



Health Sciences Centre  
**FOUNDATION**

# Foundation Connection

Innovating Together for Health Care

WINTER 2020



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## Nineteen Years and Counting

### Transplant patient shares story of hope

Nineteen years, 228 months, 6,935 days, 166,440 hours—but who's counting? Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg kidney transplant patient Kathy Urban is. Since receiving her kidney in the fall of 2001, every second is a gift.

Beausejour-born, Winnipeg-raised Urban is no stranger to the health care system. A retired health information services supervisor of 35 years, Urban was diagnosed in her early twenties with bilateral polycystic kidney disease, a chronic disease where cysts grow inside the kidneys, causing them to fail.

For the next 22 years, Urban dealt with many appointments, followed by anxiously waiting for results, until the dreaded day came in December of 1999. "At my routine check-up, I was informed that I'd be on dialysis within the year. I don't even remember how I got home that day—I just cried and cried and cried," says Urban.

A snowbird with Andy, her husband of 42 years, the couple went to Florida for what she worried would be her last time before being tethered to a machine for dialysis. Urban took home a souvenir from that trip that she will always remember: a pair of shoes that stopped her in her tracks outside a store window.

**"Even after all these years, there's not a day that goes by that I don't think of this kidney."**

—Kathy Urban, grateful transplant patient



Kathy Urban thrilled to return to one of her favourite places, Sarasota, Florida, post-surgery.

Delicate and gold-woven with a clear heel, Urban fondly dubbed the shoes her "Cinderella shoes".

Despite Urban's feet having swelled to the size of balloons—a symptom of kidney failure—she purchased the shoes never thinking she would see the day where she could wear them, but hoping she somehow could.

Urban held on to a dialysis-free existence for nearly two years before it was time to create an arteriovenous fistula in her arm, granting the dialysis machine long-term access to her blood while waiting for a transplant.

*Continued inside...*

# Nineteen Years and Counting

...continued from cover

Mere weeks after the fistula surgery, Urban answered a life-altering phone call; this time, happy tears ensued. “I received the call from Transplant Manitoba just before 4 pm asking if I wanted a kidney, as a good match was available,” says Urban. However, she needed to get to Canadian Blood Services across from HSC by 5 pm for mandatory testing to ensure compatibility. “This was to ensure that I was the best match for the kidney,” Urban recalls.

Turns out, she was. By 7 pm, Urban arrived at HSC for admission; by 11 am the next morning, she was on the operating table.

The following six months were a rollercoaster, including the down of a post-operation complication, followed by many ups. “One of the first things I did when I came home from the hospital was try on my Cinderella shoes. The memory of them fitting is one I’ll never forget,” says Urban.

Thankfully, Urban was able to board an airplane again. Last spring, she was on a plane to Ottawa as the Manitoba Ambassador for the launch of Green Shirt Day on April 7, a nation-wide movement that raises organ and tissue donation awareness, and honours Logan Boulet, the 21-year-old Humboldt Bronco hockey player whose organs were donated after he died in a tragic bus crash in 2018.

“It was an honour and privilege to be chosen to represent Manitoba—and to meet Logan’s parents—along with the other organ recipients from across Canada whose lives were saved and improved because of organ transplants,” says Urban.

Like clockwork, Urban returns to HSC on her transplant anniversary with a thank-you card for her donor’s family and sweet treats for the staff. “Even after all these years, there’s not a day that goes by that I don’t think of this kidney—I am thankful for every day, every moment. I am also thankful for HSC—it was my second home after my kidney transplant. HSC is an amazing place and Manitobans are lucky to have it, and to be celebrating 50 years of the Manitoba Transplant Program at HSC,” says Urban.

Your financial support gives patients like Kathy Urban more anniversaries to celebrate. To make your gift, contact the Foundation at 204-515-5612 or by email at [info@hscfoundation.mb.ca](mailto:info@hscfoundation.mb.ca).



Kathy Urban recovering with her husband Andy by her side.



Kathy Urban with fellow transplant recipients from across Canada in Ottawa for the launch of Green Shirt Day.



The treasured “Cinderella shoes”.



# The Doctors Are In

The future of health care is just a touch screen away

Imagine your uncle recovering from hip surgery in his own home while a “robot” coaches him through his exercises. Imagine your mom in the early stages of dementia. She is eager to live in her own house as long as possible. Imagine your sister regaining use of her arm after a stroke because of the benefits of virtual reality. Imagine your niece from northern Manitoba who needs hospital care in Winnipeg. She can recover and heal while still attending class and visiting with friends—virtually!

From virtual, augmented, and mixed reality, to artificial intelligence, health care is becoming more individualized, preventative, and efficient, thanks to ambient assisted living (AAL), which are products, services, and approaches that use cutting-edge technology to improve quality of life.

The technology exists, but we need your help. Dr. Reg Urbanowski and Dr. Amine Choukou of the University of Manitoba’s College of Rehabilitation Sciences share insight into AAL and the importance of supporting the HSC Foundation’s \$1.5 million campaign for an Endowed Chair in AAL.

**Q: What are some current AAL projects that your team is working on?**

A: Dr. Urbanowski: To name just a few, Dr. Jacque Ripat is working on mobility devices, specifically winter mobility, while Dr. Tony Szturm is focusing on tele-rehabilitation (the delivery of rehabilitation services from a distance using the internet).

Dr. Amine Choukou is developing applications for mobile phones, tablets, virtual training tools for health care providers, and our Smart Suite, which is a fully functional living space equipped with infrastructure and apparatuses that improve the quality of life of many, including those with mobility and cognitive challenges.

**Q: What is your favourite area of the Smart Suite?**

A: Dr. Choukou: The kitchen—it’s the heart of the space. There are many features related to ergonomics, safety, and accessibility. For example, there are reminders alerting the inhabitant if they have left the fridge open, or the stove on. Lights can be programmed to trigger the person’s next step with any activity, such as cooking. These reminders are especially crucial if an individual has dementia.

**Q: How critical is the Smart Suite to health care?**

A: Dr. Choukou: It is strengthening the whole health care system because it’s reducing costs and burdens on every stakeholder. Patients are assisted by technologies like 24/7 monitoring. Health care practitioners can take better care of patients because they have correct information. Researchers will have a bounty of accurate information to help current patients, as well as the next generation of patients. A patient’s family and friends will be more comfortable because they know that their loved one’s activity is monitored and that information on their well-being is readily available.

Establishing an Endowed Chair—a designated faculty position—will allow this important work to move forward under expert leadership without interruption. With a Chair in place, research and patient care in AAL will accelerate, and the program will be able to grow and attract leading practitioners in the area.

**To support our AAL program, or for more information, please call 204-515-5612 or visit [hscfoundation.mb.ca](http://hscfoundation.mb.ca).**



You can help patients stay connected with family and health care providers.



Elaine Latter on duty at the thrift shop, Just Like New To You.

## It Adds Up to Excellence

### White Cross Guild supports flexible surgical suite in new HSC Winnipeg Women's Hospital

A spring dress for \$3 dollars. A frying pan for a buck. A picture frame for 25 cents. For volunteer Elaine Latter and her White Cross Guild colleagues, the small prices they charge at their Portage Avenue thrift shop are designed to make a big difference for HSC and its patients.

"Many of our members are former nurses and we like to support projects that are patient-oriented," says Latter, who worked as a nurse in the 1960s at what was then known as the Winnipeg General Hospital.

The Guild's latest gift is a \$150,000 donation to enhance one of the seven operating rooms in the new, state-of-the-art HSC Women's on the HSC campus. Initially, four of the operating rooms were earmarked for gynecological procedures, and three for obstetrical surgeries. The White Cross Guild gift will allow HSC to convert one of the gynecological operating rooms into a more flexible, dual-use space that can accommodate pregnant women needing Cesarean sections and other procedures.

"Thanks to the White Cross Guild, we will be in an even better long-term position to manage the growing number of obstetrical cases in Manitoba as the province's birth rate steadily grows," says Ronan Segrave, HSC's Chief Operating Officer. "Their donation will make HSC Women's even more efficient and more effective for Manitoba women and their families. We are grateful for this gift and for all that the Guild does for the hospital and the HSC Foundation."

Since opening the Just Like New To You thrift shop in 2005, the Guild has donated nearly a million dollars to the hospital and to the Foundation.

**"What we really like about our gift to HSC Women's is that it will have an immediate impact and a long-term impact as well. Most of us had our children at the hospital so it's extra special."**

—Elaine Latter, White Cross Guild member and HSC volunteer



"We meet four or five times a year to consider how to allocate the money we raise," says Latter, who works at the shop every Thursday. "We like that we are able to provide extra things that make a big difference for patients. What we really like about our gift to HSC Women's is that it will have an immediate impact and a long-term impact as well. Most of us had our children at the hospital so it's extra special."

Latter is one of 40 Guild members who volunteer at Just Like New To You. Aside from supporting the hospital with the proceeds from sales, they are proud to be an important contributor to the quality of life in the neighbourhood surrounding the store at 635 Portage Avenue.

"Because we are selling donated goods at low prices, the store is very helpful to students, seniors, and our other neighbours on limited incomes," says Latter, who also volunteers in the flower shop at HSC once a week. "What we don't sell or when we have too much inventory, we donate it to Main Street Project and other charities. We're happy to help the community!"

To learn more about HSC's new 388,500-square-foot women's hospital, see [hsc.mb.ca/files/WN-INFO-NOV2019.pdf](https://hsc.mb.ca/files/WN-INFO-NOV2019.pdf).

To contact The White Cross Guild's Just Like New To You thrift shop, call 204-786-1653.



Members of the White Cross Guild on their tour of HSC Women's. L-R: Carol Cribbs, Elaine Latter, Claire Halpenny, Judy Kartusch, Margaret Turnbull.



Just Like New To You volunteers. Back L-R: Carol Cribbs, Judy Kartusch, Elaine Latter. Front L-R: Doreen McMaster, Margaret Turnbull.



White Cross Guild members with Annette Frost, VP of Development, HSC Foundation, Irma McKenzie, Director of Planned and Legacy Giving, HSC Foundation, and HSC staff at HSC Women's.

# HSC Foundation Awards over \$300,000 to Research

In the fall of 2019, the Health Sciences Centre Foundation provided researchers with over \$300,000 in grants, helping fund eight projects at HSC, Manitoba's hospital. These grants are just one way Foundation donors help HSC innovate for the future.

## General Operating Grants

**Dr. Christine Henriksen, \$64,139.07:** "Living with hope: A preliminary investigation of a novel, CBT-based psychoeducational skills class for individuals with a recent suicide attempt"

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of Living with Hope, a novel, 12-session psychoeducational skills class, in reducing suicidal ideation and behaviours among individuals who have made a recent suicide attempt.

Co-Investigators: Natalie Mota; James Bolton

**Dr. Brett Houston, \$70,000:** "Tranexamic acid use to safely reduce transfusion in major non-cardiac surgery (TRACTION): A pragmatic, registry-based, pilot randomized controlled trial"

Bleeding and the need for red blood cell transfusion is common in major surgeries. Tranexamic acid is an inexpensive drug that reduces bleeding in cardiac and orthopedic surgeries, although its use in other surgeries with comparable transfusion rates is uncertain. An innovative and cost-efficient registry-based pilot randomized controlled trial will be conducted at HSC to inform the conduct of a large phase III trial in non-cardiac surgeries at high risk for transfusion, with potential to define future practice.

Co-Investigators: Ryan Zarychanski; Thomas Mutter; Eric Jacobsohn; Gordon Buduhan; Jamie Falk; Robert Balshaw

**Dr. Meaghan Jones, \$70,000:** "Breaking the link between prenatal environment exposures and allergic disease: Insights from epigenetic research"

Epigenetic changes are induced by prenatal exposure to cigarette smoke and are hypothesized to represent the molecular link between prenatal environments and child health. The molecular consequences of those changes in an animal model will be investigated, with the goal of determining whether they represent potential targets for interventions.

**Dr. Emily Rimmer, \$70,000:** "Plasma exchange in septic shock (PLEXSIS) pilot study"

Septic shock, a life-threatening infection, is among the most common reasons for admission to intensive care units at HSC and is a leading cause of death. Therapeutic plasmapheresis is a procedure that could potentially save lives as harmful substances are removed and missing blood components are replaced serving to restore balance. This project will support a pilot study that will inform the design and conduct of a national study that has the potential to set a new standard for the treatment of this patient population.

Co-Investigators: Ryan Zarychanski; Donald Houtson; John Wilkins; Robert Balshaw

The HSC Foundation extends a special thank you to our Honourary Directors who provided support for Dr. Rimmer's grant.

## Allied Heath

**Ms. Jennifer Birt, \$12,082.74:** "Wheelchair skills area rejuvenation improving environmental and clinical engagement"

For over a decade, therapists have used the wheelchair skills area (WSA) to teach patients how to safely navigate daily obstacles in a wheelchair. This project

will update the physical space and develop teaching materials to continue to support quality rehabilitation for patients and improve efficiency for clinicians.

Co-Investigators: Allison Robinson; Emerald Savary; Cherry Nixdorf; Melissa Colbeck

**Ms. Natalie Ruest, \$13,325:** "Does body mass index (BMI) affect the magnitude of curve at diagnosis in patients with adolescent idiopathic scoliosis?"

Early diagnosis of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS) is important for successful conservative treatment (bracing, for example). Patient charts will be reviewed to determine if youth with a higher BMI are diagnosed with scoliosis later than peers, and if this relationship exists in patients attending the AIS Clinic on campus. Results will ensure patients are being referred to the AIS Clinic in a timely manner in order to achieve the best possible treatment outcomes.

Co-Investigators: Brian Black; Kristy Wittmeier; Kathy Mulder

## Mindel & Tom Olenick

### Research Award in Immunology

**Dr. Vidyand Anaparti, \$5,000:** "Role of microRNAs in preclinical rheumatoid arthritis"

Dr. Anaparti seeks to understand how cellular switches, called microRNAs, contribute to the pre-disease process and affect immune functions in this population.

**Mr. Anthony Altieri, \$5,000:** "Regulation of airway inflammation: Cytokines IL-17 and TNF, and cationic host defense peptide LL-37"

Mr. Altieri is exploring how inflammation caused by IL-17 cytokines can be regulated at a molecular level, helping provide new ideas to control inflammation.



# Grant Recipient Intent on Setting new Patient Treatment Standard

Grant recipient and hematologist Dr. Emily Rimmer is intent on combating one of the most common reasons patients are admitted to HSC's Intensive Care Unit: septic shock. Septic shock is a life-threatening condition, caused by a blood infection. It affects approximately 30,000 Canadians annually.

"Infection is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. While there are antibiotics to support the patient throughout the infection, there's still a significant number of people who die in part because there are no other specific treatments," says Dr. Rimmer.



Recipients at the 2019 grant reception.

L-R: Christine Henriksen, Renée El-Gabalawy, Jennifer Birt, Emerald Savary, Cherry Nixdorf, Allison Robinson, Brett Houston, Emily Rimmer.

This is what Rimmer's pilot study—"Plasma exchange in septic shock (PLEXSIS)"—aims to help solve as Dr. Rimmer and her team delve into a study that aims to set a new standard in treatment for these patients.

Rimmer, who completed her medical school training and a residency in internal medicine and hematology at the University of Manitoba, finished a clinical and research fellowship in bleeding disorders at the University of Manitoba and Queen's University before beginning her career as a hematologist at HSC in 2013.

"I've always been interested in the blood side of sepsis research. This study is unique in that it doesn't target just one abnormality in septic shock. It is a more generalized treatment that may be more broadly applicable to those affected," says Dr. Rimmer.

From being on call at HSC; to spending time in clinics treating people with blood disorders; to being the Medical Director of Therapeutic Apheresis; to conducting her own research and being a member of the Acute Care Hematology research group, it's safe to say the Winnipeg-born mother of two young children sees a lot of blood, and puts in a fair amount of sweat, in her day-to-day work.

Congratulations to Dr. Rimmer and her fellow 2019 grant recipients.

To help our researchers raise the bar in health care excellence, please donate to our Innovation HSC annual campaign at [hscfoundation.mb.ca](http://hscfoundation.mb.ca) or call the Foundation at 204-515-5612.

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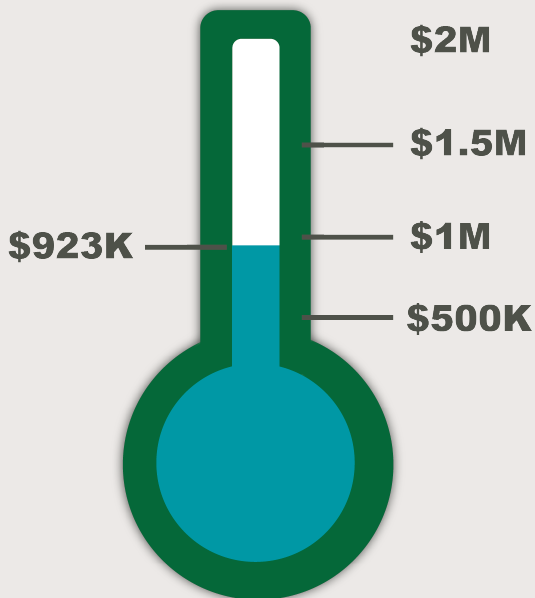
Join us for an evening of wine tastings & culinary creations, all in support of HSC, Manitoba's hospital

For tickets or to sponsor a table, please call 204-515-5612

# Innovation HSC

An annual campaign for health care excellence

We're nearly half way there. Help us reach our \$2 million 2020 target!



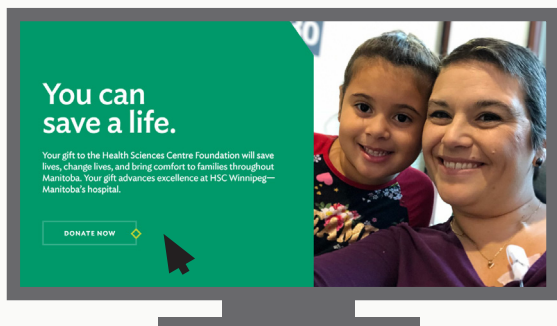
## Your annual campaign gift allows HSC to:

- ◆ Implement changes to systems and facilities to reduce wait times and improve outcomes as the health care needs of Manitobans change;
- ◆ Acquire the latest technology to diagnose and treat patients more quickly; and
- ◆ Initiate and advance important health care research, and create opportunities to keep leading medical talent in Manitoba.

The Innovation HSC campaign is your opportunity to make a difference and help HSC save lives, change lives, and provide comfort to families throughout Manitoba—year after year.

**Please give generously today.**

**For your family. For you. For all Manitobans.**



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Your online connection to HSC Foundation stories, news, and updates.



[hscfoundation.mb.ca](http://hscfoundation.mb.ca)

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