

# IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

## Stollery neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at the Sturgeon Community Hospital



In October 2019, a six-bed Stollery NICU opened at the Sturgeon Community Hospital. This new unit allows families from St. Albert and surrounding areas to receive critical medical care for their premature babies without having to transfer to an Edmonton hospital. This keeps families closer to home - where they heal best.

Alongside the Government of Alberta's \$2.3 million investment in the space, we've invested **\$2 million** to fund state-of-the-art equipment and training. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we can give the Stollery team at the Sturgeon what they need to achieve the best possible outcomes for the littlest patients.

## THANK YOU!

Together, we're transforming children's health care in Western Canada by making sure kids and youth have access to some of the best physical and mental health care - right in their backyard.



"I would like to thank everybody from the bottom of my heart, because I know this is going to make a huge impact and benefit so many families in the future."

— **Jamie McMillan**,  
Stollery Mom (with husband  
Gordon, son Austin and  
daughter Lexi)

# The Stollery Comes to Sturgeon

The new **Stollery NICU** at the Sturgeon Community Hospital opened its doors this October — an essential addition that the community supports.

BY KARIN OLAFSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY COOPER & O'HARA

Every day is a busy day over in the labour and delivery unit at the Sturgeon Community Hospital. And recently, the unit has only gotten busier: the number of deliveries here has dramatically increased in the last few years as the population of St. Albert and its surrounding communities grows. Thankfully, now that the Stollery neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) is open on-site, the hospital is more prepared than ever to deliver the best care possible to its youngest patients.

The new Stollery NICU officially opened its doors at the Sturgeon Community Hospital in October 2019. The addition of this six-bed NICU means the hospital now has the space, specialized equipment and trained staff to keep babies who need neonatal intensive care close to home. The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation is raising an additional \$2 million for the new NICU to fund staff training and additional state-of-the-art equipment essential to the continued running of the unit.

The need for the Stollery NICU in Sturgeon County was clear. Prior to the unit's arrival, Alberta Health Services had identified the Sturgeon Community Hospital as the largest labour and delivery site in Alberta without neonatal support. In other words, any baby born there requiring

neonatal intensive care had to be transferred to one of four NICUs in Edmonton. In fact, approximately every three days, the Stollery transport team rushed a newborn from St. Albert to a NICU in Edmonton.

As Nafisa Bowen, development officer of major gifts with the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation, points out, the new Stollery NICU changes that. "Now, any baby born at the Sturgeon Community Hospital has access to neonatal intensive care if needed," says Bowen. "The new Stollery NICU brings a critical level of care to this community and the surrounding communities, and it will be able to provide that care for generations to come."

## ELEVATING NEONATAL CARE AT HOME

Lisa Lenuik is a registered nurse by training and is currently working as the Stollery patient care manager with the Stollery Neonatal Intensive Care program at the Sturgeon Community Hospital site. In this role, she oversees the NICU nurses and support services at the hospital and also helped with the development, design and opening of the Stollery NICU.

"I was able to visit other NICU sites in Edmonton and take some of the components I saw working well at those other units and help incorporate them here in St. Albert," says

Lenuik. "Personally, I'm happy to see the innovations and expert practices the Stollery is known for incorporated into the Stollery NICU at the Sturgeon Community Hospital, making this a great unit for the NICU team to provide quality care here in the community."

Lenuik says she's also excited that the new unit allows the staff she oversees to provide care that meets the hospital's current demand. Between April 2018 and March 2019, close to 3,000 babies were born at the Sturgeon Community Hospital. During that time, 121 of those babies had to be transferred to Edmonton for a higher level of care than the Sturgeon Community Hospital could provide.

"The new Stollery NICU allows us to keep many of those babies here and with their parents," says Lenuik.





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**I'M HAPPY TO SEE THE INNOVATIONS AND EXPERT PRACTICES THE STOLLERY IS KNOWN FOR INCORPORATED INTO THE STOLLERY NICU AT THE STURGEON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL. ”**

LISA LENUIK



LISA LENUIK INSIDE THE NEW STOLLERY NICU.



“Keeping mom and baby together is essential for bonding, it increases milk production and decreases anxiety. It’s heartbreaking to see a baby separate from its mom to go to a unit outside of the St. Albert area. That’s the hardest part of the frontline nurses’ job: easing parents’ fears when they learn their baby isn’t well, needs medical support and can’t go home.”

Lenuik adds that keeping newborns in the community — or at least a little closer to their hometowns — and keeping families together will relieve some stress during what can be a difficult time.

### COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND SUPPORT

Craig Strain has personally experienced the deep stress of being separated from his child. In January 2016, the St. Albert local’s newborn son, Grier, had to be rushed to Misericordia Community Hospital’s NICU in Edmonton.

“If we’d had a NICU in St. Albert at that time, it could have saved my wife and I a lot of anxiety and tension when Grier was born,” says Strain. “I remember the transport team arriving with what looked like a portable yellow submarine, ready to transport my son to the Misericordia at one in the morning. That was difficult, and then it was a real process for us to pack up and drive across the city to meet them in Edmonton.”

Like Lenuik, Strain is certain the new Stollery NICU will have a huge impact for families in Sturgeon County and beyond, and he has been actively showing his support. Strain is a member of the St. Albert chapter of the Canadian Progress Club, which is a national service group with just under 30 chapters across the country. Each chapter sets its own fundraising goals, and the St. Albert chapter focuses mostly on supporting children’s charities. So, when Strain and his fellow club-members first heard about the Stollery NICU coming to St. Albert,



THE STOLLERY NICU MURAL CONCEPT.

they recognized immediately that the project aligned perfectly with their mission. The club and the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation partnered in January 2019, and the club set the goal of raising half a million dollars to support the new NICU.

This summer, the club launched its mosaic mural fundraiser. Donors support the fundraiser by paying for one of the mosaic’s 713 tiles; the final six-by-eight-foot mosaic piece, which will be installed in 2020, will live in the new Stollery NICU’s family lounge and will brighten up the area for visiting families. Nationally acclaimed mosaic mural artist Lewis Lavoie, who is from St. Albert, is creating the family-friendly mural out of tiles customized for donors. The final piece will depict a young child holding a teddy bear.

“We wanted the end-result of the fundraiser to be something inviting and cheerful, but also long-lasting within the new NICU family lounge,” says Strain. “The mosaic mural creates a memory of how the entire community came together to support this major, invaluable Stollery NICU project to help families from backyards across St. Albert and the Sturgeon County Area.”

## The Stollery NICU at the Sturgeon

### BY THE NUMBERS

6

beds in the new unit

2

private rooms

1

“pod” room with space for 4 babies

\$2M

contributed by the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation for equipment and training

3,007

babies born at the Sturgeon Community Hospital in 2016-17