

## News Release

### **Howard Mutual Insurance Company Makes \$5000 Gift to Four Counties Health Services in support of CT Scanner Campaign**

July 25, 2008

Newbury, ON- Howard Mutual Insurance Company based in Ridgetown, Ontario has donated \$5,000 to Four Counties Health Services Foundation (FCHS) to support the CT scanner campaign of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance. This money will help to bring the campaign closer to the goal of raising \$2.5 million.

"This donation is just a continuation of the strong community spirit we have at Howard Mutual. We have always tried to find ways to meet the needs of our policyholders and citizens of our area and this CT scanner will help in meeting the medical needs of our populace," says Steve Benishek, General Manager.

"Providing the best in medical care is critical to improve the quality of life in rural Ontario and I believe our policyholders will be proud that Howard Mutual was able to step forward and make this strong commitment to their community."

Now the standard of care in hospitals, CT scans help physicians to rapidly diagnose complex injuries and life threatening illness, including many different types of cancers, stroke, and severe trauma from farm accidents.

Prior to the CT scanner in Strathroy, patients had travel to other hospital centres and endure long wait times of 8-20 weeks to receive scan. Now patients seeking care at Four Counties Health Services have quick access to the very latest in diagnostic imaging. To date, 5237 people have received CT scans in Strathroy, reducing wait times while also diminishing ambulance and related hospital costs.

Within the Southwest Local Health Integration Network (SW LHINS), SMGH has the lowest wait time of 10 days as compared to the provincial average wait time of 47 days.

"I am very grateful that Howard Mutual Insurance has donated to Four Counties Hospital Foundation towards our CT Scanner Campaign. Their many customers who use the Four Counties Facilities will be pleased with the donation and know that it is helping the Four Counties Hospital," said Mary Lou Ford of the FCHS Foundation Board of Directors.

Howard Mutual Insurance Company was formed in the community of Ridgetown in 1892 as a farm mutual, to provide fire insurance for the local farmers who couldn't find or afford insurance at the time. 116 years later, this community based insurance company provides protection for home, farm, automobile and commercial risks and still practices the concept of neighbours helping neighbours.

They are proud to have consistently provided premium refunds back to policyholders for over 20 years in a row as the company has no shareholders, and exists not to make a profit, but to meet the needs of policyholders. Their insurance products are sold through local agents with most of their 7,000 policyholders living in the southern half of Chatham-Kent.

Howard Mutual is continuing to grow as a company, with a major building and renovation project completed at the head office in 2007 and they are excited to announce a new branch office opening in Blenheim in August 2008.

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**For more information, contact:**

Danielle Bruce, Communications & Events Co-ordinator  
Phone: (519) 245-5632 x. 5044 or email [dbruce@smghfoundation.on.ca](mailto:dbruce@smghfoundation.on.ca)

**Attached photo (left-right):**

Marigay Wilkins, Chair, FCHS Foundation Board; Judy MacIntyre, FCHS Foundation Board; Peter Cumming, President, Howard Mutual Insurance Board; Steve Benishek, General Manager, Howard Mutual Insurance; Dorothy Gillies, Coordinator, FCHS Foundation; Mary Lou Ford, FCHS Foundation Board.

**About Four Counties Health Services Foundation**

The Four Counties Health Services Foundation is a non-profit, charitable organization working to strengthen Four Counties Health Services' ability to provide the highest quality of care to patients in the Four Counties area.

**About Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation**

Through community philanthropy, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation supports patient care as a charitable organization dedicated to raising funds for the delivery of quality health care to the people of Strathroy and surrounding communities. The SMGH Foundation was incorporated as a registered charity in 1989 with the objective to encourage, manage and receive donations that support the needs of the hospital. The Foundation conducts a full complement of philanthropic programs, including an annual campaign, memorial gifts, special events, capital campaigns and planned giving.

**About the Middlesex Hospital Alliance**

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) is an alliance between Four Counties Health Services (FCHS) in Newbury, Ontario and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) in Strathroy, Ontario. Since 1999, the MHA allows both hospitals the opportunity to build on shared resources and expertise in order to provide the highest level of services possible to the surrounding communities. As an alliance, FCHS and SMGH work together to recruit, train, invest, and retain health care human resources, maximize new technologies and information systems, and to coordinate quality health service delivery through primary and secondary care and joint access to tertiary care.

**Wait times information is available on the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Wait Times web site and downloadable at:**

<http://www.waittimes.net/waittimes/en/default.aspx?adv=0>

**Facts About Computed Tomography (CT) Scanning**

- Computed Tomography (CT) is an essential tool for diagnosis treatment and follow up of illness. It is gradually replacing other imaging procedures.
- As of April 2005, Ontario had 100 CT scanners in hospitals and four CT scanners in independent health facilities.
- On November 17 2004, The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced its strategy that focused on reducing wait times in five areas by improving access to health care facilities. These include:
  1. MRI/CT scans and procedures
  2. Hip and knee total joint replacement
  3. Selected cancer surgery
  4. Selected cardiac services and procedures
  5. Cataract surgery

#### *How the CT Scanner Works*

- CT scanners use radiation to create images of the body • CT scan images are generated by a computer that analyses information from a series of detectors and a radiation source that rotate around a patient at high speed.
- The images generated are in the form of cross sections or “slices”. These cross sections of the body yield incredible details of anatomy • CT images obtained at SMGH are interpreted by 13 trained radiologists both on-site and in London at St. Joseph's Health Centre.

#### *CT Scans Save lives*

CT scans are a tremendous asset in the diagnosis of serious illnesses and injuries including:

- Many types of cancer, including cancers of the lungs, pancreas, liver, kidneys and brain
- Injuries and diseases of the abdominal organs • Internal bleeding, brain damage and skull fractures in patients with head injuries
- Blood clots or bleeding within the brain shortly after a patient exhibits symptoms of stroke