

## Media Release

### Victoria Hospitals Foundation launches spring campaign to raise funds for a neuronavigation system for Victoria General Hospital

May 18, 2011

For Immediate Release

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**Victoria, BC** – Today the Victoria Hospitals Foundation launched its 2011 spring campaign to raise funds towards the purchase of a new \$361,000 neuronavigation system for Victoria General Hospital (VGH) to assist with delicate surgeries of the nervous system. The equipment helps neurosurgeons create a 3D map of a patient’s brain or spine, allowing them to focus on the exact location they need to reach during an operation.

“We’re asking the community to help us raise funds to purchase this new equipment,” said Starr McMichael, board chair, Victoria Hospitals Foundation. “While the current system in use at VGH provides quality care, this new, advanced technology will increase a surgeon’s precision and improve patient outcomes.”

“The new, state-of-the-art equipment will improve surgical accuracy and reduce the length of surgeries, which means faster recovery times and shorter hospital stays for our patients” said Dr. Stephen Hentschel, Head of Neurosurgery at VGH.

Dr. Hentschel is clear about the critical role top notch neuronavigation equipment plays in ensuring excellent patient outcomes, “It is the standard of care during cranial surgery and is emerging for greater use during spinal surgery because it can help us place screws more accurately.”

One of Dr. Hentschel’s recent patients, Kate Plummer, was diagnosed with a brain tumour in November 2010. Although it was benign and slow growing, she chose to have it removed as quickly as possible and credits Dr. Hentschel’s surgical skill and his use of a neuronavigation system for a very successful operation.

“The machine is like a GPS into your brain,” says Plummer. “That’s what they used to map their way in and around the tumour. They got it all and I was just amazed at what they were able to do for me. Any new equipment that helps the hospital do even better surgeries is a must have.”

The campaign for the new neuronavigation system 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 Hospitals Foundation at 250-414-6688 or online at [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).

In addition to its 2011 Spring Campaign, the Foundation is also raising \$25 million for state-of-the-art equipment and technology for the new Patient Care Centre through its capital campaign: *Building Care Together*.

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## **Facts about Neurosurgery and Neuronavigation:**

- Neuronavigation systems enable surgeons to navigate through the patient's body using 3D images that can be changed, manipulated and merged to provide the exact view the surgeon needs – both before the operation takes place as well as in the operating room.
- By allowing surgeons to focus on the exact location they need to reach during surgery – without compromising nearby muscle, tissue, nerves or blood vessels – neuronavigation systems ensure surgical accuracy and help shorten operating times, which can lead to better patient outcomes and faster recoveries.
- The current neuronavigation system at Victoria General Hospital is used on approximately five patients each week. The new machine will have the greater precision necessary for more complex spinal surgeries, which could mean an increase of one or two spinal surgeries each week.
- Technology has changed significantly in the seven years since the existing neuronavigation system at VGH was put in place.
- The Division of Neurosurgery at VGH uses surgery to treat neurological diseases, disorders and injuries. Neurosurgery patients may be suffering from spinal cord injuries, brain tumours, strokes, intracerebral hemorrhages, seizures, spinal disc problems, Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.
- More than 250 surgeries are performed annually at VGH on patients with brain and spine diseases or injuries.
- All of the brain surgeries and the majority of the spinal surgeries for patients within the Vancouver Island Health Authority are performed at VGH.

## **Kate Plummer's story:**

- Kate Plummer was diagnosed with a brain tumour in November 2010. The tumour had destroyed the glands that controlled her sense of taste and smell, and was located close to her optic nerve, putting her eyesight at risk.
- Although the tumour was benign and slow growing, she chose to have Dr. Hentschel remove it immediately.
- Originally, Kate was worried that there would be complications following her brain surgery, but credits Dr. Hentschel's surgical skill and the neuronavigation system for a very successful operation.

## **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 approximately 40 per cent of capital equipment purchases for these hospitals. Last year, this amounted to nearly \$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 \$76 million to benefit our hospitals. For more information, call 250-414-6688 or go to [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).