

For immediate release

Mount Saint Joseph Hospital needs life-saving digital mammography **New technology detects almost 30 per cent more cancers in women with dense breasts**

Vancouver, Dec. 13, 2007 – Mount Saint Joseph Hospital is counting on the “Christmas spirit” of Lower Mainland donors to help it achieve its goal of purchasing a badly-needed digital mammography machine.

Digital mammography is especially effective in detecting cancer in women with high density breast tissue, including Asian women who comprise approximately 70 per cent of the diagnostic mammograms performed annually at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital.

According to Dr. Richard Lee, a radiologist at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, women with breasts that are 75 per cent dense have a 400-to-600 per cent greater risk of developing cancer than women with fatty breasts.

“Digital mammography detects up to 28 per cent more cancers than current technology in women with dense breasts, and in women who are younger than 50 or pre-menopausal,” said Dr. Lee. “Dense breasts hide up to one-third of invasive cancer. Digital mammography makes it easier to distinguish benign from malignant lesions, and results in a lower recall rate for biopsy.”

Digital mammography may have a substantial impact on early detection of breast cancer and other breast abnormalities in these cases because it allows the radiologist to carefully review images of the breast from various perspectives, including tomography or “slice imaging” to provide clearer images of cancer in early stages of development.

Digital mammography means faster service and less discomfort and radiation exposure for Asian and other women who undergo diagnostic mammograms at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital. This ultimately leads to more effective diagnosis and shorter wait times for the diagnostic procedure.

Every year, more than 7,500 screening mammograms and 5,000 diagnostic mammograms are conducted at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital. More surgeries resulting from breast cancer diagnoses are performed annually at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital than at any other BC hospital. Currently, digital mammography is only available in the Lower Mainland through the BC Cancer Agency.

The Tapestry Foundation for Health Care was established last spring as an umbrella fundraising organization to serve and support seven of eight Providence Health Care facilities including Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, St. Vincent’s Hospital Langara, St. Vincent’s Campus of Care, Brock Fahrni Pavilion, Marion Hospice and Youville Residence. The Foundation supports these sites by raising funds for medical equipment, programs, services and research in the field of elder care.

-30-

Contact: Michele Penz,
Calico Communications for Tapestry Foundation for Health Care
Tel: 778.888.2249 Email: calicocomm@telus.net