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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Surrey Memorial Hospital lung cancer patients can breathe easier thanks to a Canadian first: rapid diagnosis and treatment of lung masses**

Surrey, B.C. – A team of thoracic surgeons at Surrey Memorial Hospital (SMH) are diagnosing and treating lung cancer earlier, faster, with fewer tests and ultimately saving lives through a pilot program that is a first for Canada and possibly even North America.

The Rapid Autopilot Program (RAP) -- the brainchild of Dr. James Bond and his team -- was developed in response to clinical experience and a seminal report from the national medical malpractice agency, Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA), describing failures in systems leading to major delays in lung cancer treatment. The report stated that of almost 80 closed cases that were reviewed, half were found to have more than one clinical issue resulting in adverse outcomes for lung cancer patients.

With the advent of RAP, patients with lung masses at risk of lung cancer will be diagnosed and treated within 40 to 45 days – almost one quarter the time it usually takes (170 to 190 days). All patients presenting at SMH with abnormal chest x-rays, CT scans or any other issue identified by the radiologist as at risk for lung malignancy will enter into the care path.

“Rapid diagnosis is essential in the surgical treatment of lung cancer. Systemic barriers resulting in delayed diagnosis and treatment is a worldwide problem that is costing lives. By rapidly triaging patients into specialist care, the RAP is expected to produce better outcomes for early stage lung cancer patients. It will improve patient care, increase opportunities for less invasive surgeries and even a cure, and reduce redundant testing by applying and interpreting tests more thoughtfully,” said Dr. James Bond, SMH thoracic surgeon and RAP project lead.

Jacobus Both’s lung cancer was diagnosed and treated in the early stages thanks to the RAP study. Both, a 54-year-old power engineer, underwent a chest x-ray last September as part of an overall check-up at the Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre in Surrey. When the x-ray revealed an abnormality, he was immediately referred to the RAP team by a SMH Radiologist. Dr. Bond triaged Both’s chest x-ray by personally viewing the images and ordered a CT scan which was processed by the nurse

navigator. After the CT was completed, Both was seen in consult with Dr. Bond. A PET scan was then ordered which indicated a probable cancer.

An OR date was scheduled and, in November 2012, Both underwent a left upper lobectomy for a squamous cell carcinoma. Because the cancer was detected early, he required no chemotherapy or radiation. He is doing well and recently returned to work.

“By getting a fast diagnosis and treatment, I was able to avoid chemo and radiation and resume normal activities. Since the surgery, I have been skiing three times. Dr. Bond and his team at SMH were fantastic,” said Both.

Lung cancer continues to be the number one cause of cancer death in Canada in both men and women. Within Fraser Health, 21 new patients a week are diagnosed with lung cancer or an estimated 1,112 new lung cancer patients a year at various stages of disease.

To find out how you can make a donation to help fund SMH projects, visit [www.smhfoundation.com](http://www.smhfoundation.com).

Established in 1992, Surrey Memorial Hospital Foundation has raised more than \$60 million to purchase medical equipment, fund innovative programs, and support training and research.

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