

News release

For immediate release

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Major fundraising campaign launched to bring world-class surgical technology to New Brunswick

Atlantic Canada's first cardiac-enabled Hybrid OR and one of Canada's first spinal robotics programs to open at Saint John Regional Hospital by 2027 – bringing exceptional care right here at home

SAINT JOHN, N.B. – The Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation announced the public launch of its \$10.5 million “Working Wonders” campaign today to bring leading-edge surgical technology to New Brunswickers, with plans to open a Hybrid Operating Room and a spinal robotics program at the Saint John Regional Hospital by 2027.

This project will establish Atlantic Canada's first cardiac-enabled Hybrid Operating Room and launch one of Canada's first spinal robotics programs, positioning Saint John as a provincial and regional leader in surgical innovation.

Approximately 55 per cent of the campaign's goal – \$5.8 million – has already been raised thanks to the generosity of local donors and a newly launched Campaign Cabinet, enabling the project to move ahead with confidence and momentum. This includes transformative principal gifts of \$1.5 million from Andrew K. McCain, \$1.5 million from The McCain Foundation and \$1 million from the Sir James Dunn Foundation. Their extraordinary generosity underscores the vital role of philanthropy in driving health care innovation and is a cornerstone of this campaign's success.

The new Hybrid OR will enable complex cardiac and vascular procedures to be performed more safely, efficiently and with fewer patient transfers. The addition of a spinal robotics program – among the first of its kind in Canada – will improve outcomes for patients with complex spinal conditions through greater surgical precision, smaller incisions and faster recovery times.

“These two major investments have been identified as top priorities not just in our region, but in many jurisdictions – a reflection of how transformative they are for cardiac and spinal care,” said Shannon Hunter, President and CEO of the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation. “Our community is having an impact and making this transformation possible. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are already well on our way to meeting our goal. With continued donor support, we will welcome one of the first spinal programs in Canada and open the doors to New Brunswick's first cardiac-enabled Hybrid OR. This is a powerful testament to what community philanthropy can achieve.”

Both initiatives will serve as critical recruitment and retention tools for surgical teams at the Saint John Regional Hospital, aligning with broader efforts by Horizon Health Network and the Government of New Brunswick to modernize the standard of health care delivery and address growing surgical wait times.

“As the provincial referral centre for complex cardiac and spinal surgical care, Horizon’s Saint John Regional Hospital is the perfect setting for this innovative technology,” said Margaret Melanson, President and CEO of Horizon Health Network. “Advanced tools like spinal robotics and hybrid surgical suites are essential to meeting patient needs, improving outcomes and transforming health care, making New Brunswick a destination for surgical excellence.”

“A hybrid operating room and spinal robotics program are critical steps in delivering better, faster care to patients across the province,” said Health Minister John Dornan. “These technologies also help attract and retain the highly skilled surgeons we need. This is a forward-looking investment that will benefit New Brunswickers for decades to come.”

Additional Quotes & Quick Facts

Andrew K. McCain, Donor and Honorary Campaign Chair

“As Honourary Chair of the Campaign and someone who has experienced exceptional care at the New Brunswick Heart Centre, I know how vital it is to invest in surgical innovation. I’m proud to support an initiative that will deliver better care, faster, for patients and families across New Brunswick.”

Ann McCain Evans, Chairperson, The McCain Foundation

“Supporting the health and well-being of New Brunswickers has long been a priority for our foundation. These investments in advanced surgical technology will have a lasting impact, improving outcomes for patients and helping to attract and retain the skilled health care professionals our province depends on.”

Dr. Jean-François Légaré, Physician Program Lead for Horizon Health Network’s Cardiac Care Program

“This Hybrid OR will give us real-time imaging and surgical capabilities in a single space – enabling complex heart and vascular procedures that are safer and more efficient.”

Dr. Najmedden Attabib, Clinical Department Head, Clinical Neurosciences

“The spinal robotics program will transform how we approach spinal surgery in this province. Patients will experience shorter recovery times, fewer complications and a higher standard of care overall.”

Jim Mowbray, Board Chair, Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation

“We believe New Brunswickers deserve the very best surgical care, right here at home. On behalf of the foundation’s Board of Directors, we’re grateful to our generous donors who have helped us bring these cornerstone investments to Saint John, and we look forward to working with our community to deliver a brighter health care future.”

Fast Facts

- The Hybrid OR and spinal robotics program will be located at the Saint John Regional Hospital – New Brunswick’s largest surgical hospital and home to the New Brunswick Heart Centre. The Saint John Regional Hospital is the province’s only tertiary cardiac centre, serving nearly one million New Brunswickers and Atlantic Canadians each year.
- Early momentum for the \$10.5 million campaign has been driven by generous principal gifts of \$1.5 million from Andrew McCain, \$1.5 million from The McCain Foundation and \$1 million from the Sir James Dunn Foundation. Approximately 55% of the campaign goal – \$5.8 million – has been raised to date.
- Bringing this next-generation surgical technology to New Brunswick will help recruit and retain leading physicians and surgeons. The Saint John Regional Hospital’s surgical team includes **five cardiac surgeons and two vascular surgeons**.
- The Saint John Regional Hospital performs more than **14,800 surgeries annually**, including nearly **4,800 cardiac procedures** and **380 spinal surgeries**.
- The new Hybrid OR will handle **~260 complex cardiac cases annually** and is expected to boost cardiac procedure volume by **5–10%**, while the spinal robotics program will enable greater precision, faster recoveries and capacity growth in spinal care.
- A cardiac-enabled Hybrid OR, a new operating room at the Saint John Regional Hospital, will **increase surgical capacity by 20%**, helping to reduce wait times for complex procedures.
- The Hybrid OR is expected to open in 2027. The timing of the spinal robotics program launch will be determined by the completion of the campaign fundraising.

About the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation

Since 1984, the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation has been dedicated to inspiring donor generosity, enabling and recognizing community support in advancing patient care. Our community has helped raise over \$160 million, funding new cutting-edge technologies, capital projects, innovation, medical research and professional education in all health care areas, improving the health of New Brunswickers. For more information, visit: sjrhfoundation.ca.

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