

# FALL

## NEWSLETTER 2025

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## Breaking down barriers to care

When language stands between a patient and their care team, health outcomes suffer. Thanks to a \$900,000 commitment from RBC, Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) is breaking down those barriers by making health care more accessible, inclusive and equitable for thousands of patients across the region.

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## Breaking down barriers to care

(Continued from page 1) With this remarkable donation, HHS will expand its use of a 24/7, on-demand medical interpretation platform to outpatient and ambulatory clinics at every HHS site. Already a game-changer in emergency and inpatient settings, this interpretation service allows patients and providers to connect with professional medical interpreters within seconds, in more than 240 languages.

Language should never be a barrier to care, but for patients with limited English proficiency, navigating a complex health system and specialized medical terminology can be overwhelming, especially in urgent or high-stakes situations. On-demand translation bridges that gap with real-time audio and video interpretation, helping ensure patients clearly understand their diagnosis, treatment plan and follow-up instructions.

“Patient safety literature shows that patients and families who do not speak English have higher rates of adverse events and missed diagnoses,” says Tim Dietrich, vice president of quality and performance at HHS. “So an interpretation service that allows for real-time care using the patient’s and family’s language is critical to HHS’ ability to provide equitable care.”

Since launching a pilot of the interpretation platform in 2022, HHS has facilitated nearly 18,000 interpreter sessions, totaling over 286,000 minutes of translation in 101 languages. In one Emergency Department alone, use of interpretation services increased by 68% within a year – a clear indicator of both need and impact.

Now, thanks to RBC’s support, this life-changing technology will be integrated into more than 300 outpatient clinics from cancer care to pediatrics where more than 750,000 visits occur annually.

“Ambulatory care is a very high-volume care environment,” says Dietrich. “The vast number of visits means there is an opportunity to improve health equity and the patient experience.”



Translation technology ensures Aisha and Mahmoud’s concerns are heard during their daughter’s appointments.

The impact is particularly meaningful in Hamilton, where nearly one in four residents speaks a first language other than English. For newcomers, refugees and other marginalized communities, language is often a key barrier to health care. Without interpretation, critical medical instructions can be misunderstood, missed or ignored, leading to avoidable complications, repeat visits and hospitalizations.

“Whatever I’m saying, I’m sure that it’s being relayed, no matter how I’m expressing it, in the same way. It feels like I’m the one who is speaking,” says Aisha Mahmoud, who uses the translation technology for her daughter Aline’s frequent appointments at McMaster Children’s Hospital.

In addition to breaking down communication barriers, the service also helps staff streamline care, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance patient safety. Interpreter interactions are now integrated directly into a patient’s electronic medical record, improving continuity of care and making future appointments easier to navigate.

As HHS begins this multi-year rollout across its ambulatory care sites, the Foundation is grateful for partners like RBC who recognize that health care isn’t one-size-fits-all, and that compassion, communication and cultural inclusivity are essential for healthy communities.



## Teeing up for cardiac care at the 2025 CPKC Women's Open

This August, the prestigious CPKC Women's Open was more than a world-class golf tournament. It was a powerful act of compassion. The event brought with it a mission close to many hearts: pediatric cardiac care at McMaster Children's Hospital.

The tournament marked the final leg of CPKC's ambitious, months-long fundraising initiative to transform cardiac care for children. Since February, CPKC had been matching donations across multiple community-driven efforts including digital valentines, *MacKids Walk & Wheel*, monthly giving and community-driven fundraisers. These efforts united donors, families, and hospital staff in a shared cause: MacKids.

Funds from CPKC's campaign will support the creation of the Integrated Cardiac Health Initiative at McMaster Children's Hospital. This is an ambitious program that will enhance care for children with heart conditions through new family-friendly clinical spaces, advanced diagnostic equipment, expanded services like 24/7 cardio diagnostics, and a co-designed care portal to improve communication and follow-up.

MacKid Amela knows firsthand how critical this care can be. At just two days old, she was rushed to McMaster Children's Hospital with dangerously low

oxygen levels and diagnosed with life-threatening heart defects. After emergency stabilization and open-heart surgery, she made a full recovery. Today, she's a healthy, athletic teenager who only visits her cardiologist every two years.

"She's perfect," says her mom, Sabrina. "No medications. Her heart is as good as it can get."

In August, Amela proudly served as the 2025 CPKC Women's Open Charity Ambassador, attending tournament events to share her story, thank donors, and inspire others to give. The tournament featured a range of fundraising activations that engaged thousands of attendees.

As the event wound down on Sunday, August 24, CPKC presented the Foundation with a cheque for a transformative \$4 million.

"We're incredibly grateful to CPKC and everyone who rallied to support cardiac care for children across our region," says Anissa Hilborn, CEO of Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation. "Because of your generosity, children with heart conditions will have access to the best care, closer to home. CPKC has set a powerful example of what's possible when a community comes together, and I hope it inspires others to follow their lead."



CPKC Women's Open winner, Brooke Henderson, charity ambassador and MacKid Amela, and four-time LPGA champion, Lorie Kane.



## Inspirational lottery winner gives back

Judy isn't sure how she first heard about the Foundation's *50/50 Inspiration Lottery*, but she does remember why she started playing.

Around the time her husband, Jeff, was transferred from the Juravinski Hospital to St. Peter's Hospital, Judy began supporting the lottery.

Though Judy was initially apprehensive about her husband's care shifting to St. Peter's Hospital, she quickly recognized that he was in the right place.

"The team there is unbelievable," she says. "Everyone, from the cleaners to the food delivery people, the PSWs and the nurses... they are the most incredible team. I don't use this word lightly, but I came to love these people."

Sadly, after 16 months at St. Peter's Hospital and a brief stay in a long-term care facility, Jeff passed away. Despite her grief and mourning, Judy continued to support the hospital that had become a second home to her and her husband.

Just days before his passing, Judy received an unexpected, but uplifting call from the Foundation: she had won the Early Bird Prize for the *50/50 Inspiration Lottery*. \$1,000 richer, Judy celebrated this little bit of luck in what was a sad and difficult time.

Two weeks later, she received another call.

"I thought Sara from the Foundation was calling about the early bird prize I'd already won," says Judy. "But then she told me I'd also won the grand prize. To win both is just incredible."



Lottery winner, Judy.

Judy is putting her winnings to good use: a meaningful trip to Paris with her sister in honour of her husband, who loved the city. And some of the winnings, she says, are going right back to the hospital that cared for her beloved so well.

"There are a lot of 50/50 draws out there, and winning anything is wonderful," she says. "But if you're going to play, play one that gives back to your community where it will be there for you when you need it."

Your chance to win is here—while making a difference for patients like Judy's husband, Jeff. Get your tickets for the next *50/50 Inspiration Lottery* today!

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## Failing fast brings bold ideas



At Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), innovation means more than doing things differently; it means doing things better for patients, care teams, and the entire health system. That's the vision behind the *F2 Fail Fast* grant program, a bold research initiative supported by Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation.

Launched to encourage high-risk, high-reward innovation, the *F2 Fail Fast* program provides grants of up to \$25,000 for projects that aim to solve pressing health care challenges. Designed to empower researchers and clinicians to test unconventional ideas early, the program offers critical funding to rapidly evaluate, pivot, or scale novel health solutions.

The goal is to identify promising ideas that, even in failure, can generate learning and spark future advances.

"Failing fast doesn't mean giving up. It means learning quickly," says Dr. Marc Jeschke, vice president of research at HHS. "By investing in early validation, we avoid spending years on ideas that aren't viable, and instead channel energy and resources into the most promising directions. That agility helps us stay on the cutting edge of medical research, and ensures that patients benefit from better solutions, sooner."

The investment is high-risk, and high reward.

Unlike traditional research funding from government or industry that often requires significant preliminary

data, this grant welcomes projects in their infancy. It looks for ideas that are raw but potentially transformative. The program is open to a broad range of HHS innovators, from researchers and clinicians to trainees and health entrepreneurs. Proposals can target clinical, operational, technological, or patient experience challenges.

As with all Foundation-supported initiatives, donor generosity plays a crucial role in making research breakthroughs possible.

***"Donor support give us the flexibility to take smart risks that also have high potential"***

"Donor support gives us the flexibility to take smart risks that also have high potential," says Dr. Jeschke. "Without that kind of visionary support, many of today's most promising innovations would never get off the ground. Our donors are true partners in discovery, helping us test new ideas that could change care for patients here and around the world."

Thanks to donor generosity, the *F2 Fail Fast* program is building a stronger, smarter, and more responsive health care system, one bold idea at a time.



## New knee, new chapter

When Carolyn arrived at Hamilton General Hospital for knee surgery earlier this year, she didn't realize she was about to make history.

She was the first patient at the hospital to receive surgery with a new, donor-funded robotic technology.

The state-of-the-art robotic arm is used for joint replacement procedures, offering unmatched precision and accuracy. For patients like Carolyn, who required a partial knee replacement, this kind of donor-funded equipment makes a world of difference.

Carolyn's knee pain had been worsening for years, and by early 2024, it was severely impacting her life. An avid gardener and active grandparent, she found herself sidelined. "I'm very hands-on in our business," she explains. "The pain really limited me last year."

After a referral to orthopedic surgeon Dr. Dale Williams, Carolyn was diagnosed with severe arthritis localized to one side of her left knee. That made her an ideal candidate for a half-knee replacement, and for the newly donated robotic arm system.

While robotic-assisted surgery might seem intimidating, Carolyn was confident in Dr. Williams' recommendation. "It just made heaps of sense," she says. "It was a phenomenal opportunity that I was looking forward to."

The benefits were clear. The robotic arm uses detailed imaging to map out a surgical plan with



Dr. Williams, his surgery team and the robotic arm

incredible accuracy. This allows for smaller incisions, preservation of healthy tissue and ligaments, and more consistent results. For Carolyn, that meant a smoother procedure and a remarkably fast recovery.

"Four days post-surgery, I was already seeing my physiotherapist, and she said that the bend in my knee was where she usually expect patients to be weeks later," she says. By seven weeks post-op Carolyn was back to normal.

Carolyn credits the expertise of Dr. Williams, the support of her care team, and the advanced technology made possible by donors. "I'm the beneficiary of someone's generosity, and my gratefulness is immense," she says. "It's so worthwhile to support the hospital. Helping others is such a wonderful gift."

Thanks to donor-funded innovations like the robotic arm, patients like Carolyn can regain mobility, reduce recovery time, and get back to living life on their terms. Hamilton General Hospital is a regional leader in orthopedic surgery, offering patients access to cutting-edge tools and expert care teams who are pushing the boundaries of what recovery can look like. None of this would be possible without the generosity of donors like you who continue to invest in the latest medical technology and help bring world-class care closer to home.



Carolyn and her puppy



## Pioneering hope with clinical trials

Clinical trials are the bridge between scientific discovery and life-saving treatment. They turn emerging knowledge into better outcomes for patients. At Juravinski Cancer Centre, clinical trials are a cornerstone of care that gives countless patients renewed hope for the future.

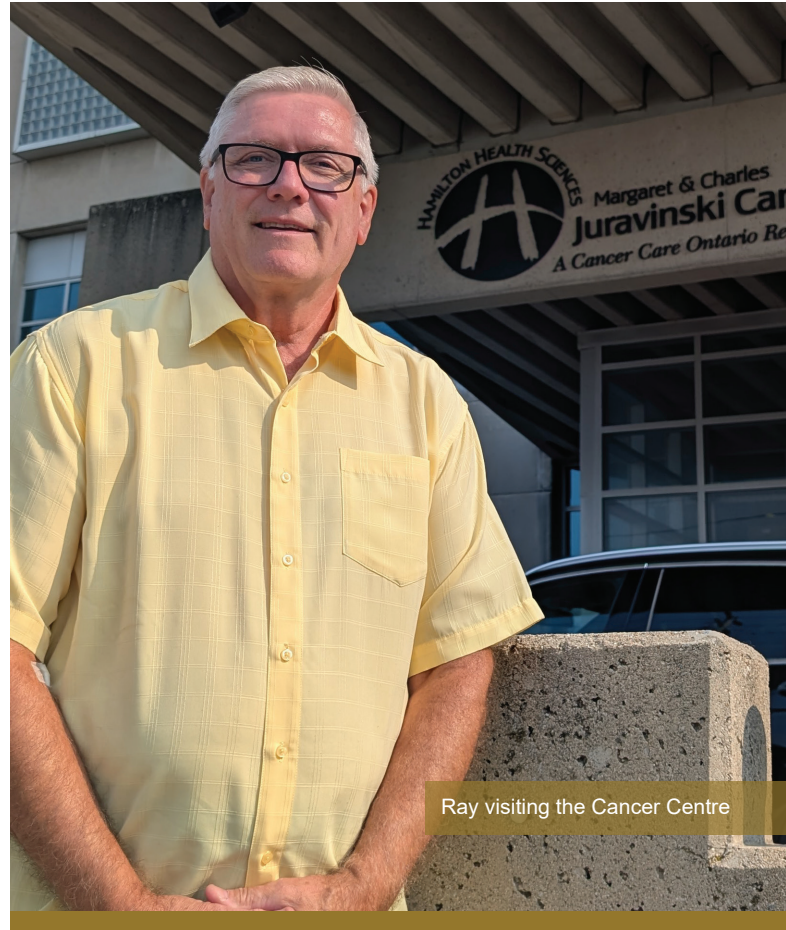
Ray is one of those patients. Six years ago, Ray was preparing to retire and celebrate 30 years of being cancer-free after surviving colon cancer in his early thirties. Life had other plans.

A routine checkup revealed something wasn't right and further testing led to a diagnosis of multiple myeloma, a rare and complex blood cancer. Following a stem cell transplant at Juravinski Cancer Centre, maintenance medication kept his condition stable for three years. When the drugs stopped working – as is often the case with multiple myeloma – his doctors referred him back to Juravinski Cancer Centre. There, he joined a clinical trial testing a new drug.

Juravinski Cancer Centre's leadership in clinical research means that patients like Ray can access new treatments sooner and help build the evidence that will shape future standards of care.

"I have been very, very fortunate. I got into a great study. I have not had one complaint," says Ray. "We made great strides with research."

His trial began with 32 weeks of weekly visits, followed by biweekly and now monthly appointments. Each time, he receives a single abdominal injection followed by a consultation with his medical team.



Ray visiting the Cancer Centre

"I see the progress. I wouldn't necessarily be here had it been 10 years or 25 years ago," he says. "We've certainly come a long way."

This kind of progress is made possible thanks to donors who help fund the research, equipment and clinical trial infrastructure that bring cutting-edge therapies to patients like Ray from across the region.

# It's time to rebuild.

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