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## **Local couple donates \$500,000 to address growing mental health crisis and advance care at PRHC**

**Peterborough, ON:** In a remarkable gesture of compassion and commitment, local philanthropists Dr. Patricia and David Morton have donated \$500,000 to the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) Foundation and the future of mental health and addictions care at the hospital.

Lesley Heighway, PRHC Foundation President & CEO, made the announcement Wednesday at a private family event unveiling new recognition signage in the couple's honour, sharing that the Mortons' gift will help transform the quality of the patient experience in PRHC's Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Response Unit.

"We're incredibly grateful to Patricia and David for stepping forward once again for our hospital and healthcare in our region," said Heighway. "Their gift will serve as a beacon of hope for countless individuals and families affected by mental illness and allow PRHC to transform physical spaces and lives.

"Their generosity mirrors their compassion," she added, "underscoring our shared belief that by supporting mental health and addictions crisis treatment, we can break down stigma, elevate the standard of care, and create inclusive environments where individuals feel valued, cared for, and understood."

The couple, who have long supported PRHC as both donors and volunteers, say they were moved to direct their donation to PRHC's Crisis Response Unit after their family suffered a profound loss due to suicide.

"Our family has experienced the terrible toll that mental illness can take," said Patricia. "We know that we're not alone and that there are many people and families in our communities fighting the same battles. We decided to give to better, safer, and more accessible mental health crisis spaces at our hospital so we can improve access, raise awareness, and make hope and recovery possible for more patients from Peterborough and our surrounding region."

Jennifer Cox, Director of Mental Health & Addictions at PRHC says that help is desperately needed, noting that PRHC, like hospitals across the country, has seen staggering increases in mental health patient volumes in recent years.

"A mental health crisis can strike at any time and when it does, our Emergency Department Crisis Response Unit is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Cox. "However, patient visits to the unit have more than doubled over the past ten years, with more than 3,600 visits last year alone. The Mortons' gift will help us increase the size of the unit by 50 percent, adding natural light, creating a dedicated waiting area for children, adolescents, and their families, and building a secure, 72-hour short-stay area for high-risk patients in need of reduced stimulation and enhanced nursing care."

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PRHC President & CEO, Lynn Mikula, added that where you heal is essential to how you heal. “With the help of the Mortons and donors like them, we’re investing in a healing environment for mental health and addictions patients, providing them with a safe and appropriate space to rest while seeking emergency intervention. Together, we’ll create conditions that foster hope, dignity, and comfort, empowering patients to embark on their journey towards recovery with confidence and strength.”

David Morton says that at the heart of their donation lies a profound desire to turn tragedy into hope. “We believe that by making sure people in crisis have a safe, secure, and supportive environment to go to for assistance, we can help prevent others from experiencing the devastation of losing a beloved family member or dear friend to mental illness,” he said. “Our hope is that this contribution will serve as a catalyst for positive change and inspire others to join us in giving to the future of mental health care in our community.”

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## **Our mission has never been more important...**

Hundreds of thousands of people from across our region rely on Peterborough Regional Health Centre for world-class care close to home. Because the government doesn’t fund equipment, we count on your gifts to fund the tools needed to save lives. Donations to the PRHC Foundation fund state-of-the-art technology, fuel innovation, bring lifesaving new services, and attract the best and brightest healthcare professionals.

To learn more about our most urgent areas of investment or to donate, contact us at 705-876-5000, [foundation@prhc.on.ca](mailto:foundation@prhc.on.ca) or visit [prhcfoundation.ca](http://prhcfoundation.ca).

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