

# *President & Chief Executive Officer's Report*

## ST. JOSEPH'S GENERAL HOSPITAL

2006/07 was again a very active year. St. Joseph's continues to play a strategic role in the Valley and North Island's health system.

As the Valley continues to grow and the population ages, new needs and expectations come to the front. Within the system we are both at the front end, i.e. emergency and diagnosis, and in others areas such as palliative care and long-term care we are the community safety net. Various areas of the system may ebb and flow, depending upon the changing population, new technology, government priorities and the support services available within the community.

I am pleased to say that St. Joseph's continues to make progressive steps to attempt to keep up with the changing requirements, and has been supported by a positive relationship with the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

### **Building Value to our Mission**

This particular year, St. Joseph's was able, with funding from the Vancouver Island Health Authority, to introduce a new four-bed Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit for patients of the North Island. The introduction of Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit required a security service, resulting in a higher level of security for St. Joseph's patients, staff and visitors.

We actively participated in the resolution of a non-refusal policy for psychiatric patients within Vancouver Island Health Authority facilities.

On the diagnostic side, a new, fixed Nuclear Medicine Unit named after Ian Anguish was introduced last Fall with state-of-the-art equipment. This improves the diagnostic services available in the North Island and repatriates a procedure known as MIBI from South Island facilities. We are appreciative of the support by the medical staff for both of these projects.

We were also able to do substantial work on patient flow, patient safety, infection control (we now have nine isolation rooms throughout the hospital) and various building systems (hot water system improvements, electrical improvements and security system improvements).

With the Cancer Care Unit completion in 2007/08 came a teleoncology service to supplement the structure St. Joseph's has put in place with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to serve the North Island communities.

Our Extended Care Unit has benefited from cohabitating the patients with severe dementia to create a calmer, peaceful environment to enable them to live with less stress. Extended Care Unit's "*Journey Program*" is now being recognized across the country for its success in residential care.

### **Sustaining our Organization**

2006/07 brought more clarity to the minimum nursing, professional and medical manpower required to provide safe, quality care. We are relieved that the Ministry of Health has now resolved Emergency Room Physician FTE requirements in line with our physician's requests.

Human resources and their expertise is our most valuable asset. The volume of work available here for Specialists and the attractiveness of the Valley as a place to live and raise families, means that St. Joseph's is blessed with a very high level of expertise. With this expertise comes a desire to function at the level they are capable of and that can reasonably and justifiably meet the community's needs. We are grateful to capital funding from the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Comox-Strathcona Regional Hospital District. The increasing support of our Foundation and our Hospital Auxiliary enables us to stretch our capital resources in such a way that we are able to provide a more reasonable level of care to our community.

Human resource sustainability is challenged with an increasing number of retirements of individuals who have had very long service at St. Joseph's. This has resulted in a higher than normal change in leadership positions. It will take time for the new staff to adjust to the volume of activity, the multi-dimensional aspects of their role and the processes and procedures that are required to ensure safe care and efficient use of resources.

This year our activity has been supplemented throughout the year by the Vancouver Island Health Authority's support for additional surgical activity. As a result, the community in addition to having more surgical procedures performed at St. Joseph's, benefited from the activity done at the Comox Valley Surgical Associates by surgeons credentialed at St. Joseph's as well as from the activity of patients going to the University of BC Hospital for hip and knee replacements, again by our surgeons. When all three are combined, the Valley, with the support of St. Joseph's in each of these, received a significant increase in the number of surgical procedures year over year. Despite this, the waitlists at St. Joseph's continue to grow indicating that the population we are serving is now of the age that they require more services. Endoscopies, cataract and joint replacement procedures are areas of greatest pressure.

St. Joseph's continues to be an attractive place to work as we witness the very high level of persons we have been able to recruit in replacing individuals this year. They will continue to advance St. Joseph's as we respond to those needs evidenced in the community.

To manage our in-patient capacity and avoid surgical cancellations, St. Joseph's has been fortunate in being able to work with the Vancouver Island Health Authority Patient Placement Program for Long-term Care to introduce a Pathways Override to maintain our capacity in a more reasonable fashion. In addition, attempts to continually provide services on an ambulatory basis have maintained our out-patient surgical procedures in the mid-70 percentile.

Our indications are that we continue to be the leader in the lowest cost per weighted case calculations and other metrics used by the Ministry of Health, the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the health industry in British Columbia.

We anticipate in the coming year that new standards will come about through the various Island-wide committees of the Vancouver Island Health Authority in which we participate. We foresee that construction programs and renovations will now take longer as new Building Codes and requirements for isolation are understood by the trades and come into full effect.

It is our expectation that we will be supported by the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Comox-Strathcona Regional Hospital District to continue to maintain and improve St. Joseph's until a regional facility is fully operational and those services that are deemed appropriate are relocated and the new role of St. Joseph's established.

Our expectation is that the service needs will continue to grow and we will feel significant pressure on our in-patient unit until the new long-term care beds are opened in 2008, at which time we will expect to see a transfer of the alternate level of care patients to those beds, freeing up significant acute care capacity.

I wish to thank Bishop Gagnon for the continued support of the Diocese and his wise counsel.

I would like to extend my appreciation for the direction and support provided by the Board of Directors and its Committees, led by Chair Ron Philip, our Administrative Executive Committee of Eric Macdonald, Barbara Kinnon, Dr. Don Fockler, Sandy Woiden, Don Tait, Jessica Landory and Lisa Murphy. We are blessed by a strong contingent of Department Heads and committed staff.

Personally, over the past year I have appreciated the services directly of Wendy Ostopovich, who left in March to a new position in the community, her replacement Kaylene Simmons, and the new staff that have come to our Administrative Suite as a result.

We extend our appreciation for the thanks of the Executive and Senior members of Vancouver Island Health Authority and their Board of Directors and their continued support of the level of service that St. Joseph's provides both for our own community and the regional services we provide to North Island residents.

It has been my privilege to have been your President & Chief Executive Officer this past year and I wish to thank you for that opportunity and look forward to your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Pontus  
President & Chief Executive Officer