

PRESS RELEASE

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New heart rhythm lab to benefit cardiology patients

(HALIFAX) At a gathering this past Thursday at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, members of the cardiology community celebrated the announcement of a new heart rhythm lab. Made possible by a \$1 million gift from Ralph and Shirlee Medjuck to the QEII Foundation, the new lab is expected to help shorten wait times for patients with heart rhythm problems and at the same time advance and support research. The heart rhythm facilities at the QEII Health Sciences Centre are the only ones serving Nova Scotians affected by arrhythmia – an abnormal heartbeat.

Located at the Halifax Infirmary site of the QEII Health Sciences Centre, The Beth Medjuck Heart Rhythm Laboratory is named in honour of the late Beth Medjuck, who was born with congenital heart difficulties. The daughter of Ralph and Shirlee Medjuck, she passed in 2004. “Heart Rhythm problems can strike anybody—from young people with healthy hearts, to those with some of the most severe forms of heart disease,” said Dr. John Sapp, Director of Heart Rhythm Service and Laboratory at Capital Health’s Division of Cardiology. “Facilities such as our new heart rhythm lab will help us treat more people, and do it better.”

Heart arrhythmias cover a broad range of abnormal electric activity within the heart, and can vary in their impact from minor to life-threatening. They can be successfully treated with a variety of methods, including medications for some, pacemakers or similar devices for others, and catheter ablation for others. Catheter ablation is a heart procedure in which wires are put up into the heart through blood vessels to find abnormal circuits, and they can be cauterized. In some cases, rhythm problems can be cured. In others, significant improvements in quality of life can be achieved. Dr. Sapp estimates that approximately 2000 patient consultations are seen in the heart rhythm ambulatory clinic each year, and another 7000 pacemaker/defibrillator checks are performed. “Will this have an impact on wait times and quality of life? Definitely,” said Dr. Sapp, “our gratitude goes out to the Medjucks for the generosity that made this possible.”

-30-

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