

IMPACT NEWSLETTER

Stories of outstanding care you make possible with your support of Sault Area Hospital Foundation.

Your support helped save Peter's life.

After 43 days in Sault Area Hospital, Peter MacPhail was amazed by the outstanding care he received.

It was the holiday season, and Peter MacPhail was getting ready to head on a trip. After a dinner with friends, he wasn't feeling well – so he laid down to rest... and he didn't get up for 3 days.

Peter thought he had a bad flu, but his wife – Val Evans – noticed he wasn't himself. "I was starting to make silly mistakes, like I couldn't figure out how to turn on the TV with the remote," Peter shared. Val encouraged him to get checked out, and they went to the emergency room at Sault Area Hospital. "We had no idea how sick I was," he said.

Peter moved quickly through triage, and a blood test identified an infection. Blood infections, like Peter's, can be fatal if left untreated. The source of the infection was traced to Peter's knee – which had been replaced 9 years prior. After another test, Peter's Orthopedic surgeon decided the knee would have to be replaced. Less than 24 hours after being admitted, Peter was in surgery.

The procedure went well. With his knee replaced, and antibiotics in hand, Peter was discharged to recover at home – but after a week or so he noticed he wasn't feeling better. His family physician ordered another round of blood tests, and when the results came back they called him quickly. "It was 6:30 in the morning and they said 'get back to the hospital right away!'" Peter's sodium levels had dropped to a critically low level.

Peter was admitted again, and ran through a battery of tests. The low sodium made him very tired. "I could hardly open my eyes," he added. The team would give an IV, and Peter would feel a bit better, but by the next day the levels would drop. There were infections all over his body.



Peter is pictured with his dog, Elsa. While pets are not normally allowed at SAH, Peter was granted compassionate exemption.

As part of the tests, Peter had a specialized ultrasound on his heart. This test only recently became available at Sault Area Hospital thanks to new ultrasound equipment. The ultrasound identified an issue – what looked like a growth. There was talk of sending Peter to St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto for surgery, and arrangements for flights started. Then, the surgeon at St. Michael's advised Peter's care team that they needed to clear the infection first – or Peter could die on the operating table.

Peter was given a strong antibiotic. After time and monitoring, eventually the infection cleared and it seemed like the heart issue had resolved. While Peter was relieved to not need surgery, he was still having issues with sodium.

“ It seemed like every doctor under the sun came into my room. Nobody could figure it out. It reminded me of a medical drama on TV – surrounded by 4 doctors talking about, **'What do you think? It could be this, it could be that!'** It was really refreshing to see them trying to solve it!

- Peter MacPhail, Patient

Continued on next page...

Peter's Story, Continued

The case was finally solved by a locum physician, who ordered a series of blood tests and a brain scan. They discovered Peter's pituitary gland had stopped working and his thyroid was under active.

Peter was set up with an Endocrinologist – a specialist in the body's hormones. Medications were prescribed, and Peter was given a high dose infusion of sodium to help rebuild the stores in his body. It took nearly a day and a half to complete the infusion, but once it was done Peter felt better than he had in a long time. "I was dreaming that I'd gotten out of bed and gone for a run – I couldn't believe how good I felt!"

During his stay, Peter was amazed at the kindness of the staff who cared for him. The cleaner who found extra blankets, and brought comfortable chairs for his family. The food services workers who made up plates of veggies and dip for him to snack on. The nursing staff who checked in at the beginning and end of each shift, and let him know

when they were planning to be away. "They'd tell me 'I'm off for a week. I hope you're OK, and you'll be out by the time I'm back.' It was so nice."

Peter will be on medication for life to manage his symptoms. He is still having regular tests and appointments to monitor his condition, but he is feeling much better these days.

Your gifts helped save Peter's life.

The lab equipment that found Peter's blood infection was funded by your gifts. The surgical tools that were used for his knee replacement were supported by your donations. And the specialized ultrasound machine that found the issue in Peter's heart was purchased just last fall, thanks to community support.

"I just think, if I had gone on that trip with this infection, and had gotten sick while I was away, I don't know that I would have made it home again," Peter said. "I had such good fortune to come here first [to Sault Area Hospital]."

THANKS TO YOU: New Stretchers, New Grads in the ED

Thanks to your gifts, our Emergency Department just received 4 brand new stretchers that are already improving care experiences for patients and providers.

Smooth Moves The old stretchers had a foot pedal to raise and lower the patient. Care workers would have to physically pump the pedal, which was tiring. The new stretchers use hydraulics, moving patients with the push of a button. They also have a fifth wheel in the bed frame, making them easier to manoeuvre.

Easier X-Rays The new stretchers have a gap between the mattress and the bed frame for sliding in a portable x-ray plate. This is critical for patients who come into the department with trauma: they can have an x-ray done without leaving the bed.



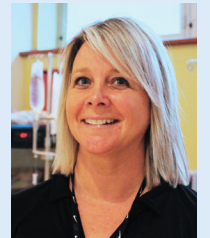
New Grads, Rylee Mancuso and Breanne Seaton, pose with one of the new stretchers.

Your gifts support recent graduates.

This summer, eight new graduates joined the Emergency Department care team. Your gifts are helping to buy the equipment they need to provide outstanding care.

"I worked in the Emergency Department at Sault Area Hospital as part of my nursing program," shares Breanne Seaton, RN, and a recent graduate of Sault College. "I chose to come back because I like the environment, and the team is fantastic!"

Our new stretchers are more ergonomic, meaning that they are less physically demanding to use. It makes such a huge difference!



Sharon Abrams
Patient Care Manager,
Emergency Department

Quick Weights The new stretchers also weigh the patient as soon as they lie down. Since weight can impact medication dosage, having this information right away is important.

"I couldn't have asked for better care."

Sarah Skagen is always on the go.

Between volunteering, sitting on local Boards, and her work at the Downtown Association, she doesn't slow down for much. But in July of 2023, while at a friend's cottage in Philips Bay, she suddenly began to feel unwell.

"I called an ambulance to take me to the Thessalon Hospital because I thought I was having a heart attack," she shared. "They treated me, they were great, but then they sent me home."

The next day Sarah wasn't feeling any better, so she made her way to the Emergency Department at Sault Area Hospital.

Sarah was in a lot of pain, but the ER Nurse (Samantha Barrett) who initially cared for Sarah was fabulous. "She was young, she was efficient, she was caring, she had a sense of humour, great bedside manner – absolutely incredible."

Dr. Bodnar came in shortly after, and was concerned to see her. A month prior, Sarah had been to the hospital and they'd thought she had pneumonia. He told her she would be admitted right away. In just a few short hours, she was medicated, x-rayed, had an ultrasound and MRI ordered, and was being prepared to be sent up to 3A to await a surgical procedure.

Sarah's care team discovered a large gallstone, and Sarah needed a scope to have it removed. "I turned very, very yellow – as yellow as Marge Simpson!" she joked.

It was Dr. Gonzalez who removed the problematic gallstone, but he found more. Sarah would need her gallbladder removed later that week.

She was scheduled for laparoscopic (minimally invasive) surgery, and had to wait a few days before the procedure went forward. "The care team on 3A was really wonderful while I was waiting. I had incredible nurses – Emma Deschenes, Laura Liddiard, and Alyssa Laframboise were all excellent. Everyone – even down to the porters – had a great attitude."

While Sarah started to feel better after the initial stone was removed, she knew if she didn't take the time to have the gallbladder removed she would be



Sarah Skagen poses with a plush gallbladder.

back again before long. "Sometimes your body just forces you to slow down – I needed to listen to my body, so that's what I did."

A week after being admitted, Sarah was discharged – sans gallbladder. She is grateful her stay at the hospital was overall so positive. "Aside from being sick, it was a pretty good experience!"

Your support makes surgeries, like Sarah's, possible!

The minimally invasive surgical tools and scopes that were used in Sarah's surgical procedures were funded through your donations to Sault Area Hospital Foundation. Not only are they bringing our surgical suites up-to-date with the most recent technology, and enabling people like Sarah to recover faster from surgery – they're helping medical teaching to happen in our hospital. Large display screens in the operating room allow everyone, including students, to see what is

"I saw medical learners all around the hospital – in the imaging department, on the floors, in the operating room. Everyone was taking their time, and making lots of room for questions from the students. **It's so inspiring to see the next generation of care professionals getting trained at our hospital.**"

- Sarah Skagen, Patient

UPCOMING NEED:

Safe, Accessible Medications

Medication plays a critical role in helping patients get better. But, in a large hospital, not only do we need to make sure that medication is tracked and kept secure – it needs to be available close to where care happens.

With millions of doses of medication delivered across Sault Area Hospital each year, having secure medication dispensing cabinets in key areas is essential.

Medication dispensing cabinets ensure the safe and effective distribution of medication to patients. When medications are available where care is happening, they can be administered quickly as patient condition changes.

The cabinets also connect to each patient's electronic medical record, which can guide the care team to the correct medication and reduce the chance of medication errors.

The Emergency Department is one of a few areas scheduled

to get a new medication dispensing cart this year. In this area, accessible medication is critical. When nurses have to travel for medication, it can create time delays – and in an emergency, every second counts.

Each medication dispensing station costs approximately \$12,800 and is expected to last 10 years before being replaced.

While patients may not notice the impact this has on their experience, care providers certainly will! Your gifts to Sault Area Hospital Foundation ensure our Emergency Department has the tools to deliver outstanding care, like this new medication dispensing cabinet.

Thank you for your continued support of SAHF!



THANK YOU!

Since April 1, we've already disbursed **\$1 MILLION +** to SAHF for critical medical equipment.

Thanks to your continued generosity, new equipment is arriving regularly at Sault Area Hospital.

This includes a \$7,641 tonopen for our Emergency Department. The tonopen is a handheld tool that measures pressure inside the eye.

This device plays a role in determining risk of glaucoma, and can help prevent damage to the optic nerve.

In serious circumstances, the tonopen can help catch an issue before a patient loses their sight!

This tool is now in the hands of the care providers in our Emergency Room thanks to your commitment to SAHF.

We're back in office!

We are happy to be back on site at Sault Area Hospital to assist patients, visitors and staff.

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday,
8:00am - 4:30pm

In the main lobby, turn right and you'll see our "Foundation" sign!

When you give, you make outstanding care possible.



Visit our website:
sahfoundation.com

Make a secure gift, or find more information about our programs.



Call our main line:
705-759-3848

We'd be happy to chat, or you can leave a message for a call back.



Send us mail:

**750 Great Northern Road
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A8**

We've included a postage-paid envelope with this newsletter for whenever you need it next.

We look forward to the next time we see each other!