



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

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Heart Institute opens first cardiac MRI in Ottawa-Gatineau

OTTAWA, February 17, 2015 – The University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) inaugurated today its much awaited Magnetic Resonance Imaging system (MRI), the first in the Ottawa-Gatineau region to be exclusively dedicated to cardiac patients. The acquisition of the new equipment was made possible thanks to the remarkable generosity of donors who have so far contributed \$3.2 million, out of the \$4 million fundraising objective.

The use of a cardiac MRI is now recognized as an essential tool for the diagnosis of cardiovascular disease. Even though recommended as the standard of care for many cardiac conditions, high demand in other centres for MRI tests meant limited timely access for cardiac patients of the Champlain LHIN.

For the last years, physicians and health professionals at the Heart Institute had to re-direct referrals to other imaging modalities such as the cardiac computed tomography (CT) and ultrasound. With the new dedicated MRI cardiac program, wait times for cardiac tests are now approximately 2-3 weeks, allowing for timely access to this essential service for cardiac patients across the Champlain LHIN.

"Our new MRI was the missing piece to a world-class cardiac imaging facility," said Dr. Rob Beanlands, Chief of the Division of Cardiology at the Heart Institute. "Managed by a team of resourceful and experienced experts, this new state-of-the-art technology will provide the necessary diagnostic tools needed to meet the challenges in cardiovascular care," added Dr. Alexander Dick, the co-director of the new Cardiac MRI program. "This will help enable us to do "the right test at the right time for the right patient," concluded Dr. Benjamin Chow, the Director of Cardiac Imaging.

The MRI uses a strong magnetic field, radio frequency pulses, and computer processing to create detailed images of internal body structures. Its images allow physicians to examine the function of the heart, valves, major vessels, and surrounding structures, to measure a patient's progress during recovery, and to determine the extent of damage caused by a heart attack or other heart illnesses.

"Once again, the Heart Institute is at the forefront of cardiovascular care and innovations," said Dr. Thierry Mesana, President and CEO of the Heart Institute. "Our cardiac imaging capacities not only provide our region with the most effective ways to rapidly treat our patients, thanks to an easier access to the best technology, but it also confirms our leadership as a national authority in cardiac imaging."

Additionally to providing patients with state-of-the art clinical care, the Heart Institute has welcomed experienced researchers to strengthen its leadership. Cardiac imaging research extends to numerous clinical studies and scientific investigations within the Institute's facilities and laboratories. Imaging technologies and laboratory research offer scientists a unique set of tools for cardiac study and the ability to translate results into therapies for improved patient care.

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