



Foundation Connection

Delivering Tomorrow's Health Care, Today

SPRING 2026

Brain Procedure Hits the Right Notes

Manitoba musical mainstay sings through surgery



Tusia Kozub with the donor-funded Elekta Esprit Gamma Knife used to treat her brain tumour.

It's not often you can describe persistent headaches as "lucky", but that's exactly how Petrusia (Tusia) Kozub feels about what she experienced in 2017.

"My doctor wasn't too concerned, but referred me for an MRI to be safe," says Kozub, 82. "That turned out to be the right decision."

The scan showed a type of brain tumour called a meningioma. Other than headaches (which went away), she had no symptoms. Because the tumour was small and not life-threatening, the decision was taken to just monitor the tumour regularly.

Kozub continued working until her retirement in 2020 when she was travelling around the province through the Manitoba Arts Council's Artists in Schools program, inspiring a new generation of musicians and singers. Earlier in her career, Kozub worked as a freelance singer and pianist, and as part of a sought-after vocal trio along with two of her siblings. (If you were raised in Winnipeg in the 1970s or 1980s, there is a very good chance you've heard the Kozubs on radio, television, or in concert.)

There were no significant changes until late 2024 when the tumour had grown to 2.2 centimetres. Kozub could have continued to monitor as her situation wasn't urgent, but Gamma Knife surgery was now an option.

"It was December, and I was anxious about it. It was overwhelming," says Kozub. "I didn't tell my family for two months."

In early 2025, with the reality of a growing tumour settling in, Kozub started to read about brain tumours and Gamma Knife technology. She learned that a Gamma Knife could safely destroy a brain tumour without incisions and with a low risk of damaging healthy tissue. She also learned that, in 2003, HSC was the first hospital in Canada to acquire a Gamma Knife, and that donors to the HSC Foundation had recently funded an upgrade.

With family support, Kozub returned to Dr. Jason Beiko in April and agreed to proceed with treatment. With medical consent, and still asymptomatic, she decided to wait until October. She returned to HSC for an MRI so the tumour's location could be precisely identified a few days before surgery. On surgery day, she was fitted with a head frame early in the morning to keep her head still during the procedure.

"They served breakfast to my husband and me and then (nurse) Leanne Yule explained everything," says Kozub. "She was thoughtful and reassuring. So were my other nurses, Kristen and Lesley. They all made me feel at ease."

Kozub was on the table for an hour while Dr. Beiko eradicated the tumour with targeted doses of gamma radiation. She was invited to bring her favourite music to enjoy during the procedure—a jazz recording of her husband, guitarist Ron Halldorson, who is also well known as a bassist with the legendary Lenny Breau. Kozub describes the experience as relaxing and comfortable: "I sang along with most of the tunes."

Kozub was back home in a few hours, with a bit of discomfort where the frame was attached to her head, but otherwise feeling fine and thankful. "I'm grateful for Dr. Beiko, my nurses, and the donors who made the new Gamma Knife possible," she says.

With your continued support of the HSC Foundation's Operation Excellence campaign, HSC can continue to acquire state-of-the-art equipment to improve the lives of Manitobans. Donate to Operation Excellence today!

Innovation HSC Radiothon Delivers Record-Breaking Support for Patient Care

Manitobans contributed more than \$525,000 in support of patient care and innovation

The 20th annual Innovation HSC Radiothon, presented by MARIC, took place on January 16 and raised a record-breaking \$525,189.98 in support of patient care and innovation at HSC Winnipeg—surpassing its \$400,000 goal. Broadcast live from HSC Women’s Hospital, listeners across Manitoba tuned in to 680 CJOB, Power 97, and Country 99 to hear powerful patient stories and frontline perspectives highlighting the impact of donor generosity.

This year’s total was amplified through generous matching gifts from community partners, including Access Credit Union, Arbor Memorial, Johnston Group, Just Like New to You, and Winnipeg Kinsmen. Funds raised supported critical priorities at HSC, including upgrades to advanced hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) surgical equipment, helping ensure patients requiring complex liver, pancreatic, and bile duct surgery have access to specialized care close to home.

“The record-breaking support shown during this year’s Radiothon reflects the strength and compassion of our community,” says Jonathon Lyon, President and CEO of the HSC Foundation. “Every gift helps advance patient care and innovation for Manitobans.”



Dr. Lev Bubis, hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) surgeon at HSC. Funds raised from the Radiothon supported critical HPB surgery upgrades, helping improve precision, safety, and outcomes for complex procedures.



Left to right: Andrea Senebald, Director of Partnerships & Major Gifts, HSC Foundation; Carol Cribbs, Founding Member, Just Like New to You; and Susan Lockhart, President, Just Like New to You — matching partners whose support helped amplify the Innovation HSC Radiothon’s impact.



Jennifer Graham received gynecological oncology surgery with Manitoba’s first surgical robot, which was funded by HSC Foundation donors.



Dan Rolfe, President of presenting sponsor MARIC, with Jonathon Lyon, President & CEO of the HSC Foundation, celebrating a record-breaking day.

“It was like a miracle!”

Donor support makes surgery possible for Lockport patient

Now that robot-assisted surgery has saved her life, Sylvia Molnar can reflect on a tense past and celebrate a few words shared in the past tense.

“Dr. Alon Altman called me following my surgery with my test results,” recalls Molnar, a resident of Lockport. “He said ‘you *had* cancer’. *Had!* The past tense! The relief I felt was unbelievable.”

Molnar, now 62, had been diagnosed with endometrial cancer in 2022. While initially slow-growing, her cancer became more advanced and her intermittent bleeding became more frequent. With complex medical needs, she was not a candidate for conventional forms of minimally invasive surgery, and open surgery would have been far too risky for her.

“I just wanted it out,” Molnar says. “Knowing that I had cancer inside of me. It was horrible and stressful. It felt like a nightmare I couldn’t wake up from.”

Molnar was treated with a combination of drugs, but the cancer progressed and her stress intensified. The future seemed bleak. And then, a new possibility emerged.

Through donor support of the HSC Foundation’s Operation Excellence campaign, HSC had recently acquired Manitoba’s first surgical robot—the da Vinci Xi. In its first year alone, it was used in 25 gynecological oncology cases where no other surgical option existed. Molnar was one of those patients.

“I had heard about the robot on the news,” she recalled. “When Dr. Altman told me I might be a candidate, it was the first time in years that I felt real hope.”

That hope was rewarded. For Molnar, the donor-funded robot made the impossible possible.

The robot enabled Dr. Altman and his colleagues to work through very small incisions, controlling the four highly precise arms of the robot from a nearby console, all the while seeing Molnar’s anatomy magnified in high definition.

During the September 2025 hysterectomy, Molnar’s doctors discovered that the cancer had progressed further than expected. But crucially, it had not spread beyond the uterus.

“If I had waited longer, it would have been a totally different outcome,” she said. “That robot came just in time for me.”



Sylvia Molnar and her husband Joe: “If it weren’t for the robot, this would have been a totally different story.”

Because of the minimally invasive nature of the surgery, Molnar was up and walking the very next morning, and discharged in the afternoon.

“I could not believe it,” she said. “It felt like a miracle. I didn’t feel like I’d just had major surgery.”

Today, Molnar is cancer-free and focused on a future with her children and grandchildren, and playing a lot of cribbage with her husband Joe.

“I’m not ready to leave my family yet,” she said. “I want to be here for everything.”

She is deeply grateful for Dr. Altman and the entire HSC team, and to the Foundation donors who made the technology possible.

“If it weren’t for the robot,” she said, “this would have been a totally different story.”

The da Vinci Xi surgical robot that saved Sylvia Molnar’s life was funded through the HSC Foundation’s Operation Excellence campaign.

With your support, HSC has been able to invest in the surgical robot and other leading-edge surgical technology. Please donate so that HSC can always deliver tomorrow’s health care, today.



Back on Her Feet Hours After Operation

Donor-funded equipment enables life-changing surgery for Lake Francis mom



Candace Andries' total hospital stay was eight hours long: "When I stood up, the leg pain was gone and I could move my toes. Nothing hurt at all. The relief was immediate."

Whether coaching at home plate or washing a dinner plate, Candace Andries' slipped disc was dishing up some serious leg pain one year ago.

The mother of three was raking her large yard in Lake Francis in the RM of Woodlands in March. An achy back after the spring clean-up soon escalated into unrelenting leg pain. "I couldn't stand for more than a few minutes," says the U9 girls softball coach. "Anything vertical was just not happening."

Believing it was sciatica, Andries decided to let the pain settle down. She sat down while preparing dinner; she sat on a bucket to coach her players. The pain persisted and she could no longer wiggle her toes. Sensing the urgency of the situation, a nearby public health nurse ordered a CT scan, which showed a herniated disc in her lower back pressing against critical nerves.

She was referred immediately to HSC neurosurgeon Dr. Alysa Almojuela, who told Andries she would need surgery.

"At first I was scared. You hear 'spine surgery' and you assume the worst," says Andries. "I figured they were going to cut me wide open and my life was going to get very hard, very fast."

That ended up being far from the case.



The small incision in Candace Andries' lower back required only three stitches: "The fact that they could fix my disc through such a small opening blows my mind," she says.

With new equipment, funded by donors to the HSC Foundation's Operation Excellence campaign, Dr. Almojuela was able to perform one of Manitoba's first endoscopic microdiscectomy procedures in September. Through one small incision, Dr. Almojuela used a tiny camera and specialized instruments to remove the portion of the disc pressing on the nerves.

"The cut was so small that it only needed three stitches," says Andries. "You could put a regular Band-Aid on it."

Grogginess from the anesthesia aside, Andries felt immediate relief and marvelled at the speed of her discharge.

"I arrived at HSC at 6:00 a.m. and the surgery began at 8:00. By 2:00 p.m. I was on my way home," says Andries. "When I stood, the leg pain was gone and I could move my toes. Nothing hurt at all. The relief was immediate."

Within days, Andries was back to routine, caring for her family, and reclaiming her independence. She even helped build a chicken coop on the family property.

As far as coaching goes, she's getting ready for the season and even expecting to play a bit of summer softball herself. As Andries swings for the fences, she'll do so with a strong sense of gratitude for Dr. Almojuela, the HSC staff, and Foundation donors who made her minimally invasive procedure possible.

"The fact that they could fix my disc through such a small opening blows my mind," she says. "Without that equipment, without those donors, and without Dr. Almojuela, I couldn't have gone back to being a mom as quickly as I did."

Equipment used in Candace Andries' surgery was funded by the HSC Foundation's Operation Excellence campaign. The campaign has invested millions of dollars to date in facility upgrades and new technologies that have enticed leading surgeons, including Dr. Alysa Almojuela, to join HSC. "There's a push at HSC to improve patient care and decrease wait times and that energy is contagious," said Dr. Almojuela. "It is something that I really wanted to be a part of."

Scan the QR code to support Operation Excellence.



Savour Mexico Delivers Record-Breaking Support for Patient Care

More than \$1.8 million raised to advance surgical care at HSC Winnipeg with donor-funded tech



Guests enthusiastically bidding during the live auction in support of patient care at HSC.



Big City All-Star Band bringing the energy and keeping guests on the dance floor all evening.



Guests sampling wines during the tasting experience presented by Manitoba Liquor Mart.



CJOB's Jim Toth and HSC surgeon Dr. Jay Toor highlight imaging technology supported through Fund-A-Need.

On February 21, guests gathered for an unforgettable evening at Savour Mexico: Wine & Food Experience, presented by Garcea Group of Companies. The annual gala brought the community together in support of innovation and patient care at HSC Winnipeg and raised more than \$1.8 million, making it the most successful Savour event to date.

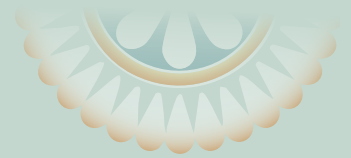
In the weeks leading up to the event, donor support and matching contributions from Greg and Becky Fettes, Just Like New to You, and Wellington-Altus Private Wealth fully funded the advanced hepato-pancreato-biliary surgical equipment originally featured by the Fund-A-Need campaign and auction, sponsored by Charity Auction Group. With that critical need met before the evening began, guests rallied behind a new priority: equipping a new operating room for spine surgery and joint replacement, supported by matching funds from the Manitoba Spine Program.

"Savour Mexico was a resonant reminder that our community cares deeply about health care and understands the Foundation's role as a catalyst," says Katie Hall Hursh, Board Chair of the HSC Foundation. "We bring people together. We educate. We engage. This event reflected all of that."

The HSC Foundation extends its sincere thanks to the guests, partners, Savour Committee members, and volunteers whose generosity and dedication made Savour Mexico a truly record-breaking success.



Left to right: Jonathon Lyon, President & CEO, HSC Foundation; Katie Hall Hursh, Board Chair, HSC Foundation; Dr. Edward Buchel, Surgery Site Director, HSC Winnipeg; and John Garcea of Garcea Group of Companies, presenting sponsor, at Savour Mexico: Wine & Food Experience.



Savour Mexico would not have been possible without the generous support of our partners.

Presenting Partner

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HSC Department of Obstetrics,
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It's For You

Please answer the call



In the coming weeks, you might receive a phone call from an HSC Foundation representative.*

Our phone campaign is designed to accelerate the growth of our monthly donor program in support of the HSC Foundation's vital work. Monthly gifts play a key role in advancing the Foundation's mission by providing steady, reliable funding that helps meet the ever-evolving needs of HSC—Manitoba's hospital.

Your monthly gift will enhance patient care, fund important technology acquisitions and facility upgrades, and support innovative health research.

When the phone rings this spring, please answer the call. It's for you. It's for your loved ones. It's for all Manitobans.

* Calls will originate from our partners at VoiceLogic.

To make your donation today, visit hscfoundation.mb.ca
or call 204-515-5612 or 1-800-679-8493 (toll-free).

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