



Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg
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Health Sciences Centre
Winnipeg

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HSC Winnipeg to Acquire Cyclotron Hospital Can Double the Annual Number of PET Scans

Winnipeg – Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg will be able to double the number of PET/CT scans it performs annually, thanks to the acquisition of a \$5 million Cyclotron, scheduled to be installed early next year. “This will greatly improve the Manitobans’ access to the PET/CT scanner, which will result in quicker and better patient care,” Dr. Brian Postl, President and CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, said.

The PET/CT is non-invasive imaging technology that allows examination of metabolic activity in the brain, heart, liver, tumors and muscle tissues. The HSC’s PET/CT is one of the most technologically advanced units in North America, providing higher resolution and greater accuracy than previously possible.

Currently, the PET/CT uses radiosotopes, flown in from Edmonton, to do the scans. “The ability to produce these isotopes at the HSC will effectively double the hospital’s capacity to provide scanning services to patients,” Dr. Blake McClarty, Medical Director of the WRHA Diagnostic Imaging Program, said.

The radiosotopes have a half-life of about two hours, he explained. “And so the flight schedules, inclement weather and Edmonton’s ability to inspect the cargo before take-off, all limit our ability to utilize the PET/CT scanner to its full potential.”

Having an on-site cyclotron will also mean that radiosotopes can be produced at any time during the day, allowing the hospital to book more patients, Dr. Sandor Demeter, Co-Medical Director of the PET/CT program, said. “It also means that we can produce an expanded array of isotopes, including ones with shorter half lives. That means we will be able to use the PET/CT scanner for a greater number of procedures. It also greatly expands our research capability.”

PET imaging is unique in that it allows physicians to label the building blocks of life (e.g. organic molecules such as sugars, fats, proteins, and hormones) which can be used to detect subtle changes in the body’s physiology, Dr. Demeter said.

“PET is one of the most sensitive ways of detecting early cancer or diseases of the brain related to dementia. Currently we are only able to use imported radiolabeled sugar. This is like a pharmacy only having one product on the shelf. With an onsite cyclotron the number of different tracers that we can produce is only limited by the imagination. We will be part of the cutting edge of the emerging field of ‘molecular

medicine'. This will greatly enhance our ability to detect, monitor and assess treatment response for a vast array of cancers and other diseases. We will also have world class research capabilities.”

HSC's Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Brock Wright, said the Cyclotron has already positively impacted the hospital's ability to recruit and retain more of the best and the brightest medical staff, while providing Manitobans with access to the most innovative health care technology in the world.

Dr. Wright noted that Winnipeg is one of the few cities in North American that will have the combination of a GAMMA-knife, PET/CT-scanner, Artiste and Cyclotron. “So this will solidify HSC Winnipeg as a centre for excellence for innovation in health care.”

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