Haldimand War Memorial Hospital has signed an agreement with Hamilton-based ophthalmologist Dr. Jesh Sharda to provide cataract surgery in Dunnville. This comes after the hospital and Dr. Sharda have been working on a pilot program while the logistics of a permanent cataract surgery program could be worked out.

In 2014, Dr. Sharda performed 385 cataract procedures in Dunnville, with a complication rate of less than one per cent – lower than the average for this type of surgery – and a 98 per cent patient satisfaction rating. Now that the cataract surgery program is officially in place, it’s expected that Dr. Sharda will perform 400 to 500 procedures each year.

The target wait time for cataract surgery in Ontario is 182 days, while at the Dunnville Hospital the wait time is 90 days.

“Our arrangement with Dr. Sharda will provide a huge benefit to our community,” says hospital president and CEO David Montgomery. “We have entered into an agreement with Dr. Sharda for time in our operating rooms, which will result in the cataract surgeries being done with no added cost to the hospital.”

The Dunnville Lions Club and the hospital’s Volunteer Association are securing funding for some of the necessary equipment.

“It is my honour and privilege to serve the community in helping to restore sight and quality of life,” Dr. Sharda says. “I thank Dunnville and the hospital for embracing me and the cataract program with such enthusiasm and support.”
Health Link Coming to Haldimand

Haldimand War Memorial Hospital is serving as the lead organization.

Health links bring together health providers in the community to better and more quickly coordinate care for patients with high needs.

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care notes that five per cent of patients account for two-thirds of health care costs.

Health links are designed to encourage better collaboration between local health care providers – including family doctors – so that patients will receive faster care, spend less time waiting for services, and have their own comprehensive health care plans.

“The goal is to avoid unnecessary trips to the hospital,” says Janine van den Heuvel, communications manager for the new Haldimand Health Link.

“Many patients such as frail seniors, people with chronic disabilities, mental health issues and dementia are frequently admitted and then re-admitted to the hospital. That’s because many suffer from more than one condition and their needs aren’t being properly met.”

The health link hopes to identify these people and connect them with a care-worker who will assess them and create a personal needs list to manage their requirements outside of the hospital.

There are 69 community health links in Ontario with more being planned.

Forty-two Years of Dedicated Service

Pat Vickers’ connection to Haldimand War Memorial Hospital started when she was still in high school, working as a volunteer candy striper. That was 42 years ago, and Pat is still at the hospital – having first been hired full time in the dietary department to cook, and wash pots and pans. After taking some business courses, she soon moved to the Emergency Department as an admitting clerk.

“The hospital staff are like family. They’re a great bunch of people, and we help each other at work and also personally,” Pat says. Her own family members are also connected to the hospital. Both her children were born there, daughter Jennifer is also a part-time clerk in the Emergency Department and husband Rick is a hospital courier.

Pat has seen plenty of changes in the facility since her early days. She remembers when the present emergency room was new in 1978.

“We still used typewriters to manually fill in all of the forms, and the admitting and emergency desks were together,” she recalls.

Pat is excited to see the redevelopment of the Emergency Department once again. “We started with two examining rooms, then went to six,” she recalls.

The Admitting Department now has an office of its own beside the Emergency Department.

“It will be exciting to see how things will be up and running when there are 12.”

When she is off work, Pat likes to read and spend time with her three grandchildren. She is thinking of retiring in the next couple of years, but isn’t sure exactly when. She likes her job, the people and the changes she has experienced so far, as well as the ones still to come.

Setting a Good Example to Fight the Flu

Hospital staff – especially those who work with patients – are encouraged to get their flu shots at the beginning of flu season each year. Pictured above: Hospital Infection Control, Education and Occupational Health nurse Barbara Traver administers a flu shot to the senior management team – David Montgomery, Chris Miller, Sharon Moore and Greg Allen. Immunizations can help strengthen the body’s natural immune response against the flu. Members of the public can contact their local pharmacy or family physician for flu shots.
Environmental Leadership Recognized

Haldimand War Memorial Hospital’s unique recycling efforts have been recognized by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA). The hospital received an Honourable Mention award in Waste Management at the 14th annual Green Health Care Awards in Toronto last November.

“We’ve had fairly unique recycling programs here at HWMH,” says Tim Baker, director of Plant Maintenance and Engineering. As an example, he cites a recent kitchen-waste collection agreement with a local organic farmer who picks up leftover greens and other organic waste to process into compost. “It’s nice for a smaller, rural hospital to be recognized province wide.”

Tim is required to submit a “green” hospital questionnaire annually to the OHA, which includes the hospital’s plans for energy efficiency, waste management and water conservation.

“The ministry is always looking for innovative approaches,” says Tim. “There isn’t much that escapes us,” he says, referring to HWMH’s constant recycling of paints, batteries, lightbulbs, metal, paper and wood. “There’s always room for improvement though, and we have several other ideas and projects both in planning or underway.”

Plenty of Opportunities for New Volunteers

Volunteers perform a variety of valuable services at HWMH and Edgewater Gardens. There are some 130 people who donate their time and talents to the two organizations, and more are always needed.

“We could easily place a lot more people,” says Volunteer Association president Kathy Bartlett. She says there’s a particular need for volunteers to help with recreation activities at Edgewater Gardens and the hospital’s complex care unit, and would very much welcome more male volunteers.

Among the activities for which volunteers are needed are wheelchair hockey, Thursday evening pub nights, bingo and card games.

“There are a lot of opportunities to do a lot of different jobs,” Kathy says. “Not all volunteer jobs involve interaction with hospital patients.”

As an example, Marie Fess volunteers on the front desk at Edgewater Gardens Monday mornings, guiding visitors, spending time with residents, and delivering mail and newspapers. She also serves in the hospital’s Hidden Gem Gift shop – a commitment she has made for more than 25 years.

People interested in volunteering at either the hospital or Edgewater Gardens are encouraged to pick up a form at the Information Desk or call and leave a message at 905-774-7431, ext. 1311.
Gala Celebrates 40th Anniversary

It’s been 40 years since the Dunnville Hospital & Healthcare Foundation was established, and an elegant gala was held to commemorate the anniversary.

The event drew 120 people to the banquet hall at the Dunnville Community Centre last October. It featured the unveiling of a new logo for the foundation, the completion of the $1.6 million “Back the C.A.T.” campaign, the final draw for the “CARe and Win” lottery and the launching of a new campaign to support the redevelopment of the Emergency Department at HWMH.

“We are grateful for the generous support of individuals, businesses and local service clubs who have helped fund Haldimand County’s first and only CT scanner,” says foundation executive director Shelley Rollo.

Partnering with HWMH, the foundation’s new “Growing BiggER & BettER TogethER” campaign will support a larger and more technologically advanced Emergency Room (ER). The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 142 helped kick off the new campaign with a $15,000 donation towards the initiative.

The grand prize winner in the “CARe and Win” lottery was Christine Webb, who works as a registered practical nurse at the hospital. Here she is pictured (right) with her brand new 2014 Ford Focus Hatchback and foundation executive director Shelley Rollo.

Among the guests at the foundation gala were (left to right) Anne Duliban, Sharon Little Topp, Fred Topp, Jim Irwin, Irene Marr and Audrey Lavell.