

For Immediate Release | May 1, 2024

KBRH Health Foundation donations help keep expectant families closer to home

TRAIL – Thanks to the Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital (KBRH) Health Foundation and its generous donors, Interior Health will be able to keep more Kootenay Boundary expectant families facing early deliveries closer to home.

A new Tier 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at KBRH, made possible by \$745,000 in additional Foundation-funded equipment and the addition of specialized NICU healthcare workers by Interior Health, means KBRH has the capacity to support deliveries and care for babies born after 34 weeks, as well urgent acute care for babies born even earlier with moderate risk.

"Families who have babies before full term face additional challenges and stress," said Susan Brown, president and CEO of Interior Health. "In addition to the equipment from the Foundation, our nurses in Trail stepped up to take the specialized training needed to support this increased service, and we added new positions to the department. This commitment helps provide the best possible outcomes to these families without the burden of travel."

A Tier 3 NICU requires significant equipment upgrades to accommodate the needs of the newborns. Three newly funded isolettes (specialized cribs), monitors and stabilization equipment are available with care provided by neonatal healthcare professionals including a NICU educator and nurses, and allied health professionals.

"This is wonderful for families in the Kootenay Boundary," said Lisa Pasin, executive director of the KBRH Health Foundation. "The new neonatal medical equipment will improve accessibility to a higher level of care for families during what can be a challenging time and will also support specialist services and recruitment for our area."

"The only focus for expectant families should be their new baby," said Katrine Conroy, MLA for Kootenay West. "This new NICU will reduce the need for long-distance travel for early deliveries and is a great example of bringing the health care people need, closer to home."

The new service will benefit expectant families throughout the entire Kootenay Boundary, reducing the burden of travel and keeping them close to local extended family and supports.

"We are thrilled to open our Tier 3 NICU and care for mothers and babies close to home," said Ian Ferguson, obstetrician, gynecologist and department head of Maternity and Pediatrics at KBRH. "We can now keep patients local and repatriate other patients back

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.

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home sooner when they otherwise would have had to relocate for care. It has made a huge difference for the families of our region, and everyone is very excited.”

“Our pediatrics team is very excited to announce the official opening of the NICU at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital,” said Dr. Brenna Eldridge, pediatrician. “This will provide much needed support for babies born prematurely and newborns who may require extra support, and will allow infants to stay in a supported environment as they recover and grow or await transport. We are immensely grateful to all those who supported this project.”

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