

For immediate release

## **Mount Saint Joseph's success in senior vision care an eye-opener** **Fundraising underway for vitrectomy system and education programs**

**Vancouver, Sept. 18, 2013** – The toll of aging on the human eye is the focus of tonight's Tapestry Foundation for Health Care's Dialogue on Aging presentation, as well as a recently launched fundraising effort for new surgical equipment at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital (MSJ) that will significantly improve patient outcomes and recovery times.

Tapestry Foundation is seeking donations for a second vitrectomy unit for MSJ because the existing system is more than 11 years old and an additional unit is vital to meet growing demand. A vitrectomy unit enables eye surgeons to perform a variety of sight-saving surgeries, including correcting detached retinas, scar tissue damage and the effects of macular degenerative disease common to the elderly and people with diabetes or high blood pressure.

The newer vitrectomy units are more advanced than MSJ's existing system and will allow doctors to perform many more complex surgeries resulting in less discomfort and fewer post-operative complications, eliminating the requisite inpatient recovery time so that patients can return home the same day.

MSJ performs the highest number of cataract procedures in BC and Western Canada, 20 per cent of all retinal surgeries in the province, and has the largest corneal transplant service in the country. MSJ's continued success as a leader in senior vision care treatment is supported by the donations made to the Tapestry Foundation.

"MSJ has the clinical talent to be a leader in senior eye care. Tapestry Foundation is simply fundraising for the tools it needs to meet the increasing requirement for services from an aging population," said Ann Adams, CEO of Tapestry Foundation for Health Care.

Donations raised by Tapestry Foundation will also go toward educational presentations in light of the popularity of tonight's Dialogue on Aging presentation.

"The Dialogue on Aging presentations are very well attended and received by the public but we need funds to be able to do them. For example, we are considering eventually rerunning tonight's vision presentation to meet the apparent public need as demonstrated by the overwhelming registration volumes," added Adams.

The Dialogue on Aging presentation, *Vision as We Age: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words*, takes place tonight at 7 p.m. at VanDusen Botanical Garden, and will discuss ways to differentiate normal age-related changes from eye disease. While this session is now full, a video of the program will be uploaded to the Tapestry Foundation website within the next week. [www.tapestryfoundation.ca](http://www.tapestryfoundation.ca).

To find out how you can make a donation to the Tapestry Foundation for Health Care toward equipment and programs for senior vision care, call 604.877.8335 or visit [www.tapestryfoundation.ca](http://www.tapestryfoundation.ca).

### **12 Tips for Healthier Eyes and Better Vision**

**Eat smart.** A diet rich in fruits, leafy vegetables and omega-3 fatty acids may reduce your risk of dry eyes and macular degeneration.

**Quit smoking.** Smoking increases your risk of cataracts, macular degeneration and other serious eye

problems. If you smoke, quit. If you don't, don't start.

**Get moving.** Research suggests exercise may reduce your risk of glaucoma and diabetes-related vision loss.

**Schedule regular eye exams.** Seniors, especially, should have comprehensive eye exams yearly to monitor vision changes.

**Upgrade your eyeglasses.** Ask your eye doctor about new high-definition lenses and anti-reflective coatings that may provide sharper vision than your current glasses.

**Wear sunglasses.** Protecting your eyes from the sun's UV rays may reduce your risk of cataracts and macular degeneration -- especially if you wear sunglasses throughout your lifetime.

**Take care of your contacts.** See your eye doctor annually if you wear contacts, and be sure to clean, disinfect and replace your lenses as directed to avoid discomfort and eye infections.

**Wear safety eyewear.** Experts say 90 per cent of eye injuries can be prevented with safety glasses and sports eyewear.

**Reduce computer eye strain.** Rest your eyes from computer work every 20 minutes to relieve strain and avoid dry eyes. Also, ask your eye doctor about stress-relieving computer glasses.

**Consider sports eyewear.** Protect your eyes, increase comfort and improve your performance with specially tinted sports eyewear for your particular sport or outdoor activity.

**Get downloading.** If you own a mobile device, you can download eye-related apps such as magnifiers, eye medication reminder tools and apps that let you try on "virtual" eyewear.

**Give something back.** Donate your old glasses and contribute to vision charities to help give the gift of sight to those in need -- both locally and around the world.

#### **About Tapestry Foundation for Health Care**

Tapestry Foundation for Health Care raises funds for eight hospitals and residences in Metro Vancouver operated by Providence Health Care. Sites supported include Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, Marion Hospice, St. Michael's Centre, St. Vincent's: Brock Fahrni, Honoria Conway-Heather, Langara, and Youville Residence. Donations support purchases of medical equipment, funding to support quality of life programs for the elderly, education programs, and geriatric research projects.

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