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Hospital neonatal intensive care unit gets boost

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SAINT JOHN • Nurses were working swiftly behind the scenes Friday at the Saint John Regional Hospital preparing a premature baby for a transfer to the IWK Children's Hospital in Halifax as Canaport LNG was donating \$30,000 to the neonatal intensive care unit.

"One of the things we are trying to pay for right now is a transport isolet because the most recent one we have, I think we bought it in 1995," said Susan Koval, a nurse on the unit.

There have been many technological improvements since then, but it would be a great to replace it, she said.

"They are all very expensive pieces of equipment, but all things that we desperately need, so we are very excited," she said of the funding announcement.

More than 500 babies are admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit every year in Saint John. The unit provides advanced technology and trained health-care professionals who offer specialized care to the tiny patients. Most are premature babies which means they are born before 37 weeks of pregnancy and weigh less than 5.5 pounds.

Twins, triplets and other multiples are often admitted because they tend to be born earlier and smaller than single birth babies. Babies with medical conditions such as heart problems, infections or birth defects are also cared for in the unit.

"We are pleased to be part of helping some of the hospital's most vulnerable patients," said Pedro Boyra, Canaport LNG's general manager. "Once you visit the facility it is impossible not to be touched."

The company is committed to the city and wanted to find a place to offer



Dr. Luis Monterrosa and Pedro Boyra, Canaport LNG general manager, at the announcement of a \$30,000 donation by the company to the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit. PHOTO: BRUCE BARTLETT/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

support and decided on the neonatal interstice care unit, he said.

"This generous gift from Canaport LNG will go a long way to helping our NNICU staff treat our most fragile patients," said Jeff McAloon, President and CEO of the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation. "Gifts such as this to the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation benefit our entire community – from our youngest community members and their families and right through all the ages and stages of our lives."

This is not the first time that Canaport LNG has supported the Saint John Regional Hospital Neonatal ICU. In June of 2012, after touring the hospital and seeing first-hand the impact it has on the families it serves, Canaport donated \$65,000 to purchase new

state-of-the-art equipment for the neonatal unit.

Dr. Luis Monterrosa, a neonatal specialist, has been working at the Saint John Regional Hospital since 2006.

"The neonatal equipment is getting more fancy day by day," he said.

Extra money from the community is important, because the hospital has many needs, so budgets to replace equipment have to go to many health care areas, he said.

Walking through the doors to the neonatal intensive care unit the first thing that becomes apparent is how quiet it is. A redesign a few years ago introduced a lot of sound insulation because premature babies thrive best in quiet surroundings, Monterossa said.

A wide range of care is provided in Saint John, but the babies requiring



Susan Koval, a nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit at the Saint John Regional Hospital.

PHOTO: BRUCE BARTLETT/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

more specialized care, usually heart surgery, are transported to Halifax, he said.

The Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation raises funds to support excellence and innovation in the areas of equipment, mental health, research, education and patient comfort at the Saint John Regional Hospital, the largest health-care centre in the province – providing world-class care for all New Brunswickers.

Canaport LNG is a state-of-the-art LNG receiving and regasification terminal in Saint John, NB and is the first LNG terminal in Canada, sending out natural gas to both Canadian and US markets. For more information about Canaport LNG, visit canaportlng.com.