



Health Sciences Centre
FOUNDATION

Donor Impact Report

Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit

On November 5, 2019, donors, media, and guests gathered to officially unveil the state-of-the-art Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit.



Remarkable results from a
transformational campaign

Spring 2021



Your Impact; Our Gratitude

As we share this report with you, we are reminded yet again of the tremendous impact HSC Foundation donors have on the health and well-being of Manitobans.

The Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit stands as a shining example of what we can accomplish together when there is a compelling project on the table championed and celebrated by passionate medical leadership, deeply engaged volunteers, and very generous donors.

This document shares some insights on the impact the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit has had since opening in July 2019. As a donor, you should take pride in this remarkable development at HSC, Manitoba's hospital. You have saved lives.

We thank you for your support.

Tina Jones, O.M.
Chair, Board of Directors

Jonathon Lyon
President & Chief Executive Officer

The Problem We Aimed to Solve

- The incidence of lung and esophageal cancers has been on the rise in Manitoba and elsewhere.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Canada; esophageal cancer has among the lowest survival rates for all cancers.
- For these cancers, early detection and treatment are critical to give patients the best possible chance of survival and recovery. HSC was not properly equipped to provide either as case numbers grew.
- Prior to the opening of Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit:
 - HSC only had a fraction of the capacity it needed to diagnose and treat these patients and space was not consolidated;
 - Patients requiring attention for complications related to their esophageal cancer (such as difficulty breathing and swallowing) would have to wait for many hours in the Emergency Department for relief;
 - Patients with scheduled thoracic surgeries in the hospital's conventional operating rooms would often get bumped for more immediately life-threatening cases.
- With cancer cases on the rise, the status quo grew unsustainable and unacceptable.
- Manitobans deserved better.

“The system wasn't working.
There was too much demand.”

-Mavis Taillieu, Campaign Lead



The Solution

- Moved to make a difference for HSC patients following the passing of her husband Wilf due to esophageal cancer, Mavis Taillieu stepped forward as a volunteer to lead a campaign to build and equip a state-of-the-art surgery clinic and endoscopy unit.
- The clinic plan reflected the vision of Dr. Larry Tan, HSC's Head of Thoracic Surgery.
- Friends and associates of the Taillieu family, along with many other Manitobans moved by Wilf's story, stepped forward promptly and donated \$3.275 million in less than a year—months ahead of schedule.
- The campaign was launched in 2017. The fundraising target was met in 2018. The clinic opened its doors in July 2019 and was formally unveiled in November 2019.
- The impact was immediate.



“I was referred to Dr. Larry Tan at the new Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit... The wheels turned quickly. The whole experience was seamless, efficient, and very impressive. Dr. Tan ordered a series of tests that took place in rapid succession. I think it was six tests in the span of just a couple of weeks. When the results came back, Dr. Tan told me that I indeed had a malignant tumour and needed surgery. **I was scheduled for surgery just six days later.**”

-**Blaine Hadaller**, one of the first patients diagnosed and treated in the Wilf Taillieu Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit in the summer of 2019. Just a few years ago, his diagnosis and surgery would have taken up to eight weeks with greater health risks as his cancer progressed.

Results

- The Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit is the **only centre of its type in Canada**, where all clinical assessment, diagnosis, staging, and treatment can be performed in one location.
- As planned, numerous procedures that would have previously required space to be booked in a conventional operating room are now being done in the clinic, thereby **reducing the number of patients who have to wait for surgery**.
- The clinic was able to **double the number of scopes** performed in its first year (over the previous year).
- The new equipment **allows multiple procedures/ tests to be performed simultaneously** (previously this would have required multiple visits over several weeks).
- One-third of the patients treated in the unit come from outside of Winnipeg. Now with more efficient care, these patients make **fewer and shorter trips** to Winnipeg.
- Patient consults increased from 1,575 in 2017 to 1,909 in 2019, the year the clinic opened. Despite the increase, the new clinic was able to see patients **within one week for urgent cancer consults and in less than four weeks for all other consults**. (COVID-19 reduced the number of in-person visits to the clinic in 2020 as many appointments were conducted by phone and through telemedicine.)
- The clinic enabled HSC to start a pleuroscopy program. (Pleuroscopy is a minimally invasive way to perform a chest biopsy and simultaneously perform a procedure to permanently reduce shortness of breath caused by cancer fluid.) For each pleuroscopy procedure performed in the Taillieu Clinic, there is a **savings of at least 1–2 hours of operating room time and 2–3 days of hospitalization at HSC**.

“When you tell me that this space exists because of donors, I get goosebumps. I’m so grateful to them, but how do you thank people you’ll probably never meet?”

–**Arlene Link**, patient who underwent an endoscopic submucosal dissection in the Wilf Taillieu Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit in the summer of 2019. The procedure allowed the surgeon to core out esophageal cancer and take it out through the mouth without any incisions on the outside of the body. The result is a shorter, safer recovery.

Dr. Larry Tan, Head of Thoracic Surgery, performs a procedure in the state-of-the-art Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit.





The impact of the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit



A Bias for Excellence; A Link to Success



Patient Ernie Bias playfully refers to his endoscopic submucosal dissection (ESD) as a “Roto-Rooter”. Whatever you call it, the procedure improved his quality of life.

When it comes to cancer, early detection is key. But in the case of Arlene Link, finding out about her esophageal cancer a little bit later spared her an invasive procedure and a lengthy recovery. Here’s how.

In the spring of 2019, 63-year-old Link saw her family doctor in Morden for a routine check-up. Her blood work was concerning so her doctor sent her for a CT scan which showed evidence of cancer.

By July, she was in the good hands of HSC thoracic surgeon Dr. Biniam Kidane at the just-opened, donor-funded Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit. With new, state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, Dr. Kidane was able to stage Link’s cancer and then perform a procedure called an ESD (endoscopic submucosal dissection).

“ESD essentially cores out esophageal cancer and takes it out through the mouth without any cuts on the outside of the body,” explains Dr. Kidane. “Had Arlene come to see me a month earlier before the clinic was open, she would have had a far more invasive surgery along with chemotherapy and radiation. Greater risk, a longer recovery, and a huge impact on her quality of life.”

“Dr. Kidane told me later that I would have had to spend a long time in the hospital if I had regular surgery,” says Link, a retired Agriculture Canada employee. “Instead I only had to stay one night.”

Ernie Bias’s story is similar to Link’s, but even more remarkable considering his age. At 82, and with other health issues, conventional surgery coupled with chemotherapy and radiation would have been impossible.

Fortunately for Bias, a resident of West St. Paul, the new clinic was up and running last fall when it became clear he needed treatment. His ESD (which he playfully calls his “Roto-Rooter”) was a huge success. Like Link, one night in hospital, no complications, and a total cure.

“Dr. Kidane explained everything to me and made it clear that there were no guarantees,” says Bias, a retired mechanic and service station owner. “I think Dr. Kidane is the greatest person ever. The man is an angel.”

The Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit was the brainchild of Dr. Larry Tan, HSC’s Head of Thoracic Surgery. Under the volunteer leadership of Mavis Taillieu, the HSC Foundation raised \$3.2 million in 11 months to make the clinic a reality. Thanks to the new clinic—which also treats lung cancer patients—HSC has been able to double the number of upper gastrointestinal and lung scopes that are performed, and a growing number of patients like Bias and Link are experiencing remarkable outcomes and avoiding more complicated procedures and painful recoveries.

“We can’t cure everyone,” says Dr. Kidane. “Thanks to donors, the people we can cure are getting faster and better treatment. The people we can’t cure are getting the help they need faster to improve their comfort and quality of life.”

“When you tell me that this space exists because of donors, I get goosebumps,” says Link. “I’m so grateful to them, but how do you thank people you’ll probably never meet?”

This article originally appeared in the 2019/2020 Annual Report of the HSC Foundation



Dr. Biniam Kidane, thoracic surgeon: “Thanks to donors, the people we can cure are getting faster and better treatment. The people we can’t cure are getting the help they need faster to improve their comfort and quality of life.”

A Surgical First for Manitoba

Less hospital time; less pain

“On August 17, 2020, our team successfully completed Manitoba’s first microcoil-guided thoracoscopic lung resection. This allowed us to perform a minimally invasive lung resection with two small (less than 2cms) incisions in the same rib interspace to remove a deep lung tumour. **The patient went home within 24 hours and was off pain medication within one week.**”

-**Dr. Biniam Kidane, Surgeon, Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit.** *This technique is new to Manitoba and the vision is to further develop it as an outpatient procedure in the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit, saving each patient up to five days in hospital.*

Just Another Day at the Office

Months became days for a patient in need

On one Friday in January 2021, the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit team welcomed a patient with two separate cancers: lung and esophageal. Both cancers required careful examination and multiple specialized tests.

Prior to the opening of the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit, this patient would have had to wait several months for all tests and procedures to be conducted. **The patient would have required two separate procedures, by two different physicians, at two different times, in two different locations.**

Unnecessary wait times and logistical complications can have very serious ramifications for cancer patients. It’s a challenge being faced head-on by the Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit.

Because of your generosity and the new facility and systems it enabled, HSC was able to quickly identify that the patient needed both endoscopy and bronchoscopy. **Both procedures were done in the same visit, within two weeks of the initial consultation.**

The patient only required one physician; only had to undergo anesthetic once; and was able to go home within a few hours. Fewer hospital resources were used, fewer contacts were required (very important during COVID-19!), and the patient received faster testing than was ever possible before.

The Phone Rang Twice at Noon

Increased capacity addresses urgent needs

It was a Friday afternoon in December 2020. The Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit was fully booked with elective procedures.

The phone rang at noon. And then it rang again. Two patients of the clinic reaching out for help with esophageal obstructions. As recently as a couple of years ago, these two patients would have had no choice but to go to the Emergency Department and wait for hours and hours for help. It could have meant an overnight wait.

Thanks to your support, these patients had a much different experience in Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit. **They were both booked for appointments that same afternoon.**

With the technology and staffing in place, Drs. Biniam Kidane, Sadeesh Srinathan, Richard Liu, and their colleagues were able to re-organize quickly and treat the two urgent cases without bumping any of the scheduled procedures. The patients all received the care they needed—when they needed it—and two seats in the Emergency Department were left available for others.

Better outcomes for patients. Better efficiencies for the hospital. Significant impact by donors.

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