

## Media Release

### THUNDER BAY REGIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE & PARTNERS

#### UNVEIL NEW BREAST MRI

##### *TBRHSC and TBRI announce partnership with Sentinelle Medical*

*June 17, 2010, Thunder Bay, ON* – Patients at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and scientists Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRI) are now among a select few in Ontario who will have access to world-class Breast MRI technology.

The partnership between TBRI, TBRHSC and Sentinelle Medical Incorporated, is an ideal opportunity to bring the new breast MRI to Northwestern Ontario. The technology has been purchased and Sentinelle Medical's leading-edge Vanguard Breast MRI coil will be installed this August at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's Linda Buchan Centre.

The Sentinelle Vanguard Breast MRI Coil is the system currently used at many of the leading cancer centers around the world and is known for its proprietary Variable Coil Geometry™ - delivering improved image quality, greater access for interventional procedures and optimized patient comfort. TBRI will be one of the first of these elite centers worldwide to be using the advanced 16 channel imaging technology, providing unprecedented imaging capabilities.

“The breast MRI illustrates TBRI and TBRHSC's drive to deliver the best care possible to patients, and our ambition to partner with Sentinelle Medical, a world-class industry leader,” says Michael Power, CEO of TBRI and Regional Vice President of Cancer and Diagnostic Services TBRHSC.

“This is the future of breast screening and assessment services and the benefit is indisputable, improving early detection of breast cancer for women in our community,” Power adds.

Cameron Piron, President of Sentinelle Medical agrees; “We are very pleased and honored to partner with TBRI as a clinical and research partner in the fight against breast cancer. The support of the community and talent of the clinicians and researchers will ensure we will make great strides against this disease.”

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A \$185,000 grant from the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation will support the purchase of the breast MRI. The majority of the funds were raised by the Bearskin Airlines Hope Classic curling bonspiel.

Brian McKinnon, vice chair of the Health Sciences Foundation, notes that through the Northern Cancer Fund, the tradition of advancing world-class cancer care and research in Northwestern Ontario continues.

“The standards of, and access to, patient care are improved with Breast MRI in Northwestern Ontario. If you have wives, mothers, sisters, daughters or friends facing breast cancer, you know how important that is,” McKinnon says.

Breast MRI, alongside mammogram and ultrasound, are the diagnostic imaging modalities that comprise a comprehensive breast imaging center. Breast MRI is a complementary form of breast imaging that is used in conjunction with mammography and ultrasound. Over the past two decades, it has proven itself as a modality that has many roles, most notable enabling problem solving, mapping the extent of disease in the breast as well as detecting disease in the opposite breast. The use of Breast MRI and MRI guided biopsies enable the best possible treatment plan to be formulated for the patient.

Dr. Neety Panu, lead radiologist at TBRHSC who recently completed a fellowship in Breast and Oncological Imaging, is skilled in the interpretation of Breast MRI and MRI guided biopsies. She says “the addition of Breast MRI to the Linda Buchan Center at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Center is a huge and exciting step forward, providing the patients of Northwestern Ontario with a world-class comprehensive Breast Imaging Center.”

“Equally noteworthy, we are poised to be leaders in the field of Breast MRI, with our industry partner Sentinelle Medical,” she adds.

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### **What is Breast MRI?**

Breast MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is a technology used to investigate breast concerns first detected with mammography or other imaging exams. Unlike mammography which uses low dose x-rays to image the breast, MRI uses powerful magnetic fields and radio waves to create images of the breast.

### **How is it performed?**

The patient is positioned on a special table inside the MRI system opening where a magnetic field is created by the magnet. Each MRI exam lasts between 2 and 15 minutes. The most useful MRI technique for breast imaging uses a contrast material which is injected into a vein in the arm before or during the exam. This contrast agent helps produce stronger and clearer images and "highlights" any abnormalities.

### **What are the benefits?**

An MRI exam allows breast images to be taken at various angles. It is highly sensitive to small abnormalities that can sometimes be missed with other exams. For instance, a mammogram or ultrasound of the breast may reveal breast cancer in one area while an MRI may show that small tumors are present in several areas.

An MRI also determines whether breast cancer has spread into the chest wall. If so, a patient may need to undergo chemotherapy before breast cancer surgery. MRI can also detect cancer recurrences in women who have already been treated for breast cancer with lumpectomy. Another major benefit of MRI is that it can often show if a breast implant is leaking or ruptured. MRI can also "see" the breast tissue that is compressed by an implant.

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