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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oncology Nurses celebrate their unique roles in patient care

April 7, 2009 *Thunder Bay ON* - Today, oncology nurses at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) join others across Canada in celebrating the 6th Annual Canadian Oncology Nursing Day.

This year's theme, "Ignite the Passion," encourages oncology nurses to celebrate their diverse and critical roles in the cancer patient journey. Oncology nurses provide care to cancer patients and their families from initial diagnosis through active treatment, as well as palliative care. They also play an integral role in promoting cancer screening, education and early detection with the general public.

"I find oncology nursing to be very rewarding. We have the opportunity to really know our patients and their caregivers. Oncology nurses passionately teach, guide, share, comfort and laugh with our patients, through the good and the bad times. It is truly an honour to play an integral role throughout their cancer journey," says Karen Melenchuk, RN, Regional Cancer Care, TBRHSC.

Regional Cancer Care – Northwest has over 100 registered nurses practicing within the specialty of oncology at TBRHSC and at 13 sites across Northwestern Ontario, delivering care close to home.

"Oncology nurses in our regional cancer program develop close relationships with cancer patients and their families. Not only do they provide exceptional care for our patients, from diagnosis through to treatment and symptom management, but also offer words of guidance, hope and support," says Bev Gellert, Manager, 1A Oncology, TBRHSC.

Oncology nursing includes a strong academic component with continuing education, industry partnerships, and an evolving research program. Through the de Souza Institute, oncology nurses with Regional Cancer Care - Northwest have access to educational opportunities that will continue to enhance oncology nursing excellence.

Ken Bittle, chair of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation board of directors, notes that the exceptional care provided by oncology nurses at Regional Cancer Care often inspires patients and family members to give back. "Each donation to the Northern Cancer Fund is a tribute to the outstanding efforts of cancer care providers, including oncology nurses," he says.

April is National Cancer Awareness Month.

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Photo and interview opportunities are available after 12:30 pm today. For more information or to arrange a photo/interview, please contact:

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