



## REGIONAL INTEREST

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2020

#### **Kimberley Health Care Auxiliary's Partnership with the EKFH is Saving Lives!**

An amazing donation from the Kimberley Health Care Auxiliary presented to the East Kootenay Foundation for Health (EKFH) is playing a very important role in COVID-19. In December of 2017 the Kimberley Health Care Auxiliary presented a cheque to the East Kootenay Foundation for Health in the amount of \$83,700.00. This donation included the purchase of a Polymerase Chain Reaction Machine (PCR). Little did anyone know that a few years later the world would be facing a world pandemic that would change lives forever. Thanks to this wonderful donation, the East Kootenay Interior Health Region now has the capability to test for COVID-19 and get results within one hour instead of having to send it to Kelowna or Vancouver, which would take up to 7 days to get results. The following letter was recently sent to the EKFH:

#### **Update: COVID-19 Testing at EKRH**

April 29, 2020

Dear East Kootenay Donors,

Two years ago, thanks to the generosity of the Kimberley Health Care Auxiliary in conjunction with the East Kootenay Foundation for Health, the East Kootenay Regional Hospital microbiology lab acquired a GeneXpert polymerase chain reaction (PCR) instrument. This highly advanced diagnostic instrument has allowed us to detect and identify important viruses (influenza and RSV) and "superbug" bacteria (C. difficile and MRSA from blood cultures) faster than ever before, enabling rapid treatment and the prevention/control of outbreaks in East Kootenay healthcare facilities.

Of course, we couldn't have known that we would be facing a global pandemic just two years later, and that this same PCR technology would be vital to the health of our EK communities. Using the GeneXpert, **we are now able to perform COVID-19 testing right here at EKRH**, providing results in under an hour for the patients who need them most urgently. We cannot overemphasize the impact of this gift, without which we would have continued to wait for testing performed at Kelowna General Hospital or the BC CDC in Vancouver. By allowing rapid confirmation and rule-out of COVID-19, we are able to better manage patients while conserving important resources such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and negative pressure isolation rooms. This testing guides infection control and public health interventions in our hospitals, long-term care facilities, and even work camps, and has truly saved this region.



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All of you who support the East Kootenay Foundation for Health are our guardian angels. It is you who have always been there, in good times and challenging times. Thank you on behalf of all East Kootenay medical practitioners and patients for your continued support during this crisis. Never doubt that your support is making a difference. Indeed, it is saving lives.

With deepest gratitude,

*Launny Lowden*

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Brenna Baker, Executive Director for the East Kootenay Foundation for Health, commented “The acts of support for our local hospitals, extended care homes and community health programs over the years have been amazing and we thank all of our supporters! In the midst of COVID-19, our hospitals after all, are still hospitals. Babies are still being born. Family members are still suffering strokes. Cancer, heart attacks and car accidents do not yield for global pandemics. There is not enough government money for all of the equipment needs so there is a constant need for support of the East Kootenay Foundation for Health to keep our facilities up to date. Thanks to our supporters, together we are making a difference in healthcare for the East Kootenay! This letter is a testament that donors are making a huge impact on our hospitals. Even though we aren’t asking directly for COVID support, we are still actively fundraising for ongoing important projects throughout the East Kootenay such as the SPECT CT for the East Kootenay Regional Hospital. We will also be kicking off an Ultrasound campaign for the Elk Valley Hospital in the upcoming months. Donations at this time are very important in order to continue the work that we do.”

The EKFH supports the East Kootenay Region including Creston, Cranbrook, Kimberley, Fernie, Sparwood, Elkford, Invermere and the Columbia Valley, and Golden. The EKFH is very close to their goal of \$1.2million for the SPECT CT Campaign with only \$50,000 more to go. This life-saving piece of equipment is going to benefit residents from all over the East Kootenay and it will save lives! To find out more, or to donate, please visit [ekfh.ca](http://ekfh.ca) or call 250-489-6481.

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