

# Comfort, space key in new cancer centre

BY AMANDA PERSICO  
apersico@yrmg.com

The first thing you will notice about the cancer centre at Markham Stouffville Hospital is the open space and natural light.

The renovated space is equipped with large windows that overlook a garden, a lobby with a fireplace, TVs at each chemotherapy station and specially created calming artwork adorning the walls.

"It looks absolutely stunning," said hospital oncologist Dr. Henry Solow.

"When I first saw the new space, my eyes were wide open and I had to pick my jaw up off the floor. We plan to match our care with how this new place looks."

Earlier this week, the hospital hosted a special sneak peak of the new facility for media.

The centre is set to open and be fully functional for patients next week.

Patient care is the focal point of the new cancer centre, built in the former emergency department.

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Oncologist

"You don't recruit patients," hospital president and CEO Janet Breed said. "Patients choose you. Patients choose a hospital because there are good care givers, it is easier to access and once you are there you feel hopeful. Believe in us because we believe in you."

The old cancer centre could house about six or seven chemotherapy chairs in one room about two feet apart, Dr. Solow said.

"It was such a small space, too close a space," he said.

"Add a family member and it could get a little crowded a little soon. This is 10 times the size."

The new centre houses nine chemotherapy chairs now and can accommodate up to about 14.

The specialized heated chairs are also new - funded by the community through the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation

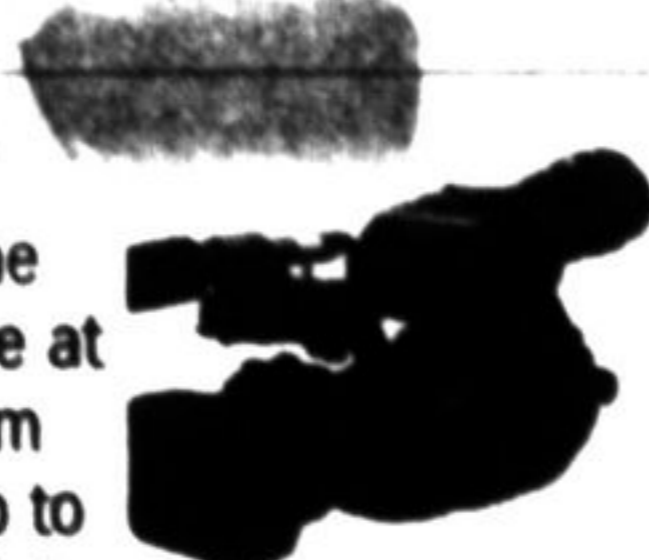


STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Clinic manager Pauline Brillinger of Stouffville peers through a window (with a sliding shutter) at one of the new chemotherapy chairs in Markham Stouffville Hospital's new cancer centre this week. It's set to open next week.

## On the web

Check out a video by Steve Somerville on the new cancer care centre at the expanded Markham Stouffville Hospital. Go to [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com) and click on videos.



and costing about \$4,200 each.

"It is all about comfort of the patient," Dr. Solow said. "And these chemo chairs are

the Rolls-Royce of chairs. This is a first class seat."

Each chemo station is equipped with a TV and DVD and BluRay player and each space can be divided with a collapsible barrier for added privacy.

"Before, you would have one TV for five or six patients," said breast health and oncology clinical manger Pauline Brillinger.

"It's a long day for patients. They are so afraid and so anxious, this is something small that helps put the time in."

The new centre, built as part of the hospital's \$400 million expansion project, includes a negative pressure isolation room, several exam rooms, an in-house pharmacy and

technician to mix chemo medication on site, a patient-family consult room and a pneumatic or vacuum tube system used to transport medication from the hospital's main pharmacy as well as send blood samples to the laboratory for testing.

The centre is also equipped with computerized physician order software, where chemo dosage is automatically calculated based on change in weight and blood work, leaving less room for error, Ms Brillinger said.

Currently, the hospital treats about 400 cancer patients a year with more than 2,700 visits and expects to grow to about 800 patients in the next few years.

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