

Area Residents Are Now Reaping The Benefits Of New Orthopaedics Program At Pembroke Regional Hospital

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PEMBROKE – Renfrew resident David Schinkel is calling the Pembroke Regional Hospital's new orthopaedics program a "win-win" for everyone after undergoing a knee replacement at PRH on January 9th.

Mr. Schinkel was the hospital's first orthopaedics patient and said he had a great experience with nothing but positive things to say about orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Chris de Jesus and the entire health care team.

"On the day of the surgery I went in at 8 a.m. and I was a little excited to know I was the first patient," Mr. Schinkel said. Recognizing that it was all new to the staff as well, he said there was a lot of attention paid to him which was flattering and there were many staff interested in seeing how everything went.

Mr. Schinkel said his recovery is going well as he returns to Pembroke twice a week for physiotherapy and keeps up with his prescribed exercises at home.

Recognizing that he will likely have to have the same procedure done on his other knee, Mr. Schinkel said he has no reservations about returning to Pembroke, especially now that he knows what to expect.

"This is a program that was badly needed in Renfrew County and it's great news for everyone now that it's here," Mr. Schinkel said.

Francois Lemaire, Vice-President of Patient Services – Acute Care and Chief Nursing Executive said it has taken a great team a solid four to five months of intense planning to get this program up and running and it is being viewed as a major accomplishment.

"The wonderful thing is that everyone involved in the planning process saw the value in bringing this program to our region. That meant that they not only were motivated to make it the best it can be but they also felt a sense of ownership and worked hard to get everything ready on time," Mr. Lemaire said.

A major part of the preparations involved staff training for which nurses from PRH travelled to Ottawa's Queensway-Carleton Hospital (QCH).

"QCH was a great partner in this journey," Mr. Lemaire said, noting that PRH nursing staff gained knowledge from their team, not only for the operating room but also for work in the orthopaedic clinic, day surgery, and recovery.

“They really helped a lot with the clinical coordination of getting our program off the ground and ensuring we had everything we needed. That’s a real shift from years ago – today hospitals recognize the value in sharing knowledge and partnering to ensure other hospitals have their own success,” Mr. Lemaire said, adding that the work spent on training and preparations was evident on January 9th when surgeries began.

In terms of the program itself, elective surgeries are well underway, the orthopaedic clinic for such services as casts and x-rays is running 1.5 days a week and patients are being seen in the emergency department by orthopaedic surgeons on a consult basis.

Soon, a final ramp up of the program to include trauma surgeries will take place rendering the program full service.

In the meantime, the orthopaedic surgeon team consisting of Dr. de Jesus, Dr. Natasha Holder and Dr. Ingrid Radovanovic are also quite pleased with how everything has come together and they are starting to feel quite at home at PRH.

“The patients are certainly happy to have the service. In meeting many of them, the first words they say are ‘welcome to the community’ so that’s been very nice. I think that while there are still some things to work out, we are off to a very good start,” said Dr. Holder.

Dr. de Jesus said being part of a program launch is a very unique experience and he’s happy to be part of a team that is working so well together.

And Dr. Radovanovic agreed, saying that patients have been extremely welcoming and as a group, they are happy to see everything come to fruition.

Pembroke resident Catherine Kalincak was Dr. Radovanovic’s first local patient when she underwent a full knee replacement on January 17th. Originally on a wait list for the procedure in Ottawa, she was very excited when she found out she could have it done in Pembroke as she only lives a couple of blocks away.

“While I was scared to go in and get it done, overall the entire process went very well and I was quite comfortable while in hospital. All of the staff were wonderful and provided a lot of useful tips,” Mrs. Kalincak said.

Discharged after just a two-night stay, she said her recovery is going well and knowing that she has to get her other knee done at some point, she said she’s feeling better knowing the outcome. “It was a good experience – I certainly see and feel the difference already in the one that was just replaced and who would have thought I could get this done so close to home.”

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