

Living with Heart Disease: a 40-year journey.

Talking to him, you would never guess that Brian Wilson had spent a good part of the last 40 years in and out of hospital. But Brian has had heart surgery three times, and a remarkable 28 stents in his heart.

“I succumbed to heart disease when I was fairly young. And no-one would have guessed it. I was a squash player and a skier. I played squash with my family doctor!”

In the 1980s, there was no treatment available in Sault Ste. Marie for heart disease. Early intervention was a brand new concept – so much so that Brian was featured in a skiing magazine, to give his view on staying active after heart surgery. Brian chuckles fondly when remembering his cardiologist’s reaction when he returned to the sports he loved.

“Dr. Mathew told me off after he heard I had been playing squash a few weeks after surgery, ‘Don’t you dare die on the squash court!’” Brian chuckles. “But at least I hadn’t cycled the 30 miles to visit him!”

Brian jokes his way through many of his stories, but his tone becomes serious when talking about the doctors and medical procedures that saved his life. He feels so grateful to have benefited from the partnerships between Northern Ontario hospitals, but admitted that traveling to different hospitals to receive care was hard on his family.

“Once, my poor wife had to drive me home from Trillium [Health Partners in Mississauga] through a snowstorm – the day before Christmas.”

Your gifts are helping Brian get more cardiac care locally.

Thanks to your generous contributions, today it is a much different story for Brian. Having seen the changes in care over the last 40 years, Brian knows first-hand the difference your gifts have made. “It is easy to take things for granted, such as diagnostic imaging, interventional tools, or catheters right on your doorstep. But it truly is amazing.”

Since opening the doors of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab in August of 2018, Sault Area Hospital has performed over 1,200 PCI (Percutaneous Coronary Intervention) procedures. PCI opens blocked blood vessels in the heart, saving the lives of patients with heart disease. Before 2018, some patients had to wait for a week or more to get this critical procedure at another hospital. Now, they can receive care at Sault Area Hospital in under 24 hours.

The Cardiac Catheterization Lab, and all of its life-saving equipment, would simply not exist if not for your generous donations.

On behalf of Brian and his family, thank you for making this incredible local care possible!



Brian says “thank you” to all of those who have supported his fight against heart disease by giving a monthly donation. In doing so, he is helping to provide life-saving technology and equipment for those who need care at Sault Area Hospital in years to come.

“You have a chance to influence healthcare and people’s lives with even a small donation. So don’t hesitate to make it and make someone’s life a lot better.”

To learn more about how you can support SAH with a monthly gift, go to www.sahfoundation.com/monthly

Have you had a positive care experience and would like to share your story?

We would love to hear from you. Call 705-759-3848 or email foundation@sah.on.ca to chat with us.

“If you’re going to be sick, you want to be sick at home.”

**Your gifts ensured Sault Area Hospital could care for Chris Fryia:
from trips to the ER, to pacemaker follow-up, to his cancer diagnosis.**



“Listen, I think it’s cancer.”

Chris and Kerri Fryia heard the words no one wants to hear in October 2018, after a trip to the Emergency Department at Sault Area Hospital.

This wasn’t Chris’ first trip to SAH. After a cardiac incident in 2011, he became a patient of the Pacemaker Clinic and was getting regular follow-up care there. But this time was different.

Chris was having stomach pain, and decided to have it checked out. After getting an ultrasound of his abdomen, Dr. Steven Bodnar sat Chris and Kerri down to break the news: the ultrasound had found a mass, and it didn’t look good.

Things moved quickly after that. Chris soon received a diagnosis of prostate cancer. His doctors were initially optimistic – while it was incurable, it was treatable. They hoped that this would be something he could live with. And for 2.5 years, he did.

Kerri, who was beside her husband Chris throughout his care, was impressed with our local hospital. “From the very beginning, the cancer clinic felt very comfortable and safe. The people were kind and caring. His team was fantastic.”

Chris had monthly treatments. He underwent regular tests – bloodwork, CT scans, and x-rays. He continued to visit the pacemaker clinic. Between all these appointments, it seemed like he was at SAH at least once every couple weeks!

During that time, Kerri was able to focus on the positives in their experience. “It’s so often you hear the horrible stories – people complain before they compliment. Anytime Chris was in the hospital over the years, his care was exceptional. The care team was knowledgeable, and went to bat for him. The housekeepers would talk to him. They made him feel like one of the family.”

Your support ensured Chris could get his care, close to home.

Your donations have helped bring programs – like Cancer Care and the Pacemaker Clinic – to SAH, so patients don’t have to travel for treatment. Your gifts have bought our tools: from ultrasound equipment, like the piece that first detected Chris’ cancer, to equipment in our lab (see page 3) that monitored the progress of his treatment. Your support ensures patients like Chris can receive life-sustaining treatments close to their home and their support system. According to Kerri, this made all the difference: “It’s so much better if you can be at home, going through this.”

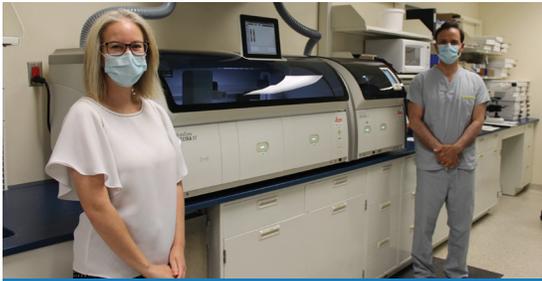
While Chris passed away in July of 2021, he was surrounded by his family, and in his home community of Sault Ste. Marie. For the Fryias, having access to outstanding local care meant more time together when that time was most precious. Your gifts made that possible, giving our hospital the tools to care for Chris right here – close to home. Thank you!

 **With Gratitude for *Cancer Care, Pacemaker Clinic, and even Housekeeping!***

For Kerri, making a grateful patient gift was a “no brainer”. After seeing a poster on the elevators at Sault Area Hospital, Kerri knew that this was how she wanted to thank the people who had “stuck out, in a good way”. Thanks to Kerri’s thoughtful gift, 10 individuals were recognized with a card and a pin acknowledging her family’s gratitude, *AND* new medical equipment will be purchased to care for patients like Chris.

Want to recognize an outstanding caregiver, and give back to our hospital? Visit sahfoundation.com/grateful

You've helped us ace these tests! *How new lab equipment is supporting Sault Area Hospital.*



Dr. Christa Cassalman and Dr. Michael D'Agostino, both Pathologists in the Lab, with a new **slide stainer**.

Tucked away on the 3rd floor of the hospital, “the lab” isn’t a department that many patients get to see – but it’s critical to the care we deliver at SAH.

From blood draws to tissue samples, swabs to biopsies, the lab processes thousands of tests every day. Having the right equipment in the lab can help us get critical answers for patients quickly. Fast results can mean patients spend less time worrying, and that they can start treatment sooner.

This year, you helped bring in almost \$400,000 in laboratory equipment!

In the spring, the lab got two new pieces of equipment that are key to supporting local cancer diagnosis.

The **Microtome** cuts extremely thin slices of tissue (as thin as one cell) for review under a microscope. These tests help identify abnormal cells. While it takes a bit more time to prepare a sample with a microtome, it produces a high quality sample for detailed review.

A **Cryostat** is also used to slice tissue for review – but this test prioritizes speed of results. The cryostat rapidly freezes and slices a tissue sample so it can be reviewed in under 30 minutes, often while surgery is happening. While samples prepared with the cryostat are lower quality, they can help surgeons make fast decisions and change surgical plans if cancer is found.

These items were just a few from a long list that also included a slide stainer, tissue processor, and a urinalysis unit. None of these pieces would have arrived without your help and support! Thank you!



A Medical Laboratory Technologist uses the **microtome** to prepare tissue samples.



Brian Kment and Holly Kajnar from the Pathology Department with the new **cryostat**.

Your support has helped us start construction for a NEW MRI!



The old MRI magnet was removed in May to prepare for the new machine. They had to take down a wall to get it out of the building!

In mid-May, the 10 year old MRI at Sault Area Hospital performed its last scan. It was taken out of service to prepare for a **brand new MRI** that should be up-and-running by fall.

Removing the old MRI was no easy task: a wall of the hospital had to be opened up to remove the massive magnet. While construction is happening, Sault Area Hospital has a temporary MRI set up to ensure our community still has access to this important service.

If you've sent in a gift toward our new MRI:
THANK YOU!

This \$3.2 million project would not be possible without your generous support. Stay tuned for another update this fall!

UPCOMING NEED: Vital Signs Monitors

Breathing. Blood Pressure.
Heart Rate. Oxygen levels.
A small vital signs monitor
keeps track of it all!

This little tool – not much bigger than a lunch box – is a key part of care at Sault Area Hospital.

A Vital Signs Monitor doesn't just show a series of lines and numbers: it gives insight into a patient's condition. It can help caregivers quickly determine whether a patient is stable, getting better or getting worse. When there may be cause for concern, a monitor alerts the care team so they can intervene.

In short, these Vital Signs Monitors help save lives.

Many of our monitors are now 10+ years old. Continuing to use old equipment can be risky: equipment is more likely to break down as it ages. We rely on these monitors every day, in every area of the hospital; their replacement is crucial.



Vital signs monitors are a key part of care.

New technology comes with improvements: newer monitors are able to detect signs of a problem earlier, and provide alerts sooner. This gives caregivers the ability to intervene quickly, and deliver proactive care.

The upgraded monitors cost about \$7,500 each, and are expected to last another 10 years. We hope to replace 25 of them in the next year, which means that we will need to raise over \$185,000 for their replacement alone. While this number may seem daunting, with your help, we know we can do it.

Your continued support provides the tools for outstanding care at Sault Area Hospital today, tomorrow, and every single day for the next decade.

THANK YOU!

In our 2021/22 year
you helped purchase
\$5.2 MILLION+
in equipment!

That included...

Almost \$2 million for Diagnostic Imaging.

From viewing hearts, to screening for breast cancer – you're ensuring our hospital gets the whole picture with crisp, detailed medical images.

Over \$1 million to Critical Care and Emergency.

You've helped patients breathe when they can't on their own, purchasing 12 ventilators!

... and so much more!

Our hospital would not have these tools if it wasn't for your incredible generosity.

THANK YOU!

We're back in office!

While visitor restrictions are still in place, we are happy to be back on site at Sault Area Hospital to assist patients, visitors and staff.

Office Hours:

Tues.-Thurs., 8:00am-4:30pm.
Still working remotely Monday/Friday.

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!