

Significant Investment In New Mammography Equipment Improves Patient Care and Patient Experience At PRH

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PEMBROKE – A significant investment in new state-of-the-art mammography equipment used for breast imaging at the Pembroke Regional Hospital is already paying off in terms of improved comfort for patients, image quality, efficiency and ease of use by members of the Diagnostic Imaging team.

“The new General Electric Senographe Pristina mammography unit represents a capital investment of approximately \$600,000 and replaces equipment that was scheduled for an upgrade,” said Sabine Mersmann, PRH Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services / Partnerships and Integration.

“As with any advanced technology, the new unit has features that were not previously available which will allow us to provide an enhanced screening and diagnostic mammography service for those in our community,” Ms. Mersmann said, adding that, in 2021-2022 alone, the PRH Diagnostic Imaging department performed 3,740 mammograms.

Diagnostic Imaging Director Laurie Menard said the hospital relied on the expertise of the staff and radiologists as part of the equipment evaluation, selection and purchase processes and they worked with the hospital’s information technology and maintenance teams, as well as external partners, to ensure that the three-week downtime for removal and installation of equipment had minimal impact on patient care. Despite the downtime, Ms. Menard said, mammography wait times remained on target, in large part due to the excellent collaboration.

Radiologist Dr. Raluca Antonescu who was directly involved in the equipment selection process said the goal when reviewing different equipment options wasn’t only to find a replacement for the aging equipment but to ensure that new features for patient comfort and radiation dose reduction were considered. Ergonomic features for technologists were equally taken under consideration.

Dr. Fred Matzinger, Radiologist and Chief of Diagnostic Imaging, explained that one of the advantages of the new mammography unit is that it has the capability to perform advanced breast imaging that has the potential to detect more cancers in women who have dense breast tissue. It may also decrease the callback rate for additional imaging when a woman has her first baseline mammogram,” Dr. Matzinger said.

Dr. Antonescu echoed her colleague’s sentiments about these benefits and added that the unit can also be used with a specialized biopsy system with more options for positioning that will result in additional comfort for patients required mammography guided procedures.

Since the installation of the new equipment in early April, technologists Stephanie Kutschke and Melissa McGraw said patient feedback has been positive with individuals commenting on the improved comfort, improved speed, and overall positive experience in their exams.

"We love the new equipment," Ms. Kutschke said. "It is so user-friendly and much quicker which helps with patient comfort. The unit is much more ergonomic for the technologists and we are excited to train on the new technology."

Ms. McGraw added that staff who have to work with the equipment every day "felt lucky to be involved in the process". She said it was helpful to be able to evaluate the options and choose the best one for the group. "We were also able to redesign the layout of our room as a group and feel that it is more accessible for patients with disabilities, injuries and limited mobility."

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