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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **\$60,000 Donation to Hemodialysis Unit Ensure Patient Comfort**

CALGARY – For patients undergoing hemodialysis at the Sheldon Chumir Health Centre, things just got a lot more comfortable. A \$60,000 donation to Calgary Health Trust from respected business leader and community philanthropist, Jim Gray made in memory of his late wife Justina Gray, lovingly known as Josie, focuses on enhancing patient's experience and health while undergoing treatment.

Aside from enhanced comforts, the ten new state-of-the-art dialysis chairs are also equipped with stationary bike capabilities that patients can easily adjust themselves.

During Josie's long and hard fought battle with kidney disease she was exceptionally grateful for the wonderful medical staff and, most of all, the exceptional nurses and staff members at the Sheldon Chumir Hemodialysis Unit for their extraordinary care. Josie came to regard them as family and in her memory Jim set up a memorial fund to donate back to the unit for those who would need the long treatments to fight their own battle.

"As a dialysis patient, Josie was well-acquainted with the rigors of hemodialysis. She wanted to make a meaningful yet practical gift to those who helped her through her last years. She felt that new chairs would make an enormous difference to the quality of life of not only the other patients but the nursing staff as well. It is simply a perfect way to honour Josie," explains Jim.

Dialysis is the process of cleansing the blood of toxins and excess fluid when normal kidney function is reduced. A patient's blood is filtered through a dialyzer and then returned to the body. Patients undergo dialysis in hospitals or community facilities three times a week, with each typical session lasting about four hours.

Since 2011, patients have had the opportunity to cycle during dialysis as the health benefits have proven to be significant. Previous research has shown that exercise during hemodialysis helps clean the blood more effectively and leads to improvements in blood pressure control and cardiac function.

The new chairs allow patients to be in the driver's seat of adjustments themselves without of having to ask a nurse to do so for them, giving them greater autonomy and flexibility to cycle during treatment. To date, more than 200 dialysis patients choose to exercise during treatment.

The chairs are also designed to be more ergonomic for patients as they sit for long hours and lower the risk of staff injury in moving the chairs.

"This is a perfect example of how health care philanthropy brings world-class care to individuals and their families in Calgary and southern Alberta," says Janice Stewart, Senior Operating Officer, Peter Lougheed Centre.

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“Alberta Health Services strives to ensure Calgary is home to the best health care for those who need it and we are grateful for this generous donation that will allow us to continue doing just that.”

Jill Olynyk, CEO of Calgary Health Trust, a charity focused on fundraising for health care, shares these sentiments. “Jim and the Gray family are a remarkable example of the spirit of philanthropy that exists here in Calgary. The legacy of Josie will be one that touches the lives of many patients and has an incredible impact on care, not only at Sheldon Chumir, but throughout The Southern Alberta Renal Program.”

**Calgary Health Trust** is a Calgary-based charity focused on fundraising that will transform health care in Alberta. The incredible generosity of our donors has helped to raise more than \$412 million for health care since 1996. Funds raised benefit Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus and many community health programs and 12 Carewest care centres in our community.

**Alberta Health Services** is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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