

Bridgepoint Health half way to completion

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October 28, 2011

The construction of a new hospital for patients with complex, chronic disease and disability in south Riverdale reached a new high this week as the final steel beam was hoisted to the top of Bridgepoint Health's new 10-storey building.

Dozens of staff members and supporters gathered outside the local hospital near Gerrard Street East and Broadview Avenue to celebrate the building's "topping off," a construction milestone when a building has reached its tallest vertical height.

Exactly two years ago ground broke on Canada's first purpose-built hospital for the care and management of complex chronic disease.

The project is now halfway done and staff and patients said they are eager to move in to their new home in the spring of 2013.

"For me and for all of us who have imagined this new hospital, it's not simply a new building but it is and does represent a new way of delivering health care. We've made it our mission to revolutionize health care," said Marian Walsh, Bridgepoint Health's president and CEO, moments before construction workers raised a white steel girder signed by dozens of supporters high into the sky.

"This (construction milestone) signifies 10 years of planning, hard work and collaboration with our partners. This milestone signifies the 50 per cent mark of our journey."

The beam will be located on the penthouse floor of the new building and will be available for all to see.

The new 680,000-square-foot, 10-storey hospital Bridgepoint Health will have 472 beds with a washroom in each patient's room. It will also be built with environmentally responsible and sustainable features and will be certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system.

The former Old Don Jail will be repurposed into administrative offices and the Bridgepoint Collaboratory for Research and Innovation.

A consortium called Plenary Health will design, build, finance and maintain the new \$622-million facility for 30 years after its completion.

Deb Matthews, Ontario's minister of health and long-term care, attended the topping off celebration and credited all who were involved in helping reach the halfway mark of the construction of the new Bridgepoint Health hospital, the largest health-care facility of its kind in Canada.

Matthews also thanked the staff at Bridgepoint Health for providing "wonderful, wonderful care" to her



Bridgepoint Health half way to completion. The final steel beam is hoisted into place at Bridgepoint Health during a topping off ceremony for the new 10-storey building, which will serve patients with complex, chronic disease and disability in south Riverdale. (Oct. 26, 2011) *Staff photo/NICK PERRY*

mother, who recently spent time there.

"Bridgepoint is a wonderful, wonderful treasure, a place of excellent care. I can't wait to be here for the opening," she said.

Local MPP Peter Tabuns, a longtime supporter of Bridgepoint Health, congratulated the healthcare provider on reaching this important milestone and thanked all involved in keeping the local hospital open when the Mike Harris government threatened to close it in 1997.

"Congratulations on building the dream. It wasn't easy but it's happening," said the Toronto-Danforth Councillor Paula Fletcher at the event, pointing to the more than 30 parcels of land and three heritage buildings on the 10-acre site that had to be taken into consideration during the redevelopment process.

"It's an exciting campus of care. It is a dream and we're building it," she said.

And while the construction of the new hospital may have reached a major milestone, the Bridgepoint Health Foundation (the hospital's fundraising arm) is still working to reach its goal of raising \$60 million for new facilities, research and patient care programs.

So far, \$12.5 million has been raised thanks in part to a \$1 million donation from Frances and Tim Price as well as \$45,000 raised by Bridgepoint Health staff members in the last five months.

For more information or to donate, visit www.bridgepointhealthfoundation.ca

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