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Hospital welcomes gift from Ajax

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By [Kristen Calis](#)

AJAX -- Doctors and staff at the Ajax-Pickering hospital beamed about a gift from the Town of Ajax Thursday.

"This is going to make our female population a lot happier in their time of need," Dr. Michael Ricer told staff and Town of Ajax officials.

Ajax Mayor Steve Parish was among some town politicians who presented Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital with the latest in cancer technology, sentinel node biopsy equipment, which allows for minimally-invasive surgery. The new Bluetooth probe detects where cancer is likely to spread from a primary tumour, and doctors then only have to remove what's necessary. Standard lymph node removal for breast cancer requires surgery that removes most nodes in a woman's underarm area.

"It's now becoming the standard of care in Ontario and in fact all of North America," Dr. Ricer said, adding it can also be used for melanoma.

Lisa McVety, manager of the operating room, explained only a small incision is made to remove the node and women who undergo the surgery can often leave the same day. The small, less-invasive surgery reduces swelling, something she said can be quite painful, even when women are doing otherwise menial tasks such as putting on underarm deodorant.

"This is the technology we needed," she said.

The Town of Ajax has pledged \$250,000 to purchase gifts for the hospital over a four-year period. This is the second installment; last year the Town donated an automated endoscope reprocessor, commonly known as a scope washer. Mayor Parish said while the hospital has gone through some difficult times lately and Ajax council doesn't mind criticizing it, the Town wants to be part of the solution.

"We're glad our money is being put to work right here in the community," he said.

It allows doctors and nursing staff to be as effective as possible with the hospital's "always limited resources," he said.

Chad Hanna, hospital foundation president, welcomed the donation.



Jason Liebrechts / Metroland

AJAX -- Dr. Michael Ricer discusses new detection equipment with Mayor Steve Parish, left, Regional Councillor Colleen Jordan and Wendy Temple, a nurse at Rouge Valley Health, during a press conference highlighting the purchase of Sentinel Node Biopsy equipment with funds from Town of Ajax's pledge to the Hospital. Apr. 2, 2009

"Growing communities face the challenge of providing really high-quality care with finite resources," he said. "It almost creates the need for other forms of funding to buy equipment."

He added by donating equipment, the Town can control how the money's being spent and it "makes their gift real."