



## **New Bone Mineral Density testing offers early diagnosis of "silent killer" osteoporosis**

**Prevention and treatment has potential to save lives**

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**Strathroy, ON** – Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital is now offering Bone Mineral Density (BMD) Testing, a service that will give patients, primarily women, the information they need to help prevent hip and other bone fractures. Approximately 32,000 Strathroy and area residents no longer have to travel far for the specialized test.

The test is safe, quick, painless – and covered by OHIP. The new equipment, a state-of-the-art GE Lunar Prodigy central DXA scanner, reliably measures bone mineral density (strength). The patient lies on a flat bed, fully clothed, while an "arm" passes over them, taking readings at the hip and the lower spine. Patients must get a physicians' referral before booking an appointment.

Low bone mineral density can indicate osteoporosis, or in younger patients, how likely they are to develop the disease in the future. Approximately 25,000 Canadians each year fracture their hip. More women die each year as a result of bone fractures than from breast and ovarian cancer combined.

"Although post-menopausal women are at greatest risk, we're encouraging both men and women to get a test," says Kristen Grisenthwaite, Manager, Diagnostic Imaging.

"This way, you know what your baseline bone mineral levels are. If you're at-risk,

taking action now can prevent disability later." The diagnostic test is useful for assessing bone density, the patient's risk of fractures, and the effectiveness of therapy.

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Although there is no cure for osteoporosis, treatments to prevent fractures or further bone loss include weight-bearing exercise, drug therapy and changing diet to increase calcium intake.

"This is a wonderful addition to the broad scope of services Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital already offers," says Mike Mazza, Chief Executive Officer. "This equipment is in keeping with our mandate to offer progressive, and preventive, health care to Strathroy and area." The new equipment was purchased at a cost of \$100,000 with assistance from the Hospital Foundation.

Prior to BMD testing, osteoporosis was detected through routine X-rays or a bone biopsy. These methods rarely diagnosed osteoporosis before a fracture had occurred and the disease was well advanced.

### **About Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital**

Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) serves a population of over 32,000 residents in the northwestern region of Middlesex County, the eastern region of Lambton County and the Township of Strathroy-Caradoc. SMGH is a full service family-centred community hospital providing a comprehensive range of diagnostic and ambulatory services, as well as both primary and secondary care.

The Township of Strathroy-Caradoc has the second-fastest growing population in Ontario, and is a bedroom community for many residents who work in London **and Sarnia**. SMGH is the area's fifth leading employer, operating on an annual budget of over \$19 million.

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# Facts About Osteoporosis

- 1.4 million Canadians suffer from osteoporosis.
- More women die each year as a result of osteoporotic fractures than from breast and ovarian cancer combined.
- One in four women over the age of 50 has osteoporosis. One in eight men over 50 also has the disease. However, the disease can strike at any age.
- The cost of treating osteoporosis and the fractures it causes is estimated to be \$1.3 billion each year in Canada alone. Long term, hospital and chronic care account for the majority of these costs.
- Without effective action on osteoporosis prevention and treatment strategies, it is estimated that over the next 25 years Canada will spend at least \$32.5 billion treating osteoporotic fractures. Given the increasing proportion of older people in the population, these costs will likely rise.
- The reduced quality of life for those with osteoporosis is enormous. Osteoporosis can result in disfigurement, lowered self-esteem, reduction or loss of mobility, and decreased independence.
- The statistics related to hip fractures are particularly disturbing. There are approximately 25,000 hip fractures in Canada each year. Seventy percent of these are osteoporosis-related. Hip fractures result in death in up to 20 per cent of cases, and disability in 50 per cent of those who survive.

**All facts courtesy the Osteoporosis Society of Canada.**