

HEART MATTERS

THE REGIONAL CARDIAC CARE PROGRAM
NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY, 2003 VOL.1, ISSUE 3



SOUTHLAKE
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

PROFILE FROM THE HEART

Dr. Jack Symmes

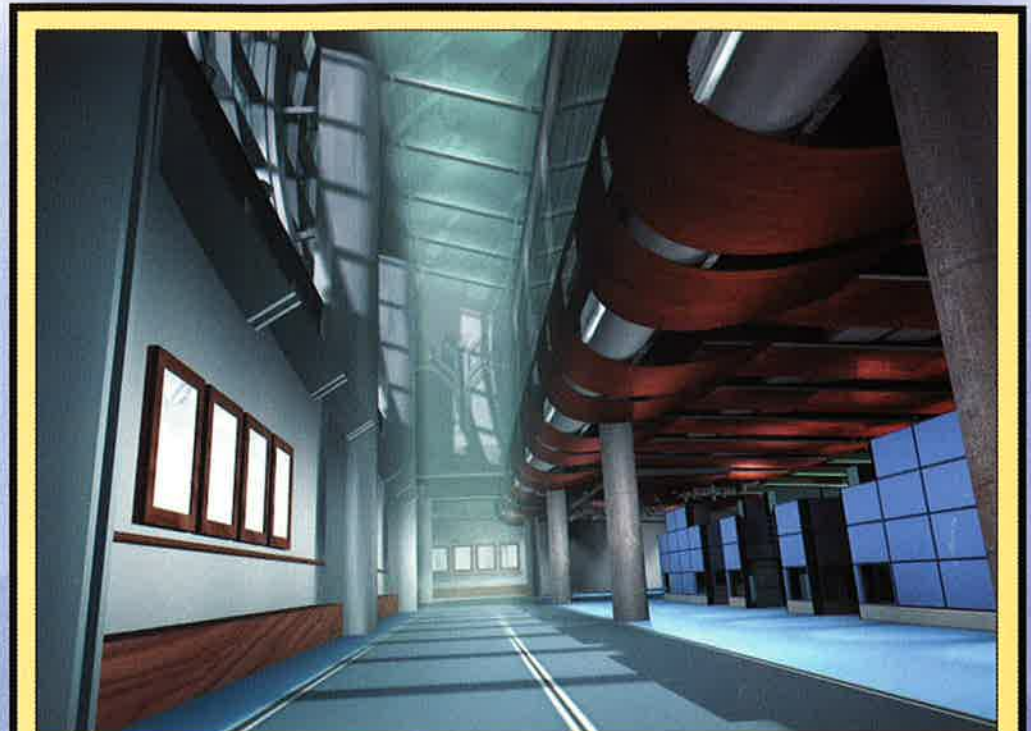


As a veteran member of SRHC's cardiology team, Jack Symmes, M.D., FRCP, FACC, has seen the hospital grow from a local community hospital to become the centre

for the Regional Cardiac Care Program for York, Simcoe, and Muskoka regions. He is presently Medical Director of HeartWorks, now an integral part of SRHC's cardiac care program—specifically designed to improve overall heart health in individuals who are at risk or who suffer from cardiovascular disease.

After graduating from the University of Toronto Medical School in 1973, Jack completed his internship at St. Michael's Hospital. From 1975 to 1977, he was Resident Cardiologist at Toronto's Western Hospital and St. Michael's Hospital, respectively. He then joined St. Joseph's Hospital for one year as Chief Resident, Medicine and Intensive Care Unit. Since 1978, Dr. Symmes' career has been centred at SRHC where he has held various key positions as Staff Cardiologist/Internist, Chief of the Department of Medicine, Co-Director of the Intensive Care Unit, and Director of the Cardiac Care Unit. From 1996 to 1999, he was Physician Leader of the Cardiac Care Program—during these years, he played a pivotal role in spearheading the drive that eventually led to SRHC becoming the regional cardiac care centre.

As Medical Director of HeartWorks, he states, "As a regional cardiac care centre, we have the responsibility to care for people not only while they are in the hospital but also while they are busy living their lives in the community. The HeartWorks program allows us to provide this essential component of an individual's overall care plan."



SRHC's future Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre

The Parkin Group

SOUTHLAKE REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE'S CARDIAC REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Program awarded \$400,000 to supplement existing services.

Over the past 40 years, Ontario has experienced a steady decline in mortality rates from cardiovascular and coronary heart disease. However, the demand for cardiac care services in the province has increased exponentially due to several factors: a rapidly growing and aging population in the 65+ age group who are living longer with heart disease, and the tremendous medical progress achieved in cardiac diagnosis and treatment. Added to these

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factors is the increasingly high incidence of cardiovascular disease among people in the under 45-year-age group, which is a cause of significant concern among healthcare professionals in the province.

It is also widely recognized by healthcare specialists that treatments for congestive heart failure, heart attack, coronary heart disease, chest pain, and other cardiac-related problems through

emergency services, cardiac surgery, angioplasty or PCI, etc. are not a cure. The underlying cardiac risk factors (smoking, high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol, etc.) that have caused these problems remain even after treatment, and can provoke a reversal in treated individuals. As a result, the need for more and enhanced cardiac preventive and rehabilitation services is evident and pressing*.

Continued next page, page 3

*Source: Cardiac Care Network



HEARTWORKS

*Members
of the
HeartWorks
Team*

*Denise Tunney,
Pharmacist*

*Denise Coney,
Social
Worker*

*Dave Kiernan,
Kinesiologist*

*Janet
Domingues,
Registered
Nurse*

*Dr. Jack Symmes
Medical Director of HeartWorks*

*Eleanor Joyce
Manager, Cardiac Rehabilitation*

REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Continued from page 2

Since being provincially designated in 1998 as a regional cardiac care centre to serve York, Simcoe, and Muskoka regions, SRHC's cardiac team has lost no time in developing HeartWorks—a comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation and prevention program for patients who have experienced a cardiac event or who were at risk for it. As Dr. Jack Symmes, Medical Director of HeartWorks, has stated: "At SRHC, we realized that we couldn't just be putting out fires; we needed to devote more attention to preventive medicine."

Now an integral part of SRHC's regional cardiac care program, HeartWorks includes a number of specialized services—Cardiac Rehabilitation, 24-Hour Blood Pressure Monitoring, a Hypertension Clinic, and a Lipid Clinic—supported by a highly-skilled team of healthcare professionals (cardiologists, endocrinologists, kinesiologists, registered nurses, a pharmacist, registered dietitians and a social worker). Patients who have experienced a heart attack or angina and/or undergone cardiac surgery or PCI, or are at risk for cardiovascular disease can now participate with their support person in SRHC's cardiac rehabilitation program. This program consists of an exercise (walking and stretching) plan specially tailored to the individual's needs and abilities for two nights per week, and educational classes to learn about the heart's structure and function, heart disease, cardiac risk factors, diet, nutrition, and stress management. In addition, patients attend an intake clinic for risk-factor assessment

and physical fitness testing *before* and *after* completing the 26-week cardiac rehabilitation program. If desired, patients may continue with the exercise component for an extended period of time. As a further improvement to the current rehabilitation program, the team plans to offer a smoking cessation program and a weight loss program in the near future.

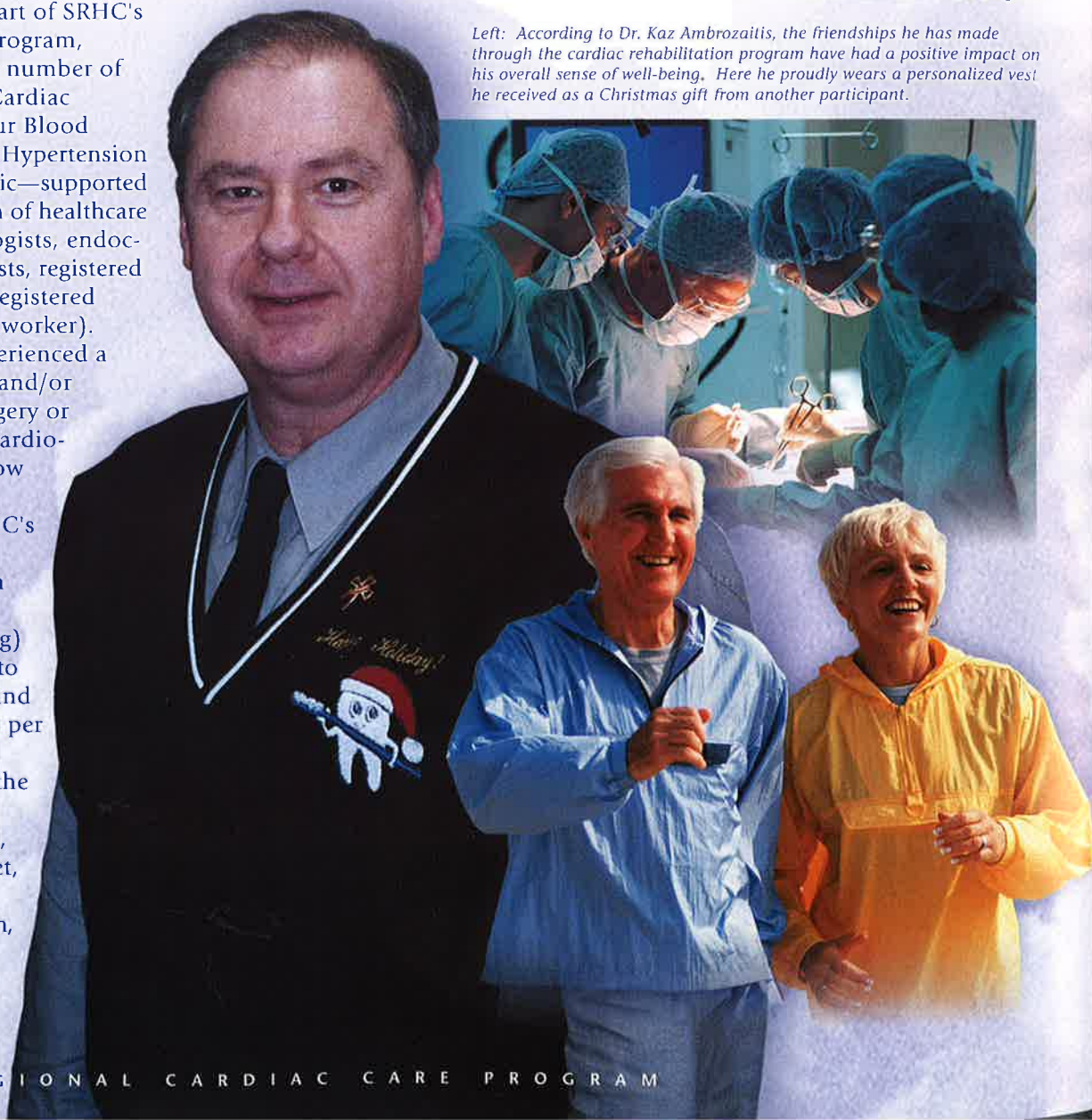
In recognition of SRHC's progress and continued commitment to further develop its existing cardiac rehabilitation and prevention services, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care selected SRHC as a

new site to provide comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation services using the model of care developed by the Cardiac Care Network (CCN) of Ontario. A total of \$400,000 of operating funding for fiscal 2002-2003 was allotted to supplement SRHC's current program and to enable it to add 400 new clients.

Research has shown that restoring cardiac patients' confidence to enable them to resume their normal, daily activities and lead an active life in the community through exercise, education, and counselling, has helped to hasten the recovery process. Dr. Kaz Ambrozaitis

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Left: According to Dr. Kaz Ambrozaitis, the friendships he has made through the cardiac rehabilitation program have had a positive impact on his overall sense of well-being. Here he proudly wears a personalized vest he received as a Christmas gift from another participant.



REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Continued from page 3

a practising dentist in Newmarket, can certainly attest to this. With a family history of heart problems, Kaz was referred to Dr. Symmes at SRHC in June 2002 for tests to diagnose his condition. The results of his angiogram were serious enough to prompt Dr. Symmes to refer him immediately for further treatment. Within a month of the referral, Kaz underwent angioplasty and shortly thereafter was enrolled in SRHC's 26-week cardiac rehabilitation program. His individualized exercise plan started with 4-5 minutes of walking, but by the end of the program he had progressed to walking for 45 minutes (approximately 3 miles). Kaz continues to participate in the exercise component of the program as he finds it extremely beneficial. Most of all, he says that he has learned a great deal from the well-researched, evidence-based sessions on

lipid and cholesterol controls, diet, nutrition, stress management, and psychological and spiritual counseling. Kaz also states, "What helped me immensely to overcome the depressed feelings I experienced during the recovery period was the invaluable emotional support I received from my family, and the friendships I made with other participants of the rehab program."

Currently, HeartWorks is operating out of the Tannery Mall, located two blocks west of the hospital, where patients and their partners have access to classrooms, exercise equipment, and the mall's mezzanine to use as a walking track. Upon completion of SRHC's massive \$149 million-expansion project, HeartWorks will move to its permanent 12,000-sq.ft. location on the first floor of SRHC's new building. This new and modern facility will offer a variety of exercise equipment, including weights and treadmills, a teaching classroom, and a walking track.

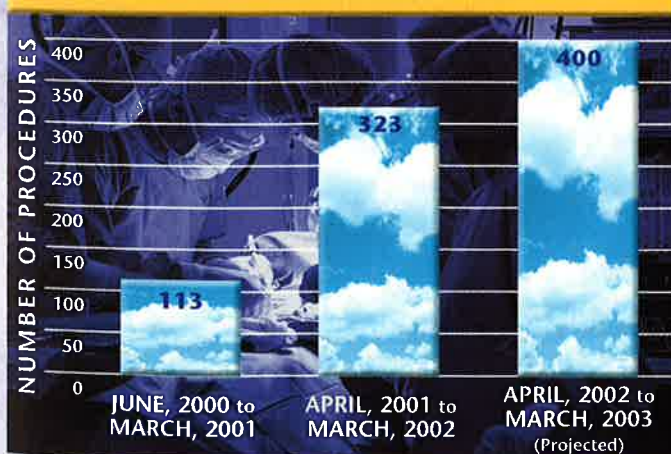
Committed to developing new and innovative ways of delivering cardiac services closer to home, SRHC's cardiac team has expressed interest in integrating and coordinating the delivery of cardiac rehabilitation services throughout its catchment area. The intent, therefore, is to eventually establish satellite clinics in various communities throughout York, Simcoe, and Muskoka regions in order to deliver consistent rehabilitation care closer to each participant's home.

Participation in SRHC's cardiac rehab program requires that patients be referred by their cardiologist or family physician. Referral forms can either be faxed to 905-830-5980 or mailed to HeartWorks, Southlake Regional Health Centre, The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Drive, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 2P1. Additional enquiries can be directed to 905-895-4521, ext. 2798.

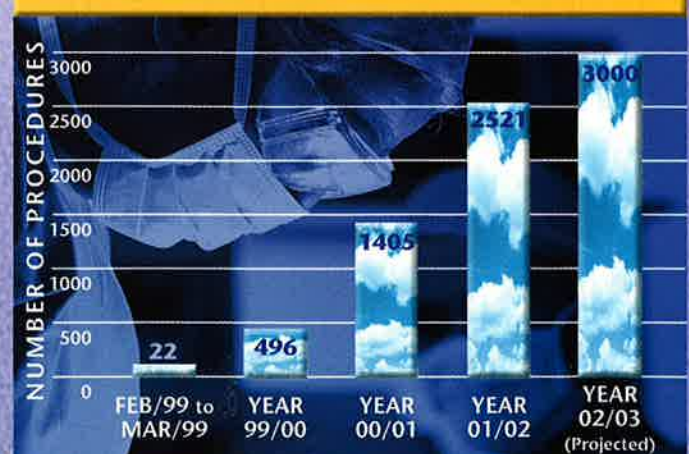
THE BEAT GOES ON

Since being designated a regional cardiac centre in 1998, Southlake has successfully increased the number of permanent pacemaker insertion and cardiac catheterization procedures performed each year. Impressively, Southlake now ranks as one of Ontario's top performing centres in the provision of these advanced cardiac procedures.

PERMANENT PACEMAKER INSERTION PROCEDURES PERFORMED



CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION PROCEDURES PERFORMED



COUNTDOWN TO 2003

With less than 10 months left for SRHC to meet its goal of offering a comprehensive range of cardiac services, the preparation and planning of the cardiac program have reached a feverish pitch in step with the construction of the new infill building that will house many of these services. Recruitment of new staff members to support cardiac surgery, PCI, and the Arrhythmia Program have moved forward aggressively.

Cardiac Surgery

Surgery will commence in the fall of 2003. The number of procedures (bypass and valve surgery) planned when fully operational in 2004/2005 is estimated at 900-1000 per year. To prepare for open heart surgery, three highly-renowned cardiac surgeons have been recruited:

- Dr. Byung Moon, Division Head, Cardiac Surgery (joining SRHC from the London Health Sciences Centre)
- Dr. Richard Bauset (Hôpital Laval, Quebec City)
- Dr. Charles Peniston (University Health Network, Toronto)



*Inset:
Janis Klein (RN),
Project Manager
for
Cardiac Surgery.*

Supporting the surgical team is Janis Klein (RN), Project Manager for Cardiac Surgery, who will be responsible for coordinating the setup of the 9-bed CVICU and the 25-bed in-patient cardiac surgery unit. Janis' other responsibilities include working with various task forces to develop plans for the pre-admission and cardiac operating room procedures, and the post-operative phases of patient care.

With support from the Ministry of Health, six anaesthetists from SRHC's Department of Anaesthesia are completing advanced retraining in both cardiac anaesthesia and cardiac intensive care; and two anaesthetists have completed training in TEE (transesophageal echocardiography).

Currently underway is the recruitment of key members of the cardiac team:

- lead perfusionist
- Acute Care Nurse Practitioners (ACNP), who will work with the physicians to facilitate the timely care and discharge of patients
- an Operating Room Resource Nurse
- clinical educators, and
- all of the nursing staff and allied health professionals.

Complementing the surgical team to ensure that each patient receives the best quality care will be respiratory therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, social workers, spiritual and religious care workers, and volunteers.

Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI)

Also scheduled to begin in the fall of 2003 is PCI. Three highly-qualified interventionalists have recently been recruited by SRHC to join the cardiac team:

- Dr. Sylvain Plante, Medical Director (joining SRHC from Hôpital Laval, Quebec City)
- Dr. Steve Miner (University Health Network, Toronto)
- Dr. Lorne Goldman (Spokane, Washington)

Detailed planning for PCI began in December 2002 and it is

estimated that 1400 procedures will be performed each year in the cardiac catheterization laboratories, when fully operational.

The Arrhythmia Program

Under the direction of Dr. Zaeve Wulffhart, the provision of electrophysiology studies, ablations, and Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICDs) is slated to commence in April 2003.



Dr. Zaeve Wulffhart, Director of Arrhythmia Services and Marianne Beardsall, Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.

The Planning team of the Arrhythmia Program has been hard at work to select and prepare for the installation of the state-of-the-art equipment, and to search for a second electrophysiologist. Marianne Beardsall, an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, has recently been hired for the Arrhythmia Program; as part of her multiple responsibilities, she will work with the cardiologists to ensure that every patient's health care experience reflects the program's overall commitment to excellence.

At SRHC, the past few months have witnessed an unprecedented surge of activity as the cardiac team moves forward to meet its targeted opening dates. As Pat Norman, Vice-President, Regional Program unequivocally states, "The extensive planning, the recruitment strategies, and the intensity we have felt in preparing for these services have been quite energizing for everyone involved. In short, we have worked hard to ensure that the advanced cardiac services we will soon offer will meet or exceed the expectations of our patients, their families, and our partnering hospitals."

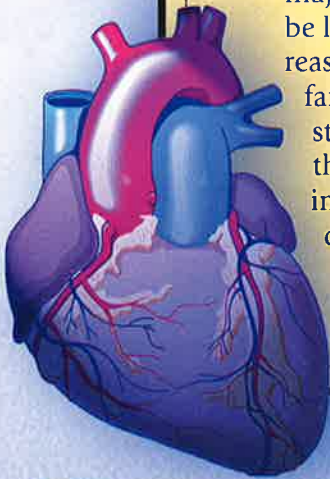
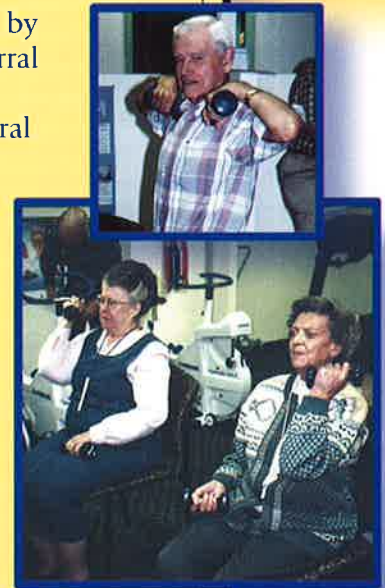
YOU ASKED US RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS

Q: *How do I refer my patients to SRHC's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program?*

A: You may refer your patients to the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program by faxing the referral form to us at 905-830-5980. Included in the referral is information about your patient's cardiac status, procedures, or surgery that he or she may have had, and test results. After the referral is assessed at SRHC, an appointment will be set up for your patient at the Intake Clinic. This part of the Rehabilitation Program involves a treadmill test that helps us to determine the patient's exercise capability and baseline data. After the Intake Clinic, your patient will be ready to begin the program.

Q: *Can I refer patients with severe arthritis to the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program?*

A: Absolutely. The main component of the exercise plan for the majority of participants is walking. However, some people may be limited in their walking capabilities due to other health reasons, such as lung disease, arthritis, stroke, or congestive heart failure. The program also includes exercising on the arm strengthening machines, stationary bicycles, and treadmills that are adjusted to suit each individual's needs. Our exercise program is individually-based so that each participant works at his or her own pace and comfort level. We have always been able to accommodate patients with any physical limitations.



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Questions for the *YOU ASKED US* column, enquiries, comments or requests for additional copies may be directed to:

Corporate Communications
Southlake Regional Health Centre
596 Davis Drive
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 2P9

Tel.: 905-895-4521, ext. 2541
communications@southlakeregional.org
www.southlakeregional.org



SOUTHLAKE
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

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