



**Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Foundation**

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Northern
Cancer Fund



Northern
Cardiac Fund



Health Sciences
Discovery Fund

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\$300,000 from Northern Cancer Fund for colonoscopy equipment in Northwestern Ontario

Thunder Bay – The new Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation announced its first major grant today to kick off Cancer Awareness Month. The Health Sciences Foundation's Northern Cancer Fund granted \$300,000 for colonoscopy equipment to help increase access to colorectal cancer screening across Northwestern Ontario.

The Northern Cancer Fund continues the work of the Northern Cancer Research Foundation. "We remain committed to the fight against cancer in Northwestern Ontario," says Ken Bittle, Chair of the Board, Health Sciences Foundation. "Applying donor contributions to cancer screening equipment enhances early detection of colorectal cancer for people throughout our region. Today's announcement demonstrates that donor generosity produces life-saving results right here in Northwestern Ontario."

"As part of a new provincial screening program, Cancer Care Ontario provided funding for 1,500 more colonoscopies in Northwestern Ontario. This significant grant from the Northern Cancer Fund allows us to meet Ontario's new service standards by purchasing colonoscopy scopes and equipment for Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, Dryden, Kenora and Marathon," said Michael Power, Vice President, Regional Cancer Services and Diagnostics, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

The Ontario Government recently rolled out ColonCancerCheck, a provincial colorectal cancer screening program. Under the new program, men and women 50 years of age or older without a family history of colorectal cancer are considered average risk, and will be screened using a Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT). A FOBT is a take-home kit people can complete and mail to a central lab. If the FOBT comes back positive for blood in the stool, the person will be referred for a colonoscopy. People considered at increased risk, including those with a first-degree family history of the disease (parent, child, or sibling who has had colorectal cancer), will be referred directly for a colonoscopy.

"The goal of ColonCancerCheck is to raise screening participation rates for colorectal cancer, which is 90 per cent curable if found early. With more people participating in screening, there will be greater demand for colonoscopy. This grant will help ensure more residents of Northwestern Ontario have access to colorectal cancer screening," said Alison McMullen, Director of Preventive Oncology, Regional Cancer Care.

"This grant announcement is great news for surgeons performing colonoscopies in the region," said Dr. Gabriel Mapeso, General Surgeon and Colorectal Cancer Lead for Northwestern Ontario. "With more scopes, we can screen more people, simple as that."

The Northern Cancer Fund of the Health Sciences Foundation raises funds that are 100% dedicated to support excellence in cancer care in Northwestern Ontario.

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