

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Partnership to Benefit Breast Screening Patients without Primary Care Provider

(Thunder Bay, ON – July 17, 2023) A new partnership between Prevention and Screening Clinical Services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and Lakehead Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic (LNPLC) will ensure patients without a primary care provider are being screened for breast cancer and will get the follow-up care required in a timely manner.

In the Thunder Bay area, there are over 30,000 individuals without a Primary Care Provider (i.e. family physician or nurse practitioner), referred to as unattached patients. Prior to this partnership, unattached patients requiring follow-up from a routine breast screening mammogram would have to facilitate it through a walk in clinic or the emergency department.

Thanks to this new partnership, unattached patients who require follow up after having a routine breast screening mammogram at an Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) site in Thunder Bay, now have the option of having it through the LNPLC. These patients are assigned a Nurse Practitioner at LNPLC who receives a copy of the patient's test results and facilitates any necessary additional testing.

"Our clinic is pleased to partner with TBRHSC to offer this important access to care," says Pam Delgaty, Executive Director at LNPLC. "Abnormal mammogram results are difficult for patients to understand and can be intimidating at best. Our team's goal is to help these patients navigate the system and in doing so, relieve some of the anxiety they may be experiencing."

As a result of this new partnership, individuals requiring follow-up due to abnormal results will be connected for further imaging and care in a more seamless manner, instead of having to search for a primary care provider through other avenues, such as emergency department and walk-in clinics.

"Often times, there are delays for unattached patients between completing the screening, receiving the result and waiting for a primary care provider to facilitate follow-up," explains Tarja Heiskanen, Manager of Screening and Assessment at TBRHSC. "The hope is that this partnership will significantly reduce wait times."

Heiskanen adds, "Individuals who may be reluctant to get screened for cancer because they do not have a primary care provider, can self-refer themselves for breast screening and feel less anxiety knowing they will be cared for after when follow-up is required"

For more information about services offered by Lakehead Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic by visiting <https://lnplc.ca/>. Learn more about breast cancer screening at <https://tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening>.

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Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), a 389-bed academic specialized acute care facility, is a national leader in Patient and Family Centred Care. As the only tertiary care provider in Northwestern Ontario, we provide comprehensive services to a population of over 250,000 residents in a region the size of France. Effectively addressing the health care needs of patients and families has earned us both Innovation Awards and Leading Practice Designations. As an academic health sciences centre, we teach the next generation of health care providers and advance medical research. Patients benefit from interprofessional teams of dedicated health care providers and access to leading-edge medical technology and clinical trials. To fulfill its teaching and research strategic goals, TBRHSC is supported by Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI) as a not-for-profit and independent research corporation. TBRHRI is the research arm of TBRHSC and seeks to lead research to improve the health outcome of the people of Northwestern Ontario and beyond.

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