

**Victoria Hospitals Foundation launches spring campaign to raise funds for a hematology cell counter for Royal Jubilee Hospital**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Victoria, BC** – Today the Victoria Hospitals Foundation launched its 2010 spring campaign to raise funds towards the purchase of a \$396,000 hematology cell counter for Laboratory Medicine at Royal Jubilee Hospital. This sophisticated medical equipment benefits almost all hospital patients and guides the doctor’s decisions around diagnosis and ongoing treatment of a broad spectrum of patient care from cancer to trauma.

“We hope the community will support us in our efforts to purchase this new equipment,” said Starr McMichael, board chair, Victoria Hospitals Foundation. “The enhanced technology of the new hematology cell counter will help ensure the highest level of care is provided to patients.”

Blood has three types of cells: red, white, and platelets. A blood cell count determines how many cells of each type are present in your blood – information that can indicate many different illnesses or conditions.

“The advanced technology of the new hematology cell counter provides extremely accurate blood test results in minutes,” said Dr. Brian Berry, director of hematopathology, Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Patients undergoing chemotherapy or other cancer treatments are monitored regularly with blood cell counts to reduce the risk of complications.

“Better, faster, and more reliable testing frees laboratory technicians to dedicate more time to analysis and interpretation, and gets results to doctors more efficiently,” said Berry. “Increased accuracy means doctors trust abnormal results without having to wait for confirmation through retesting.”

Chronic Myelocytic Leukemia patient Carl Peterson was given an estimated life expectancy of one to five years when he was diagnosed in 1988. But over the past 22 years, Peterson has been a living beneficiary of ongoing technological advancements in the lab.

“Originally I required invasive and painful bone marrow extractions every three months,” said Peterson. “But thanks to technological changes in blood cell counters, I have been able to almost completely move away from aspirations and rely on blood counts to monitor my progress and determine my ability to receive chemotherapy treatments.”

The campaign for the hematology cell counter launches this week throughout Greater Victoria. Donations can be made by returning the direct mail letter residents will receive at home, by contacting the Victoria Hospital Foundation at 250-414-6688, or online at [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).

### **Facts about Laboratory Medicine:**

- More than 3.5 million tests are performed annually by our hospital's lab.
- Between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of all health care decisions affecting diagnosis or treatment are influenced by laboratory medicine results.
- About 400 patients per day receive blood tests through the Royal Jubilee Hospital laboratory. Almost all inpatients receive an initial baseline blood test, and annually more than 125,000 other patients visit the hospital's cancer, renal and diabetes outpatient clinics for blood tests.
- The Department of Laboratory Medicine at Royal Jubilee Hospital is a leader in Canada, and one that other labs look to as an example of how to function for the best outcomes in patient care.
- Our hospital labs run around the clock, so that whenever there is an urgent need for test results, doctors can immediately receive the information they need to provide the best care to the patient.

### **Carl Peterson's Story:**

**Profession:** Architect

**Age:** 63

- Carl Peterson was diagnosed with Chronic Myelocytic Leukemia in 1988. His estimated life expectancy was between one and five years – but for the past 22 years, he has been a living beneficiary of technological advancements.
- Originally, Carl required invasive and painful bone marrow extractions every three months.
- But thanks to technological changes in blood cell counters, he has been able to almost completely move away from aspirations to blood counts to monitor his progress and determine his ability to receive chemotherapy treatments.
- Every three months he receives blood tests and only requires a bone marrow extraction once a year. His medical issues are handled by the hematology cell counter, which quickly and accurately monitors his white blood cells (both the total count and differential counts).
- Thanks to the friendly and efficient staff at the lab, the entire blood testing process takes only half an hour.

### **About the Victoria Hospitals Foundation:**

The Victoria Hospitals Foundation works in partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to enable donations to Vancouver Island's two largest and most comprehensive hospitals: the Royal Jubilee and the Victoria General. Every year we fund 40 per cent of capital equipment purchases for these hospitals, and last year this amounted to more than \$6 million for urgently needed medical equipment and special projects that help these two hospitals provide care to all 752,000 residents of Vancouver Island. Since 1989, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised more than \$70 million to benefit our hospitals. For more information, call the Foundation at 250-414-6688 or go to [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).

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