

# Leading healthcare

## Innovation and advancement at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre



With the arrival in October 2010 of the new TBRHSC President and CEO, Andrée G. Robichaud, a new era of acute care began. Previous Strategic Plans had been achieved, for example, as a new



*Andrée G. Robichaud became the President & CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in October, 2010.*

through engagement and consensus-building. It identifies key healthcare directions that appropriate resources will be applied to in our clinical, academic, and

research environment. Patients and families will continue to be at the centre of all plans and activities. President Robichaud is confident that the people of Northwestern Ontario will have been integrally involved in building the plan so that members of the Board of Directors will be proud to present it to the general membership. It is anticipated that the Strategic Plan will be seen by everyone as an opportunity whose time has come.

Even though TBRHSC is facing significant financial constraints, people are coming forward with ideas to make us better in everything that we do. So, it is exciting to see that the number of occasions when “Gridlock” is declared is diminishing. This means that places are being found for Alternate Level of Care patients at home, in long-term care, or in other community locations. Again, through collaboration, the opportunity for agencies to partner with us in caring for patients is growing. We are finding that the outcomes are positive because better care is provided.

As TBRHSC matures as an Academic and Research Health Sciences Centre,

our reputation for providing innovative care is being noted around the world. Researchers from around the globe are making application to come here. Funding is being found for them, their support staff, and related activities. “Bench to bedside” treatment opportunities are demonstrating that great things are being done to improve medical understanding and treatment modalities. The partnership of clinical, research and academics speaks to numerous challenges that face the healthcare industry, but also suggests that solutions are being generated that work for us all.

It is interesting that at this time members of the TBRHSC Board of Directors decided to change the Vision Statement to “Healthy Together”. Already the Strategic Plan is inviting partners from various sectors to join with us and our patients and families to deliver the best care possible. It is hard to understand why this opportunity has not been seized before now. But, here it is. It is being presented to us at the right time. People will soon see that we are “Shaping our Future Together”.

### Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute

In partnership with  
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

### Research Institute Continues to Grow

Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRRI) is an independent, not-for-profit research corporation located in Thunder Bay, serving Northwestern Ontario. We are closely partnered with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) - ranked among Canada’s leading Academic Health Sciences Centres. Incorporated in December 2007, the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute is quickly gaining national and international recognition. We have secured more than \$50 million in government and industry partner funding and have an established board of directors and executive leadership team that includes some of the most respected health research minds in Canada. We have recruited and continue to recruit outstanding scientists from across Canada and around the world.



*Dr. Mitchell Albert is TBRRI’s first-ever Research Chair*

The passion of our scientists and their new discoveries is kindling a sense of hope in the lives of patients and residents in Northwestern Ontario. For over 25 years, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre has been host to successful clinical trials in cancer. Patient-centred research motivated TBRRI and TBRHSC to jointly

launch the first Translational Research Program in 2010, to focus on novel clinical trials. Key areas of clinical trial research will be conducted in cancer, cardiology, molecular imaging, offering participants in the Northwest access to early-stage trials in molecular imaging and advanced diagnostics.

Now more than ever, personalized medicine is revolutionizing healthcare. At TBRRI, scientists and clinicians are working together with academic and industry partners to bring advanced, personalized diagnostic technology to our patients. Our interdisciplinary team includes 12 new institutionally supported scientists, 5 clinician scientists, and over 100 staff. Our Philips 64 slice Gemini PET/CT scanner is one of only nine in Ontario, and the Philips 3T Research MRI, both offer world-class imaging and research opportunities.

Above all, our success relies on partnerships. Together, TBRRI, TBRHSC and Lakehead University, have recruited the first-ever Research Chair, Dr. Mitchell Albert. Dr. Albert was recruited from the University of Massachusetts and prior to that, he spent years at Harvard Medical School. He will be instrumental in advancing the MRI Center at TBRRI.

And we continue to foster close relationships with our partners at TBRHSC; Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Northern Ontario School of Medicine; Lakehead University; Cancer Care Ontario, and Confederation College. TBRRI has established commercial partnerships with Philips Healthcare, Sentinelle Medical Inc. and Tornado Medical Systems - the new medical imaging company headquartered in Thunder Bay.

As part of a research and innovation healthcare cluster in Thunder Bay, we are now recognized by all levels of government as a major player in medical research. Government support for technology and infrastructure, combined with regional donations to the Health Sciences Discovery Fund, allow us to build from strength-to-strength. Among our greatest achievements are the world class experts, scientists, and clinician-scientists we’ve recruited. Their active involvement in our Academic Health Sciences mandate is helping meet the unique needs of patients in our region.

### Exceptional Cancer Care



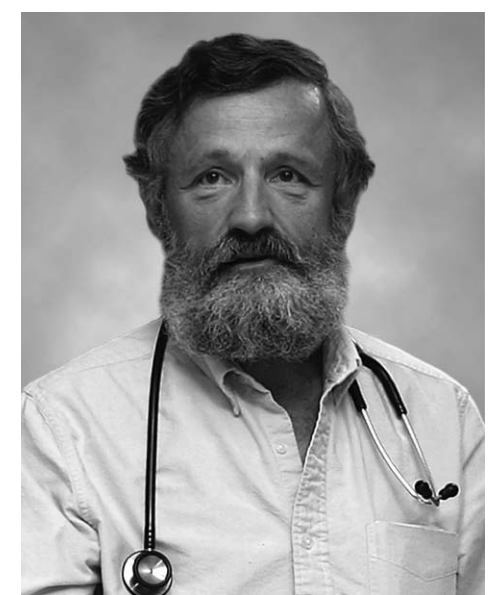
Regional Cancer Care Northwest is committed to providing exceptional cancer care in our region. We continue to be an innovator in quality

care, a provincial leader for wait times, and a national leader in patient satisfaction rates. Together, we consistently support our patients throughout their journey with cancer, and continue to place a significant emphasis on finding cancer as early as possible.

Prevention and screening programs are a cornerstone for cancer care in Northwestern Ontario. In comparison to the rest of Ontario, our region has higher rates of adults with cancer risk factors that include smoking, obesity, and inadequate vegetable and fruit consumption. As a direct result, we have higher incidence rates of breast, colon and rectum, lung and prostate cancers than the rest of the province.

In order to help detect cancer early, in 2010 we conducted over 1,500 colonoscopies for adults 50-69 with a positive FOBT or first degree family history and 11,500 Ontario Breast Screening Program mammograms in women 50 years and older. While these screening numbers continue to grow each year, so do the number of treatment visits at our Cancer Centre with 53,000 outpatient clinic visits in 2010, and 2,800 telemedicine cancer care consults.

Diagnosing cancer as early as possible is crucial. Regional Cancer Care Northwest has developed leading diagnostic and clinical practices that help to alleviate wait times, ease anxiety, and give patients and families the support they need while waiting for test results or diagnosis. Newly implemented lung and colorectal Diagnostic Assessment Programs (DAPs) now provide a single point of access for patients, helping to coordinate their diagnostic care. After only one year, the colorectal DAP has decreased wait times for colonoscopy by 4 weeks, enhancing quality of care and improving our patients’ experience. With the newly implemented lung DAP, wait times are estimated to drop from 18 weeks, down to a target of 7 weeks.



*Dr. Dimitrios Vergidis, Chief of Oncology*

Also worth noting is our new breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Breast MRI is offering new, leading-edge care, as a supplement to mammography and ultrasound. The breast MRI is able to go beyond standard tests to detect cancer in several areas of the breast, particularly in women with dense breast tissue or higher genetic risk. This new diagnostic tool is allowing women to receive care even closer to home.

Of course, in order to provide exceptional cancer care, it is important to commit to leading research and clinical practices. A major part of this commitment is working with affiliated organizations and partners such as the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation, who last year alone provided over \$800k in grant funding for important cancer programs, equipment and initiatives (that include the Breast MRI).

Perhaps Dr. Dimitrios Vergidis, Chief of Oncology, says it best when he points out that “we need to embrace change, commit to improve the patient experience, and ensure quality of care through innovation”. Continually striving to deliver innovative, exceptional care is what makes Regional Cancer Care Northwest a pillar of hope for people living with cancer in our region. And together, our exceptional team of care providers and staff at Regional Cancer Care Northwest remain committed to making a difference for patients and families in our region.



### Supporting Progress

The unprecedented progress in healthcare at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is the result of the vision of healthcare providers shared and enabled by the people who donate to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation. During the past year, millions of dollars were raised in support of virtually all areas of our Health Sciences Centre, with a specific focus on areas of high activity and high need in our community.

Gifts to the Northern Cancer Fund support new equipment and programs for the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery of cancer for Regional Cancer Care Northwest. One grant for \$185,443 supported the development of a Breast MRI Program. Donations to the Northern Cardiac Fund help fund the second cardiac catheterization



*Andrée Robichaud, President & CEO of TBRHSC, recently accepted a \$950,000 cheque from Foundation Chair Brian McKinnon. Donations made the gift, which will remain in Northwestern Ontario to advance patient care, possible.*

lab at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. The second lab brings 24/7 access to emergency angioplasty – the Gold Standard of cardiac care – within reach. Contributions to the Health Sciences Discovery Fund allow world-class Thunder

Bay Regional Research Institute scientists to improve the quality of healthcare through excellence in patient-centred research. A \$500,000 grant is supporting projects such as High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU). Because of HIFU research at TBRRI, in the near future people with cancer will experience safer, more effective removal of tumours - without surgery, and the people of this community will be the first to benefit.

Brian McKinnon, Chair of the Health Sciences Foundation, says advances like these demonstrate the difference donations make. “Support of the Health Sciences Foundation is more relevant than ever as our Health Sciences Centre continues to evolve into a leading-edge academic health sciences centre. I have sincere gratitude for those who enable such progress through their generous and selfless donations,” he says.

**100% Northern.** Make a difference. Donate today by calling 807-345-4673.



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**Together, we make a healthier Northwestern Ontario.**



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