



## Hospital volunteers support Personalized Medicine Program

*London Health Sciences Centre Auxiliary pledges \$2.24 million*

October 6, 2016

**London, Ont.** – When you visit the gift and flower shops run by London Health Sciences Centre's Auxiliary, their connection to hospital innovation may not be readily apparent, but it is there. Proceeds from the flowers, snacks and carefully selected inventory of gift items support some very progressive programs over the volunteer organization's history.

"The commitment of the LHSC Auxiliary shows in the remarkable initiatives to improve patient care that they've supported in the past 92 years," says London Health Sciences Foundation Chair Tod Warner. "The Auxiliary volunteers' care towards patients and families is most evident as they thoroughly consider how to designate the funds that they raise."

From establishing the first scholarship for post-graduate nursing studies in North America, to forming the first Ontario Cancer Control Committee to educate the public about cancer, to its 1999 pledge of \$5 million towards hospital redevelopment - the largest pledge ever from a hospital auxiliary in Canada - to its support for a mental health project to ease patients' transition between child, youth and adult programs, the LHSC Auxiliary has contributed greatly to care in our region.

"I am so proud of our members," says Auxiliary President, Louise McKnight. "Their dedication to our hospital, its staff and most of all its patients is the reason we can support LHSC like this. It's not uncommon for our members to volunteer 20 or 25 hours each week - and some of them have done so for more than 35 years."

Today, the LHSC Auxiliary announced its latest pledge of \$2.24 million to support Canada's first hospital-wide implementation of personalized medicine under the leadership of world-renowned clinical pharmacologist and LHSC Chair/Chief, Clinical Pharmacology, Dr. Richard Kim.

The ceremonial cheque presentation was appropriately made just outside the Auxiliary's "Victoria's Place" gift shop in Victoria Hospital's North Tower, Zone B Atrium.

"This pledge supports LHSC's journey to fundamentally transform the way care is provided in our hospital and community – but the Auxiliary's contribution goes beyond the gifts, services and financial support they provide – these volunteers are truly great ambassadors for our hospital," says LHSC President and CEO Murray Glendining.



*LHSC Auxiliary President Louise McKnight (left) presents a cheque for \$2.24 million, to LHSC Chief Clinical Officer Laurie Gould, LHSF Chair Tod Warner, LHSC Chair Chief Clinical Pharmacology Dr. Richard Kim and LHSF President & CEO John MacFarlane.*

The pledge will support laboratory positions, the purchase of key technology for genomic diagnostics, training initiatives and other resources needed to enable Canada's first hospital-wide deployment of this personalized medicine approach.

Personalized medicine uses recent advances in genomic diagnostic technologies to understand the genetic differences between individuals and how each patient will process medications. This process helps identify the best medication, at the right dose to be most effective for each, individual patient - while reducing the possibility of adverse drug reactions.

In contrast, traditional prescribing protocols or the "iterative" approach, factors in patient group traits and clinical experience to determine an effective medication and dosage for treating an identified symptom, condition or disease. While this method works for a significant proportion of patients, it cannot predict a percentage of patients whose bodies may not process the medication as intended, thus reducing its effect, or worse, causing an adverse reaction.

"Personalized Medicine increases patient safety and quality-of-care," says Dr. Kim. "The LHSC Auxiliary's donation will help transform the model of care at London Health Sciences Centre - and eventually worldwide - by incorporating personalized gene testing as a part of patient care."

The Auxiliary's gift and flower shops are located at **University Hospital:** Zone B, 1st Floor, and at **Victoria Hospital:** Victoria's Place - Zone B, 1st Floor, Boutique - Zone D, 3rd Floor, Garden Shoppe - Zone D, 3rd Floor, and Tower Shop - Zone E, 1st Floor.

...End