

# Donors transform B.C.'s most specialized care at VGH

## Taking the fight to blood cancer



Cancer survivor Chad Warren (second from right) is joined in his fight against the disease by girlfriend Megan, his father Clark (far left), mother Sandy and Dr. Stephen Nantel, Medical Director of the Hematology/Bone Marrow Transplant-Clinical Practice Unit (centre). You can follow Chad's personal battle on Twitter at [twitter.com/chadwarren604](https://twitter.com/chadwarren604).

For Chad Warren, the battle against cancer isn't just personal: it's a family affair.

"Until 2001 we took our family health for granted," recalls Chad. "We lived well, had active, healthy lives, and no major medical issues. Then, within a 12-month period, three of us were diagnosed with cancer. I was the first, then dad, then mom."

Chad was just 26 when he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the blood. His father, Clark, had surgery to remove a tumour-laden kidney in April 2002, while mom Sandy was also diagnosed with multiple myeloma. While Clark recovered after his surgery, Chad and then Sandy have spent the last eight years undergoing

bone marrow transplants, chemotherapy, full-body radiation, experimental drug therapies and almost every other treatment available for multiple myeloma patients. Now, Chad is fighting back with a personal commitment to raise \$1 million with the help of friends, family and the community to help the Hematology Clinical Trials Unit at VGH to find new treatments and cures for blood diseases, including multiple myeloma, leukemia and thrombosis (abnormal blood clotting).

"Cancer dealt me a major blow; I want to hammer back at it in a way that's going to make a difference," said Chad. "When my treatments started I was stunned at how complex and taxing

they were both physically and emotionally. Because of everything I've been through, I'm motivated to do something to make the experience easier on others."

The Hematology Clinical Trials Unit is a unique program—established by donors—dedicated to producing and evaluating new treatments for blood diseases that are more effective and have fewer side effects than standard treatments. To date, this team has provided more than 400 B.C. patients with access to more than 50 new drug trials and treatment options that would otherwise not be available to them. Among the patients who've benefited: Chad's mother, Sandy.

"She went through standard treatment, then relapsed and was one of the first people in B.C. to receive a trial drug called revlamid; it worked for her," said Chad. "Now she's gardening again, playing bridge, enjoying her grandchildren and life in general."

To date, Chad and his family have personally committed \$250,000 to their \$1 million goal. In total, \$8.8 million is needed to ensure the Hematology Clinical Trials Unit can continue into the future.

"The bottom line is that the research being done by the experts at VGH will lead to better treatments and maybe even cures for these detestable diseases," said Chad. "I believe I'm still here for a reason; if I can help bring in \$1 million, I know the future will be smoother for others who have to face these diseases."

To find out how you can help Chad raise money for pioneering research into new treatments for blood diseases, contact Barb McInnis at 604-875-5193 or [barb.mcinnis@worldclasshealthcare.ca](mailto:barb.mcinnis@worldclasshealthcare.ca).

## Caring for the community



Community care supports those who are better served outside of a hospital.

VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation is reaching out to the streets and homes of Vancouver through a fundraising partnership that helps provide residents of all ages with health care services outside of the hospital.

"Our focus is on providing the right level of care for each individual according to their unique needs at every stage of life," said Maureen Whyte, Vancouver Coastal Health's Vice President of Strategic Community Initiatives. "Community and home-based care helps reduce hospital admissions, freeing up beds for patients who need emergency and acute care services."

There are several community health projects that are in need of donor funding, including the new Northeast Mental Health Centre at

2750 East Hastings. This facility, opening in December, will offer specialized mental health services, including diagnosis, treatment, individual and group therapy, and rehabilitation for adults, seniors and children.

Other priorities include the spring 2010 relocation of the Pine Free Clinic, which has provided youth with confidential counseling and specialized medical care since 1972, and the Grandview Woodlands Community Health Centre at Broadway and Commercial Drive.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Cheryl Gurin at 604-875-4111, ext. 63354 or e-mail [cheryl.gurin@worldclasshealthcare.ca](mailto:cheryl.gurin@worldclasshealthcare.ca).

## VGH aims for MRI reboot



Dr. Stephen Ho, Director of Interventional and Angiography Radiology at VGH, is one of the many health care professionals who depends on the hospital's ageing MRI unit to diagnose and treat patients. Dr. Ho says acquiring a new MRI is "crucial for treating the seriously ill patients who come through our doors."

It's been a workhorse for Vancouver General Hospital for more than a decade. Thousands of patients have passed through it and countless numbers of them owe it their lives. But the day is coming that we will need to put VGH's MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) machine out to pasture.

"We have both the oldest and the most active MRI scanner in the province," said Dr. Nestor Müller, VGH's Head of Radiology. "It runs at least six days a week, sometimes seven, from seven in the morning to 11 in the evening. It would run 24/7 if we had enough technologists."

MR imaging uses a powerful magnetic field, radio waves and a computer to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissues, bone and virtually all other internal body structures.

"We can no longer just upgrade this unit," said Dr. Müller. "It's like trying to install the latest software into a 1990 PC. You can't do it. MRI technology has evolved tremendously in terms of quality of images and faster scan times."

At VGH, the MRI unit helps doctors diagnose and treat a wide range of diseases and injuries including brain tumours; epilepsy; liver diseases; hip, spine and spinal cord injuries; prostate cancer; and stroke.

Dr. Philip Teal heads the team at VGH that sees more than 600 severely ill stroke patients every year. Dr. Teal says that a new MRI unit is essential

to the work he and his team do each and every day to save patient's lives.

"Time is a critical factor for stroke patients and our ability to quickly assess and diagnose strokes hinges upon our understanding of what's happening to the brain. And for that we depend on the MRI," said Dr. Teal.

"It helps us determine what brain tissues are damaged and, more importantly, what brain tissues are at risk but still salvageable, which in turn helps us decide what therapies to proceed with. That can make a huge difference in patient outcomes."

Purchasing and installing the latest generation, state-of-the-art MRI unit will cost nearly \$4 million. VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation needs donors to help fund and champion this project, which will have an enormous impact on the health of thousands of British Columbians.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Jim O'Hara at 604-875-5100 or [jim.ohara@worldclasshealthcare.ca](mailto:jim.ohara@worldclasshealthcare.ca).

## The gift of good health



I'm very excited to present the first of a four-part series of VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation's 2009 Community Report. This special series, running over the next three weeks here in the Vancouver Sun, highlights your hospitals: Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital and GF Strong Rehab Centre. These are the stories of our patients, the skilled and dedicated health care professionals who care for them, and the generous donors who invest in care for all British Columbians.

Last year our Foundation, with the help of more than 15,000 generous individuals and organizations, raised almost \$38 million. This funding has purchased life-saving equipment, supported enhanced patient care initiatives, advanced pioneering medical research and made a tremendous difference in the lives of patients and families from right across our province.

With the demand for specialized health care growing, our hospitals rely on donors to help ensure patients receive the kind of health care we all want and expect. We need you now more than ever.

We are grateful to everyone who has given a gift to help our hospitals better serve British Columbians, and we look forward to working together to give people from across B.C. the gift of good health.

*Ron Dumouchelle*

Ron Dumouchelle, President and CEO, VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation

## Please consider a gift to VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation

One of the best ways you can show your gratitude for the exceptional care you or a loved one received at Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital or GF Strong Rehab Centre is by making a gift. For more information or to make a donation, please visit [www.worldclasshealthcare.ca](http://www.worldclasshealthcare.ca).

## For more information or to make a donation contact us

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Advancing world-class health care for people in British Columbia

This edition of VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation's Community Report is part one of a four-part series. Once published, all four editions will be available at [www.worldclasshealthcare.ca/media](http://www.worldclasshealthcare.ca/media).