



SOUTHLAKE
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

**STRONACH REGIONAL
CANCER CENTRE**



Here is where
CANCER MEETS ITS MATCH.

Creating the cancer care you deserve.

[SOUTHLAKE.CA/HERE](https://southlake.ca/here)

On the cover: Survivor Sheila Verzin celebrates her recovery with her Radiation Oncologist, Dr. Tatiana Conrad.



I wasn't worried about a thing. Just walking in the doors, I felt like I was in the best hands possible.

Sheila Verzin,
Cancer survivor



It's my privilege to work at Southlake. It brings me the greatest joy to work with people not only so talented, but so dedicated to each other. Here, we build relationships, we preserve dignity, and we make sure patients are active participants in their treatment.

Dr. Tatiana Conrad,
Radiation Oncologist

**One in two
Canadians will
be diagnosed
with cancer.**

**They're our spouses,
children, parents,
friends and neighbours.**

They're us.

For some, the diagnosis will finally provide an explanation for a pain that just wouldn't subside. For others, it will be the result of a routine mammogram or colonoscopy they've had so many times before.

For all, it will utterly upend their lives.

One diagnosis makes our world smaller.

When we hear the words “you have cancer,” life is never the same. Everything out there — jobs, errands, commitments, and the daily stress of our lives — is suddenly less important. When life is turned upside down, what matters most is right **here**.

Scheduling appointment after appointment. Balancing family responsibilities with their own care. Finding support from loved ones without adding burden. Every scan, every consultation, every hour sitting in a chemotherapy chair as debilitating life-saving medication pushes their body to the limit — it adds to the mountain of difficulty, worry and stress. We cannot allow our loved ones to face this mountain alone and far from home. We will not.

The Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake is dedicated to making here the absolute best place to diagnose, treat, and survive cancer. Our mission is to provide a space here to receive leading edge care close to home and the critical support systems people living with cancer must rely on.



Here is where cancer meets its match.

For more than a decade, Southlake and its Stronach Regional Cancer Centre has redefined what a regional hospital is truly capable of. Combining the expertise and care options of an academic hospital system with deep community connections, we balance leading edge treatment with patient-centred care.

Southlake delivers exceptional-quality programs and services for patients living in York Region, North York and South Simcoe County, including cancer screening, diagnostic testing, radiation, chemotherapy and supportive care. Our staff are always by our patients’ side through every step of their journey. Through that journey, patients experience a level of excellence that matches the world’s leading institutions with a level of compassion they take pride in.

We are proud of what we have achieved with our community. Guided by innovative research, our oncology experts work in a state-of-the-art treatment facility, co-leading cancer programs with partners such as Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and SickKids. Our clinicians share insights and training with the very best programs, not only in Canada but around the world, to ensure patients benefit from the most advanced cancer care. This collaboration has led to Stronach Regional Cancer Centre’s recognition as a national leader — recognition made possible by the dedication of our staff and the incredible support of caring donors like you.

Stronach Regional Cancer Centre has served our communities with distinction. But those communities are expanding, our neighbours are aging, and the demands on Stronach are growing.



Here is where cancer meets its match.



The care that happens at Stronach is nothing short of extraordinary. I’m so proud of what our team has achieved over the last 10 years. As a former oncology nurse, I know it takes an entire community to make this work possible, and the recognition our Cancer Centre has received shows there’s really something remarkable here.

**Arden Krystal, President and CEO,
Southlake Regional Health Centre**



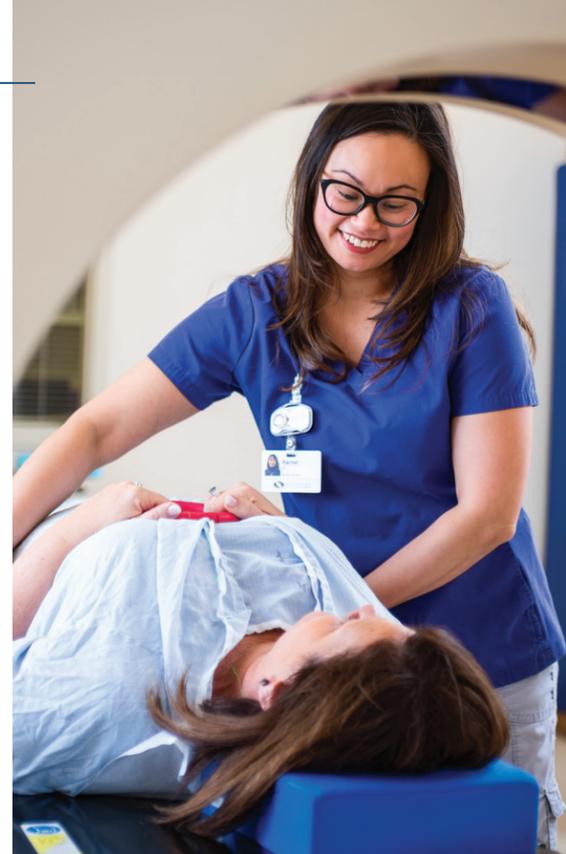
Our goal is \$20 million.

Your support will provide:

Leading edge technology

Greater options for diagnoses and treatment

Urgently needed space to serve our growing community



Here is where cancer meets its match.

Creating the cancer care you deserve.

This Campaign will bring the latest technology to the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre to ensure our talented clinicians can deliver the best care — and the best chance for our patients to survive their cancer — right here. With the investment of our community we can increase our capacity to help more people and improve the patient journey and experience.

Together, we will:

Bring the first ever PET-CT scanner to our region to expedite diagnosis and treatment.

Deliver more radiation therapy with new technology and new linear accelerators.

Expand chemotherapy treatment to improve wait times.

Provide outpatient care for acute leukemia patients so they don't need to travel for care.

Replace an aging MRI machine that is often down for repairs.



I could barely sit upright on the car rides home. I don't know what I'd do if my chemo was more than 15 minutes away.

Jamie Pimek,
Two-time cancer survivor



10 Years *on the front line.*

Since opening its doors, the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre has delivered remarkable, life-saving cancer care to countless families.

621,578 Outpatient visits

272,044 Radiation fractions

117,168 Chemotherapy & supportive treatment visits

Statistics above represent 10-year period from April 1, 2010 to March 17, 2021.

Here, the need is greater than ever.

Simply put, our communities are growing faster than our capacity. And as more families come to live in our region, our population is also rapidly aging. With age comes increased risk of cancer.

We see a tomorrow where the demand for leading edge cancer care is greater than ever before. We are determined that future will not be one of compromise. Facing this challenge requires not only expanding our capacity to deliver care, but introducing advanced technology to transform care. In the end, our goal is to ensure that our loved ones can find the care they deserve close to home.

Due to COVID-19, many people delayed regular screening or medical attention. When they finally arrive at Southlake, their cancer is often more advanced and complex. We are concerned that this ripple effect will compound an already overwhelming demand.

And as advances in cancer care continue, people are living with what were once terminal illnesses for far longer, sometimes receiving second diagnoses years after their first. While this progress is encouraging, it also adds complexity and even greater demand.



What we have seen is just the tip of the iceberg.

Dr. Sara Temple,
Chief of Surgery, Surgical Oncologist

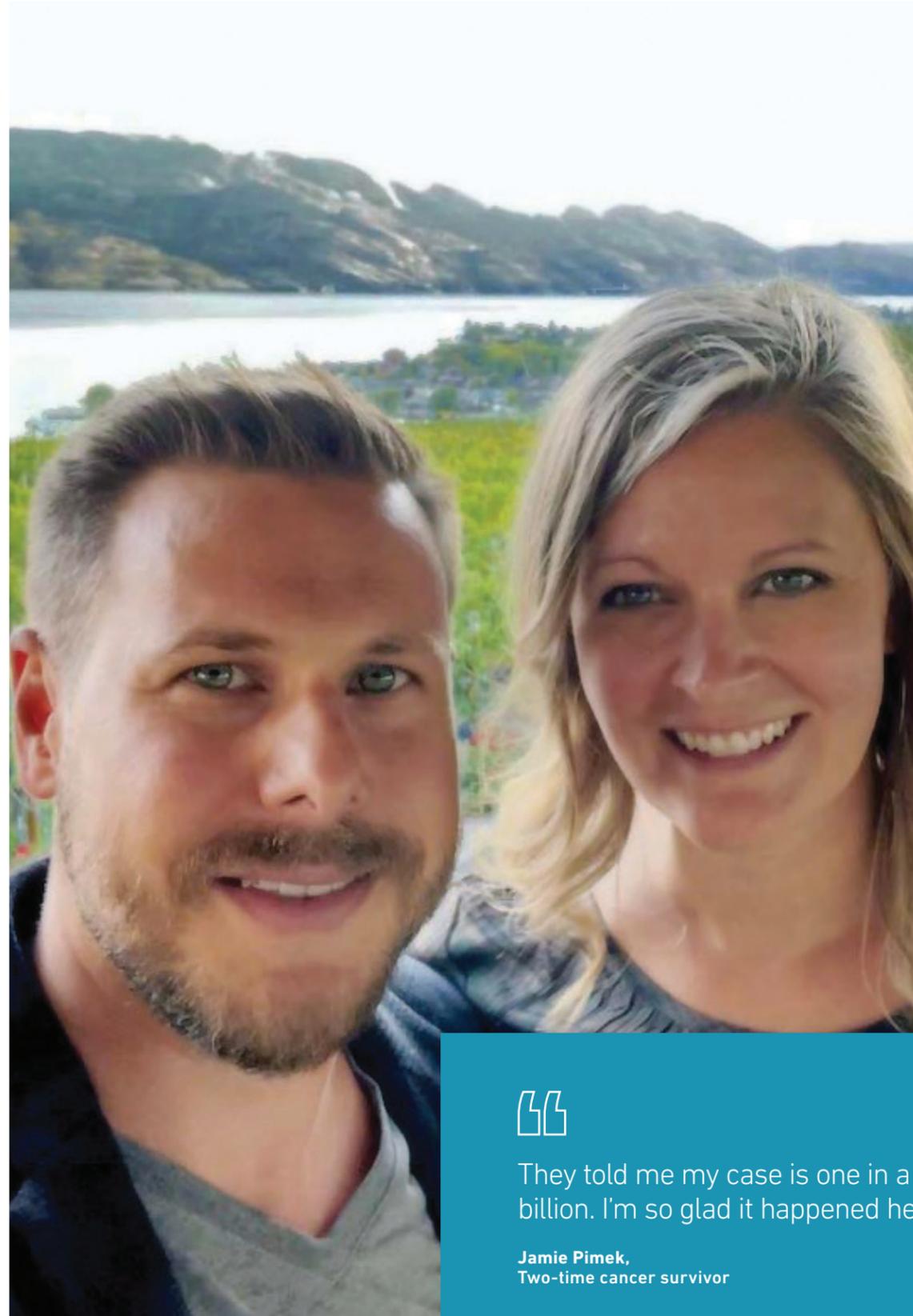
Between 2001 and 2016 Southlake's catchment area grew by over 30%, almost two-and-half times more than the province as a whole.

The communities we serve are among the fastest growing and fastest aging in Ontario.

In 2019-2020 alone, Southlake had the highest medical and surgical occupancy among 21 large hospitals in Ontario.



Stronach Regional Cancer Centre's Radiation Treatment Unit provides leading edge care to hundreds each year.



They told me my case is one in a billion. I'm so glad it happened here.

Jamie Pimek,
Two-time cancer survivor

A Patient's Story: *Jamie Pimek*

In 2013, Jamie Pimek was worried he had an ulcer. The Newmarket business leader was 31, healthy and active, so he attributed the pain in his stomach to work stress. But that pain wouldn't go away. It wasn't until his family doctor sent him to Southlake for a colonoscopy that he began to think the unthinkable. "I knew something was wrong. I didn't want to wait – I said, Doc you got to tell me right now." It was stage three colon cancer.

He remembers that first half-hour after the diagnosis clearly. "Initially, I was in total shock and fear. But then my attitude changed. I said to myself, I got this. I was determined to fight."

Jamie was quickly scheduled for surgery. His surgeon, Dr. Ian Soutter, knew they had to act fast. After a successful procedure, Jamie began 24 weeks of grueling chemotherapy. "The first week was awful. Then it got so much worse. Within two weeks I had lost 20 pounds. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy."

For Jamie, the fact it was so close to home was its only silver lining. "I could barely sit upright in the car rides home. I don't know what I'd do if my chemo was more than 15 minutes away." A two-hour trip to Toronto would have felt impossible, but it's the reality for those who need diagnostics or treatments currently unavailable at Southlake.

Thankfully, the chemotherapy worked. Next came five long years of regular check-ups and testing. "As the time between tests slowed down, doubts

began to creep in. Every anniversary brought extreme anxiety." Over the first two years, Jamie's oncologists changed. "But I never felt like I was being handed off – each cared so much about my recovery." At the five-year mark, he was declared cancer-free.

Then the unthinkable happened again. One year after being declared cancer-free, a routine colonoscopy revealed a large polyp. It wasn't that Jamie's old cancer had returned — this was an entirely new. His doctors were shocked. The same kind of cancer in nearly the same space, but unrelated to the first diagnosis, was beyond rare. His Southlake team reassembled.

Seven years after his first surgery, Jamie was back on the operating table. This time his surgeon was Dr. Sara Temple. Jamie felt comforted by the level of focus and attention from his doctors: "I remember Dr. Temple telling me 'You have a dream team here today.' It definitely felt like it."

Operating in the same area as a previous procedure can be incredibly complex. His surgeons had to navigate scar tissue in an already reduced colon — the risk that Jamie would need an ostomy bag for the rest of his life was very real. It was the first question he asked when he woke up. But the answer was miraculous. Thanks to his incredible surgical team and the advanced approaches taken by Dr. Temple, he would be able to make a full recovery without an ostomy bag or chemotherapy.

Jamie's case represents the level of personalized care every patient receives at Southlake. Despite almost overwhelming complexity, he experienced a standard of care often only available in major city centres. It's this foundation on which we can build the future of Stronach Regional Cancer Centre with your help.

Here, the right people *come together.*



If you have cancer, this is this place to be. We have such incredible talent here — individuals at the very forefront of their disciplines. Our doctors, nurses and radiation therapists represent the very best. Now we need to ensure they have the technology worthy of their skills.

Dr. Peter Anglin,
Oncologist and Physician Lead for
the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre



Here, patients are never just a number. Stronach is remarkable because we can achieve the standards of a major academic hospital without sacrificing the patient-centred care that comes from being a part of such a close community.

Dr. Sara Temple,
Chief of Surgery, Surgical Oncologist

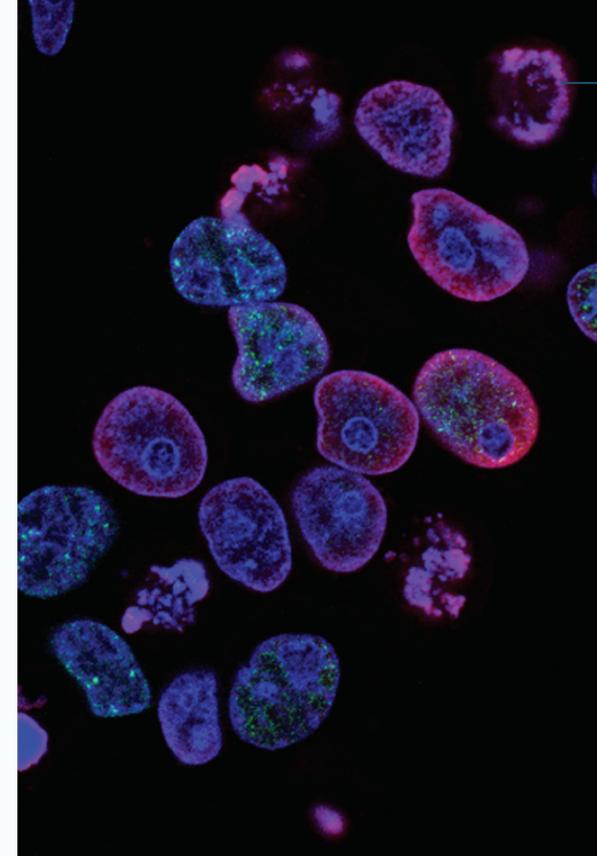


The right people make a world of difference for patients like Jamie. People like Dr. Sara Temple, who led Jamie's "dream team." As the Chief of Surgery at Southlake, she works closely with incredibly talented clinicians across disciplines to deliver comprehensive cancer care.

People like Radiation Oncologist Dr. Woodrow Wells, who helped found Stronach over a decade ago, and Oncology Nurse Barbara Kok, who has supported hundreds of people navigating and enduring the challenges of chemotherapy. To her, it can be the little moments with patients

that matter most: "We build such close relationships with the people we see every week. It can mean so much to them, having someone to there to talk to, to listen and share their experience. But as our capacity is stretched thin, we lose those moments talking about our families and lives. We just can't let that happen." They and dozens of others, from medical physics and service engineers who maintain state-of-the-art equipment to managers who keep it all running smoothly, are responsible for the extraordinary patient outcomes made possible here. They're the ones putting your investment to work every day.





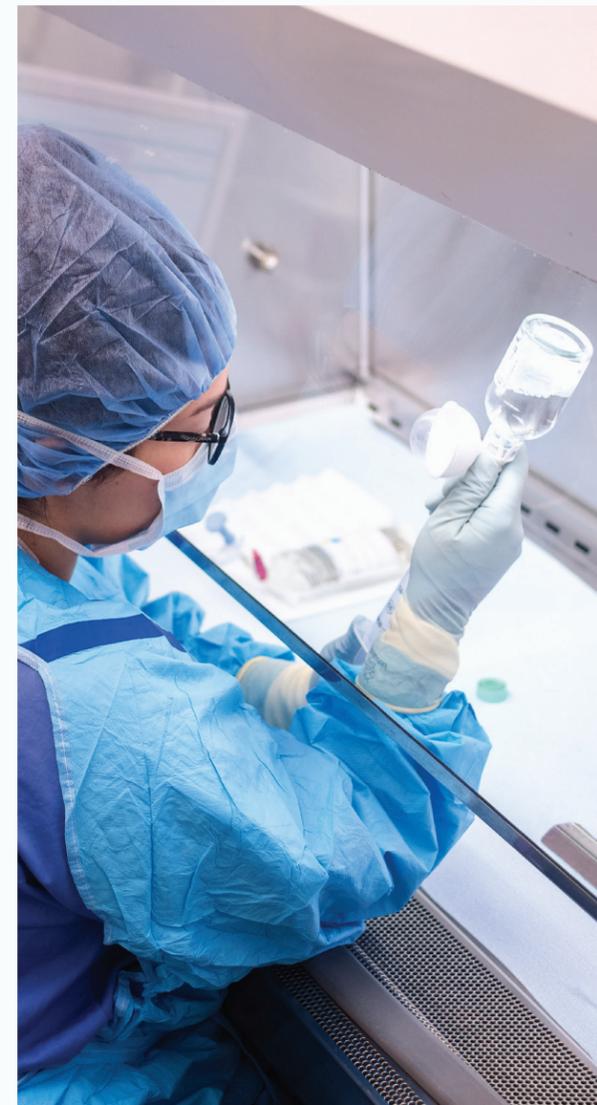
Here, new technology means new *hope*.

The investment of donors like you gives Dr. Anglin, Dr. Temple, Dr. Wells and their colleagues at Southlake the equipment they need to deliver leading edge care to our community. In the fight against cancer, we cannot face tomorrow's challenges using yesterday's methods. Much has changed since the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre opened its doors over a decade ago. The advancements in diagnostic precision, targeted radiation therapy, and in tailored treatments must be acquired and used here, now.

Ultimately, these investments aren't made for our teams but for our patients. **Every vital piece of equipment is acquired, maintained and put to work for patients like Jamie and the thousands who come to Southlake for treatment each year. Your donation makes acquiring this technology possible.**



Finding, staging and treating cancer relies on putting advanced tools and equipment in the hands of skilled professionals.





To have a PET-CT at Southlake — that's a dream.

Dr. Elaine Boutell,
Division Lead Medical Oncology



Priority: PET-CT Scanner

We know distance matters. But for a patient's recovery, it's not only the kilometres travelled to treatment that have an impact: it's the millimetres between tumour and healthy tissue. That's why clear insight and accuracy are so crucial. Positron Emission Tomography and Computed Tomography (PET-CT) scans give patients in-depth insight into not only where their cancer is located, but its stage and other variables critical to tailoring a personal treatment plan. This equipment represents the very latest in cancer diagnostics, and is increasingly becoming the standard of care. It shows both form and function, mapping out a detailed image of the cancer with unique markers that other diagnostic tools may miss.

Today we are the only Regional Cancer Program in Ontario without a PET-CT. Southlake patients often need to travel significant distances to other hospitals and private clinics where they can experience wait times of over two weeks. But the introduction of a PET-CT to our hospital will ensure patients can access this critical precision here — with their own clinical team — in their own community. The equipment will also allow physicians to conduct scans more frequently, not only to diagnose and stage, but also monitor outcomes and adjust treatment accordingly. Today, many patients are only willing to make the journey to a distant hospital when scans are absolutely necessary. For others, the distance, stress and challenges of transportation and assistance make it impossible.

Priority: Linear Accelerators

Many patients require radiation therapy to treat their cancer. Personalized radiation treatment plans are developed to target tumours with incredible accuracy, and are often key to avoiding invasive surgery or grueling chemotherapy. Not only can they attack cancer cells while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue, but these therapies can also reduce ongoing symptoms. A tumour pressing against an optical nerve can be shrunk, for example, preventing blindness. And for patients with tumours on the spine, radiation can mean the difference between paralysis and mobility. In palliative cases, radiation therapy is critical to improving — and prolonging — quality of life.

These therapies are delivered through Linear Accelerators, or "LINACs," intricate equipment that require specialized spaces, maintenance, and entire teams to ensure their calibration and safe operation. When the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre was first built, three LINACs were installed, and now those original three LINACs are reaching the end of their lifecycle. As they age, they require more frequent downtime for maintenance, which adds strain to the system and can create wait times for patients. They must now be replaced without creating further disruption.

While a fourth LINAC was introduced in recent years, the massive growth of our communities now demands a fifth. We're relying on the support from dedicated donors like you to give James and his team of radiation therapists the leading edge technology they need.



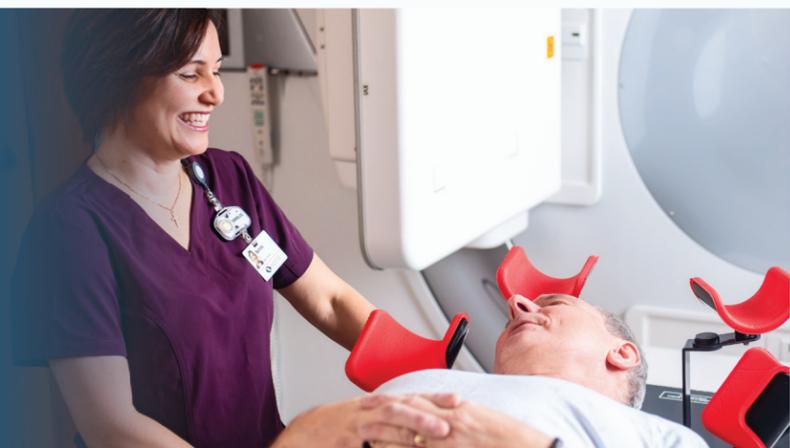
Older equipment means more downtime. Nobody wants patients to miss treatment, so our teams are going above and beyond to treat our patients on the remaining treatment units in operation. It isn't sustainable though. We need to replace our aging machines so our patients can continue to find leading edge care close to home.

James Loudon,
Manager, Radiation Therapy



1,686

scans will be provided by the PET-CT each year



400

additional patients will be treated by a fifth LINAC each year



Priority: MRI

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of a patient's body. The scans are used to investigate and diagnose conditions such as cancerous tumours that affect the brain, soft tissues, organs, bones and joints.

Southlake's current 1.5 Tesla MRI Machine has been the workhorse of the Hospital's MRI Department for over 16 years, giving many thousands of patients timely diagnoses even as the demand for scans increases. But now it's reaching the end of its life and replacement parts are difficult to obtain. Maintenance has grown increasingly expensive — and more importantly, time-consuming. When it's down for repairs, the strain is felt across the hospital, but most acutely in our Regional Cancer Program. **The time has come to bring in the next generation.**

Advances in MRI technology mean that its replacement will provide better, more accurate images that give staff a clear view of tumours and other signs of cancer. This can mean a world of difference at a critical moment in a patient's cancer journey, allowing for faster, more personalized treatments tailored to their needs. With your support, we can introduce the very latest MRI technology to serve our communities for years to come.



Few technologies are more critical to a hospital than an MRI machine. Keeping them ready, working and available to our teams is a top priority to ensure we never have to make patients wait or send them elsewhere for diagnosis. It's an area where donors can have a massive impact. Not just at Stronach, but across Southlake.

Dr. Lisa Thain,
Clinical Director of MRI



8,000

scans provided by the new MRI each year





870 MORE PATIENTS TREATED AND 6,868 MORE TREATMENT VISITS provided with the expansion of the Systemic Therapy Program for chemotherapy treatment.

Patients spend dozens of hours in ergonomic chemotherapy chairs during their treatment.

With your support, we can bring the number of chairs and their ancillary equipment to 42, meeting the demand head-on. These new chairs will be ergonomically designed for greater comfort and support. As patients' bodies experience the effects of the treatment — weakness, dizziness and nausea — every bit of comfort can make a massive difference.

Receiving, storing, and preparation of chemotherapy medications demands extreme care. Under-dosed, and they can be ineffective. Over-dosed, and they can be dangerous. That danger is not only to the patient receiving them, but to the people caring for them. Storing and tracking the medication demands extreme care to ensure it's ready — and safe — for the dozens receiving therapy each day. Because of this, Southlake must dramatically expand our current Cancer Centre Pharmacy. This isn't just an upgrade, it's a necessity.



Priority: Chemotherapy Suite

It is one of the most challenging experiences a patient can face, but also one of the most critical to recovery for many cancers. For day after day, week after week, powerful medication tailored to their unique needs is administered through a complex system that requires the utmost precision in preparation, delivery and monitoring.

Today, we have 26 chemotherapy chairs. But

that isn't enough. Our communities have grown so fast that we can no longer meet demand for chemotherapy, which leads to unacceptable wait times. When you are diagnosed with cancer, every day matters. Once your treatment starts, you shouldn't then face a wait list, unable to adequately plan ahead until sometimes only a day before treatment can be scheduled. This amplifies the anxiety of an incredibly uncertain time, which is often already filled with other tests, appointments and complexity.



Our pharmacists go above and beyond to ensure care isn't delayed or disrupted. Despite the limited and aging space, they've been able to keep treatment going. But it isn't enough. I can see the risk of falling behind every day. We can't just rely on the teams to make the best of it. We need to grow, and grow fast.

Jennifer Daley-Morris,
Manager, Oncology Pharmacy & Systemic Therapy Suite





In memory of *Diane Van Keulen*

For years, teacher Diane Van Keulen felt a growing pain in her ribs and shoulders. It would occasionally subside, but it never truly went away. In 2019, the pain grew so severe that her daughter and husband both insisted that she go to the Emergency Department at Southlake. There she was told the unthinkable: it was lung cancer. Stage four. The doctors told her to expect six to eight months remaining.

Diane had never been a smoker. She wasn't high-risk. Without the clear warning signs or indicators that doctors should be considering cancer, tumours were growing in her lungs and bones for two years. Now it was too late for surgery. But the team she found at Southlake wasn't going to give up. Diane remembered that day – and the people she met. “They were wonderful. The nurses and staff, they were just incredible.”

Oncologists Dr. Zishan Allibhai and Dr. Shaqil Kassam moved quickly to begin treatment: first immunotherapy, then chemotherapy. But neither was working, and Diane became weaker, sicker and in ever-greater pain. She credited managing that pain and the overwhelming stress that came with it to palliative care physician Dr. Katie Mulhern and her supportive team of nurses. When the pandemic hit and her family was unable to accompany her to appointments, that team became even more important. So

did Southlake's proximity: “If I had gone to any other hospital, it would have devastated me,” Diane recalled. “I couldn't do a two-hour trip.”

As her treatment progressed, the pain grew. Dr. Kassam knew they would need to move fast and think outside the box. Diane remembered a breakthrough. “He called me on Sunday night – on his vacation – and said ‘Clearly, the chemotherapy isn't working. So I'm going to put you on this new drug.’”

She seized the opportunity. And within days of starting the new regimen, she felt different. “By the end of that week, I could eat anything. I was enjoying the hospital food!” Her unique type of lung cancer was responding well to the innovative treatment, despite its advanced stage.

The new treatment gave Diane a critical gift. Time. By the spring of 2021, the six-to-eight-month prognosis had become two years. Diane called it her ‘cancer-versary.’ Two years of living life the way she wanted, of sharing time with her family and advocating for cancer patients across Ontario. In September of 2021, she entered palliative care. Two days later, Diane Van Keulen passed. By her side was her family and the doctors who had been with her from the beginning.

Diane's daughter Deidre reflects on the difference her mother's cancer team made. “They went above and beyond. They never stopped thinking about her, trying new things. We were lucky to have a team like that. But I think about what could be possible if they had the technology they needed to catch my mom's variant right away. I feel like they could really reach their full potential.”

Talent is only half the equation. It can't be tethered by a lack of access to the latest tools and technology. **With your help, it won't be.**

Here is where we hope, heal and *save*.

Here is the line drawn in the sand. The moment when a community reminds neighbours with cancer that our Hospital, our Cancer Centre and all of us are by their side. That we will not allow them to face this challenge alone. And we will not force them to travel when they are exhausted by illness — or ask their families to take on the burden and expense. This is for the thousands whose brave fight has ended, for the thousands whose fight still rages, and the thousands whose fight is yet to come.

We face this challenge with a foundation of funding from the government. It is vital, and we are grateful for it — but it only gets us halfway to our goal. The rest is up to us. To a community of passionate supporters who have seen the terrible cost that cancer exacts and who came together a decade ago to build an extraordinary cancer centre. To neighbours and family who believe their loved ones deserve the very best treatment. To you.

Hope isn't simply something we tell ourselves to have. It comes from the certainty of having the tools and team to truly make a difference. Healing doesn't simply happen at the hands of extraordinary people. They need the capacity and the equipment to heal.

Here is where we make hope and healing a reality. But the reality is also that cancer will always be here. In our neighbourhoods, in our homes, changing the lives of the people we love. We know that while cancer is close to home, so is caring and generous community committed to standing together. Now that community — your community — is needed more than ever before.

At the end of the day, Southlake doesn't need a PET-CT. Patients like Jamie do. It doesn't need new Linear Accelerators. Patients like Sheila do. Our hospital doesn't need new pharmacies or expanded chemotherapy, but patients like Diane did. Patients can't simply go out and acquire one. We can.

We are not asking you to invest in research that will have an impact many years from now. The need is now. We are calling on you to rally together for our parents, our spouses, our siblings, our children. This is for them.

Here is where cancer meets its match. Will you join us?

To invest in Southlake's Regional Cancer Program, please contact:

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