



Doreen Burkholder is the first patient to undergo a cardiac TEE procedure at MSH. Pictured here with Dr. Jonathan Lu and the cardiology team at MSH.

CARDIAC CARE CLOSE TO HOME

New cardiac equipment brings key medical procedure to Markham and Stouffville communities

For Doreen Burkholder, Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) as an institution has always been synonymous with home — a familiar cornerstone of the community she has come to rely upon in her later years to provide high-quality care in times of need.

But in the winter of 2017, when bloodwork results from the hospital's Emergency Department called for Doreen to undergo a specialized cardiac procedure called trans-esophageal echocardiography (or TEE), that assurance of close-to-home care was temporarily shaken.

Doreen lives a mere few minutes from MSH, and at the time the TEE was only available at a hospital 45 minutes away. "We were all pretty anxious, wondering how we were going to get mom there in her debilitated state and how we were going to find our way around. They just didn't know us there," said Sandi Lofgren, Doreen's daughter and patient care

more than \$150,000 was raised at the hospital's Festival of Colours Gala in April, specifically to support patients like Doreen.

"It just so happened that my mom's follow-up TEE procedure was scheduled to coincide with the arrival of the new TEE equipment in May," said Sandi, whose mother had waited two months for her first procedure at the alternative, out-of-the-way hospital. "We were just thrilled — we were treated like royalty as the first patients in the unit, and it was just so nice for her to be at her home hospital where everything was familiar."

"Dr. Jonathan Lu and the staff were really kind and did a wonderful job explaining the procedure in a way I could understand," adds Doreen who received the TEE. "They walked me through every step and were very thorough during the exam."

PATIENTS GAIN ACCESS

Dr. Lu, a cardiologist at MSH who oversaw Doreen's TEE procedure and the many provided to patients since,

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director at MSH's Uxbridge site, who is one of her primary caregivers.

It was Doreen and her family's good fortune that the staff at MSH had long since recognized Markham's status as having one of the fastest growing senior populations in the country. In a related effort to ensure that the demands of its surrounding community were met, the MSH Foundation worked closely with the community to fundraise for the necessary TEE equipment. Through the generosity of long-time donors, the Nanji Family, and strong partnerships with leaders in the South Asian community,

says the availability of this advanced echocardiography exam means that patients will now have access to elevated levels of diagnostic accuracy, to potentially life-saving interventions and to a more effective continuum of cardiac care closer to home.

"The TEE is basically the best way for a cardiologist to look at the valves and structure of the heart," said Dr. Lu. "It's an ultrasound probe that allows us to receive far better images than we might get with a traditional echocardiograph. We can take a three-dimensional picture of the heart valve and essentially recreate what a surgeon might

see in the operating room."

Emphasizing the benefits that the recent acquisition of TEE equipment will have for all members of Markham's diverse community, Dr. Lu recalls the story of a young man who came into the hospital with a fever, only to have a leaky heart valve

reveal itself by way of the sophisticated exam.

"This man could have gone decades without realizing this serious issue which could have potentially developed into heart failure," said Dr. Lu. "We were able to diagnose this problem quickly and he can now see a heart surgeon and hope to

live a long and healthy life."

DELIVERY OF CARE

"The availability of the TEE has changed our day-to-day delivery of care significantly," said Dr. Lu. "The test is a vital part of being able to provide a full suite of cardiac diagnostics to our patients."

And for those like the Burkholder family — a family who historically farmed the land upon which the hospital was built and have served as committed and loyal donors to the MSH Foundation since 1983 — observing the hospital's commitment to community-based healthcare in action has been an event both close to home, and close to their hearts.

"Our level of care is where we want it to be," said Sandi of her mother's current treatment plan. "Everything that we need is at MSH and that's really important to our family."

Sandi adds that while there are specialists in the Greater Toronto Area who are particularly savvy in the realm of her mother's condition, it has been made clear where Doreen would like to continue receiving care today and in the future.

"My parents are adamant that Markham Stouffville Hospital is the place for them," she said. "That's our hospital."

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