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## Marshall Eliuk Cardiac Interventional and Advanced Heart Rhythm Program opens at Kelowna General Hospital

KELOWNA – When Penticton resident Betty Lou Thomas woke up in her local hospital’s intensive care unit, she had no memory of what had happened. The last thing she remembered was sitting in a waiting room at her gym on a fall November day. That is when she suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed without warning. Twenty-four hours later, she was transferred to the cardiac care unit at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH).

Luckily for Betty, just a few days earlier the new Marshall Eliuk Cardiac Interventional and Advanced Heart Rhythm Program had opened at KGH, meaning she did not have to travel any farther for care. The advanced heart rhythm program is a partnership between Interior Health, Cardiac Services BC and the KGH Foundation, which raised \$7 million for the program.

After a series of tests, Betty had an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) surgically inserted in her chest in the newly completed KGH Electrophysiology Lab, which opened as part of the advanced heart rhythm program. The ICD is designed to shock her heart back into normal rhythm if necessary. The day after the procedure, she was back home in Penticton, resting and recovering.

“Honestly, it was a phenomenal experience,” said Betty. “Even though it was a scary procedure and scary what happened, I felt very comfortable. Everyone was so knowledgeable. We are lucky to have this in Kelowna. Now, for everyone who needs this in the Interior, it’s so close, rather than us going to Victoria.”

“Bringing services closer to residents is a key priority for our government and the opening of the new heart rhythm program at Kelowna General Hospital will benefit patients in all parts of Interior Health. I’d like to thank everyone involved for their dedication and hard work, and the community for their tremendous support with their donations to the KGH Foundation,” said Health Minister Adrian Dix.

Opening the Electrophysiology Lab at KGH allowed Interior Health to add the advanced heart rhythm program to other specialty cardiac services at the hospital, including medical cardiology and cardiac surgery inpatient units, a coronary care unit, a cardiac surgery intensive care unit, cardiac imaging and an intervention lab. Patients from across the Interior region who need higher-level cardiac care can now access the full range of services in Kelowna.

As well, services are available at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops, where there is a coronary care unit, medical cardiology inpatient unit, and cardiac outpatient clinics. In addition, internal medicine specialists provide cardiac care in Cranbrook, Vernon, Salmon Arm, Penticton and Trail.

“Congratulations to everyone involved in this effort to enhance cardiac services for residents of Interior Health,” said IH Board Chair Doug Cochrane. “The partnership between Interior Health, Cardiac Services BC and the KGH Foundation demonstrates how collaboration can be the basis of enhancing patient care. This new program will benefit many people in our region.”

Community support for the program was critical and the KGH Foundation’s call to raise money for advanced heart rhythm services struck a chord with donors. In less than a year, the foundation raised \$7 million for the needed equipment in the Electrophysiology (EP) Lab.

“We are grateful to be the bridge between such an incredibly generous community and our regional partners in health care,” says Doug Rankmore, CEO of the KGH Foundation. “The addition of electrophysiology and advanced heart rhythm services at KGH as part of Interior Health’s cardiac program are significant advancements that we can all celebrate.”

The establishment of the EP Lab at KGH not only enhances care for patients in IH, it contributes to an expanding network for cardiac services within the province. Patients across B.C. will benefit because of an overall increase in capacity for the management of heart rhythm disorders.

“Timely, high quality access to specialized care, which is close to home, will improve the experience of care for our patients, their families and caregivers,” said Dr. Sean Virani, Provincial Medical Director of Cardiac Services BC. “The IH program is a demonstration of our commitment to better understand the journey of those suffering from cardiovascular disease in B.C., regardless of where they live, and implementing solutions that will improve not just the quantity, but the quality of their lives as well.”

For cardiac patients like Betty Lou Thomas, having services closer to her Penticton home made a hard situation that much easier. Betty is grateful her experience took place just about an hour from her hometown instead of having to travel much farther.

“It’s wonderful for our community that we have this service because heart problems are something so many people have. This can happen to anybody and we are lucky to have such an efficient and effective service so close to home,” she said.

[Watch a KGH Foundation video on the new KGH EP lab here.](#)

**Photo caption:** Patient Betty Lou Thomas after her procedure in the KGH electrophysiology (EP) lab.

#### Quick facts:

- The new KGH EP lab is named after Marshall Eliuk, an Edmonton and Peace River businessperson and philanthropist, who donated the final \$1.4 million to the KGH Foundation’s fundraising campaign, his first donation to KGH.
- Over \$1 million was raised from community donations during the KGH Foundation’s annual Day of Giving, which will take place again in the spring of this year. For more information, and to donate to the KGH Foundation, you can find them online at [kghfoundation.com](http://kghfoundation.com) or on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).
- KGH is now the fifth adult EP program in the province, alongside Royal Jubilee Hospital, Vancouver General Hospital, St. Paul’s Hospital and Royal Columbian Hospital. This additional expertise and lab capacity will enhance service delivery throughout the province and improve B.C.’s capacity to provide specialized services to patients province-wide. Learn more about province-wide cardiovascular care and services at [www.cardiacbc.ca](http://www.cardiacbc.ca)

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- 30 -

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