

At your service

**Kate Gilderdale
Correspondent**

Perhaps the most striking first impression of Markham-Stouffville Hospital is its lack of institutional character. With its light, spacious atmosphere and soft, muted decor, it's reminiscent of a hotel rather than a hospital.

The fact that this impression permeates the central philosophy of everyone involved makes it a very special and innovative health care facility; one in which employees and the community at large can take tremendous pride. Markham-Stouffville Hospital will combine true patient-centred care and staff involvement with the finest state-of-the-art technology available.

Chief of staff Dr. James MacLean has overall responsibility for the hospital's specific care areas. With a focus on hearing disorders and ear surgery at the hospital, the department of surgery will be headed up by Dr. Jerry Halik, an ear, nose and throat specialist from St. Michael's Hospital.



Dr. Jim MacLean is Chief of Staff

Dr. Halik was joined by another ear, nose and throat surgeon, Dr. Phil Wade, who was on staff at the Toronto Hospital. In addition two general surgeons, two ophthalmologists, two orthopedic surgeons and a urologist will be on staff. "One plastic surgeon, Laura Tate, will perform a full range of surgery, including cosmetic," advises Dr. MacLean.

The department of medicine will cover the bulk of patient care at the hospital, he states, offering a broad range of services. The department will include six internists, and will be headed up by Dr. Bruce Brooks, an endocrinologist from York Central Hospital. "There's no special focus in the department," notes Dr. MacLean, "we cover the gamut in terms of internal medical problems."

With a strong emphasis on maternity care, the obstetric and gynecology department, headed by Dr. Robert Gall from Women's College Hospital, will be an important focus of the hospital. "We will have five obstetricians/gynecologists," says Dr. MacLean. "We want to focus on practising family centred maternity care. We'll have liberal visiting hours and a liberal number of visitors, including grandparents and children."

The Birth Place consists of five very spacious birthing rooms, where mothers stay during the process of labor and delivery. "The focus will be on natural childbirth, getting away from the high tech approach, although it's there if needed. There is also a Caesarian room within the unit for quick intervention. Family members are welcome to attend the birth."

The Department of Psychiatry will boast the largest psychiatric unit in York Region, with 36 beds. Department Chief Dr. Ralph Pohlman joins Markham-Stouffville from Sunnybrook Hospital, initially the department will consist of four staff members, with an increase to six within the first year. The department will incorporate a psychiatric day treatment area as well as an active out patient clinic.

"We're also involved in the education of paramedics in York Region," says Dr. MacLean. "All department staff has specialty training in emergency medicine, which is very good for a community hospital..". The Chief of Emergency medicine is Dr. David Austin, from Toronto General Hospital.

Ed Takacs, Vice President Diagnostic and Support Services, believes state of the art technology, plus the hospital's patient-centred philosophy, places Markham-Stouffville at the forefront of community hospitals. "We're very proud to have a CT scanner in our diagnostic imaging department; that's unusual for a medium-sized community hospital. We're also using a 600 speed film screen in the department, which reduces the amount of radiation exposure, and that's important for safety and quality of care."

In terms of results' reporting, he says, everything is immediate. "Whenever the laboratory department completes a report, it can be accessed by staff within minutes. Such information can be obtained only through the use of a password, ensuring that no one other than qualified personnel will have access to test results."

The laboratory also features state of the art equipment, including an automatic analyzer, which does about 80% of all testing. Because the equipment is tied into the computer system, the results are fed in directly, avoiding the need for manual input.

More than four hundred employees will be on staff when the 245 bed hospital opens in March, with an eventual complement of 700 full and part time members anticipated. As well, over 500 volunteers have already been recruited.

Like his colleagues, Mr. Takacs is aware of the importance of a happy and involved staff. "We're doing as much as we can for our employees. The type of person we've recruited reflects our goals for the hospital," he notes. "We stress open communications and a decentralized form of management, giving mid-management and nurse managers responsibility for their own areas."

The Hospital regards its employees as one of its biggest resources, states V.P. Finance Michael Young. "The way the patient sees the employee is the way they view the hospital as a whole. We're trying to look at the individual and provide them with the most flexible packages to provide the benefits they need." Lynn Hoath, Vice President Patient Care Services agrees.

The enthusiasm, dedication and effort which has been expended on Markham-Stouffville Hospital will go a long way to ensure that the goals Marilyn Bruner, President, and her colleagues are aiming for will be realized. "Although no one ever wants to be in hospital," she concludes, "we hope that for the community and our staff, this hospital will be a wonderful place to be."



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