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Covid-19 crisis forces cancellation of hospital fundraisers

The emergence of the Covid-19 crisis is impacting the delivery of health care in Western Nova Scotia in many ways, including the fundraising activities of the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation.

Two of the Foundation's major events — the Spring Gala and Jody Shelley's Golf Fore Health — have been cancelled in their normal format for this year, Board Chair Dr. Harold Cook has announced.

“In these unprecedented times for our community, country and indeed the world, the primary concern of the Foundation is for the health, safety and general well-being of everyone,” Cook says. “Accordingly, we are formally suspending our normal approach to our operations and activities over the next three months.

“We need to be ready to meet the existing and possibly changing needs of Yarmouth Regional Hospital, which serves Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties,” he says. The Foundation raises funds for equipment, programs and other essential services for the hospital, including the retention and recruitment of physicians initiative.

For example, Cook says, the Foundation will be developing processes to encourage sponsors and participants in the special events to continue their support through some form of “virtual participation.”

The Spring Gala was scheduled for May 30 at the Mariners Centre. The goal was to raise \$60,000 for a collaborative learning centre for medical personnel. The Jody Shelley Golf Fore Health, which aimed to raise \$40,500 for six operating room stretchers, was to have been held July 10 at the Yarmouth Golf and Country Club. These two events have raised \$1,156,000 for equipment since they began in 2005.

The annual WE CARE Radiothon, launched in 2017, has raised \$420,000. In the past two years, respiratory equipment — which is so important in today's health crisis — has been the focus of the fundraising efforts.

The Foundation office in the hospital lobby will be closed, and staff will be working from their own homes with phone, email and computer facilities available during normal business hours.

“While we are changing how we are operating for the time being, the need to support our regional hospital continues,” Cook stresses. “The needs of the hospital can quickly change in ways we have not been able to predict, so we may be called upon to step up our game to respond to the demands of this healthcare crisis.”

The easiest way to support the needs of healthcare in Western Nova Scotia is online, by clicking the DONATE NOW button on the Foundation's webpage — yarmouthhospitalfoundation.ca. You may also donate by calling 902-740-5873 or by mailing cheques to the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation, c/o PO Box 7, Yarmouth, NS B5A 4B1.

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