

Rocky Health Foundation launches \$585K 'Your Rest Assured' fundraising campaign for new hospital beds

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After celebrating the success of its recent cardiac campaign, the Rocky Health Foundation is launching its next major fundraising effort: a \$585,000 campaign to replace every patient bed and stretcher in the hospital's acute care and emergency departments.

The new campaign, titled "Your Rest Assured," aims to fund a total replacement of the hospital's aging fleet.

"We're here for a couple of reasons," said Maureen Janke, secretary for the Rocky Health Foundation. "The first reason is to thank the community."

The foundation just successfully wrapped up its "Heart of the Community" campaign, which raised \$444,000 for cardiac equipment in just one year — a much faster timeline than anticipated.

"We've seen support from families, individuals, our business partners and anonymous donors," Janke said. "We feel truly blessed and absolutely gobsmacked ... we are touched that they continue to think about us and they really are helping build a legacy of healthcare here in our community."

Shirley Hope, chair of the Rocky Health Foundation, reiterated the sentiment: "From our hearts to yours, we've been telling the community, thank you."

'DESPERATELY NEEDED': REPLACING 21-YEAR-OLD BEDS

With the cardiac campaign complete, the foundation is now focusing on the hospital's next priority: beds and stretchers.

The goal is to raise \$585,000 to purchase 33 new beds and nine new stretchers.

According to foundation members, the need is

urgent. The hospital's current beds were purchased 21 years ago, following the foundation's first gala dinner in 2004.

"They're at the end of their life," said Joyce Ritchie, a community member of the foundation, relaying feedback from hospital nurses. "They can't get pieces to replace broken parts."

Ritchie explained that staff are "scrambling sometimes to find enough beds" and that some in use have to be "jerry-rigged so that they work."

This directly impacts patient care and trust, according to frontline staff. "Their comment was, 'it's really hard to build trust and respect for the patient when their first encounter with you has to do with you not being able to make the bed work,'" Ritchie said.

Other nurses told Ritchie the current beds are a "safety issue" and cause "a great deal of frustration" when features don't function properly.

NEW TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND COMFORT

The new beds represent a significant technological leap, offering features that benefit both patients and staff.

Jess Moncrief, a nurse and foundation committee member, provided information on the advantages. The new beds will help prevent pressure injuries (bed sores) with innovative surfaces and "continuous lateral rotation ability" that changes pressure points for patients.

Other key features include: pressure reduction to prevent pressure injuries (up to 33 per cent reduction) with innovative surfaces and continuous lateral rotation ability; reduction in patient falls due to increased safety features such as visual icons on the floor that monitor

bed safety features in place, bed exit alarms; verbal safety prompts to patients and caregivers like 'please don't get up' or "brakes not set"; adjustable length up to 12 inches; stand assist; and easy-to-use patient controls which include charging ports in the bed rail.

Nurses also noted that some current airbeds are "noisy" and "creepy," with motors that wake patients. Furthermore, the current birthing beds are described as "very uncomfortable for postpartum use."

Angie Breault, the foundation coordinator, noted the new standardized models will also help staff, including travelling (locum) nurses, who are often unfamiliar with the hospital's multiple, outdated bed models.

"It's so nice to have equipment that the other hospitals have," Breault said, recounting a nurse's comment. "We want their attention on the patients, not on how to put a bed into sitting position."

A 'SOFT LAUNCH' FOR A BIG CAMPAIGN

According to Hope, this is the "soft launch" for the "Your Rest Assured" campaign.

There is no set deadline to raise the \$585,000. Breault explained that the foundation can order the new equipment in groups as funds are raised, rather than waiting for the full amount.

"It's a big campaign for sure, one of our biggest ones," said Janke. "But it's something that is desperately needed here in the community."

"That just shows the generosity of Rocky and Clearwater County," Breault added, reflecting on the last campaign's success. "We're very lucky to see that generous support each and every time we do something."