

February 22, 2012

**For immediate release**

**Donation from local family purchases life-like mannequins to train medical staff for obstetrical emergencies**

CALGARY – She might sound and look like she’s in labour, but don’t let Noelle fool you. “Noelle” and her life-like baby, “Hal”, are the newest additions to the simulation training program at Rockyview General Hospital. Together they give medical professionals and nurses hands-on training for some of the most difficult situations that can arise during labour and delivery.

The Noelle Maternal and Neonatal Birthing Simulator and Newborn Hal were purchased through donations to Calgary Health Trust totaling more than \$85,000 from Ryan and Carrie Knievel and the Oilympics Hockey Tournament. One-year-old and five-year-old Hal mannequins were also purchased.

When Carrie Knievel was 24 weeks pregnant, she was diagnosed with HELLP Syndrome, a rare, life-threatening obstetric condition usually associated with pre-eclampsia. As a result, their son, Jacob, was born far too young and unable to survive. After their loss, the Knievels were able to grieve privately in one of the pregnancy and infant loss rooms provided through a donation a local family, the Smed’s, made to Calgary Health Trust.

“It was really tough for us when we lost Jacob,” says Ryan Knievel. “Having a private room to grieve quietly made a big difference to help us cope. The generosity the Smed’s demonstrated by providing funding to outfit a private grieving space made a difference, and that’s what motivated us to do something similar to give back to the labour and delivery unit.”

They met with Dr. Doug Wilson, Professor and Head, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Calgary and Alberta Health Service – Calgary Zone, and together decided to focus on the simulation mannequins. A portion of the proceeds were raised through a golf tournament held by the Knievels, and \$50,000 was donated by the Oilympics Hockey Tournament which Ryan has actively participated in for 10 years.

“This equipment, provided through donations by the Knievels and the Oilympics Hockey Tournament, will greatly impact patient care,” says Sally Flintoft, CEO, Calgary Health Trust. “The equipment will help staff learn how to treat and react to a variety of situations that can arise in labour and delivery and will give them the confidence and experience they need when real-life situations occur.”

Simulation is increasingly being used to educate and train health professionals. Emerging medical simulation technologies, such as the Noelle and Hal mannequins, help provide training in a risk-free, supportive environment where complex cases of patient care can be identified, recreated, practiced and tested amongst medical professionals to teach new techniques to apply to real scenarios.

“Using the sophisticated Noelle and Hal models will allow better team care and communication practices for high-risk obstetrical emergencies,” says Dr. Wilson. “The mannequins will help

assess and evaluate the team; determine learning gaps before emergencies arise; teach new techniques; and help teams deliver better health care to patients.”

Noelle can give “birth” via birth canal or Caesarian section and recreates all the sights, sounds and symptoms experienced during labour. She can have a normal birth or be programmed to simulate a delivery with major complications such as pre-eclamptic seizures, shoulder dystocia, a prolapsed umbilical cord, fetal distress and cardiac arrest. Noelle can also simulate post-birth complications such as postpartum hemorrhage. Newborn Hal can be born “healthy” or as a distressed infant. Both Noelle and newborn Hal, along with the one-year-old and five-year-old Hal mannequins, can be used to allow staff to perform CPR, start intravenous lines and insert catheters and ventilation tubes. The one-year-old and five-year-old Hal mannequins can also be used to practice emergency scenarios such as seizures, trauma, respiratory or cardiac emergencies.

Media are invited to attend a demonstration of the Noelle and Hal mannequins and interview Ryan Knieval, Dr. Doug Wilson and Sally Flintoft, CEO of Calgary Health Trust, today at Rockyview General Hospital. Please meet at the main entrance at 10 a.m., where a representative will escort you to the event location.

—

*Calgary Health Trust connects donor passions with health care needs. Together we are touching lives in our community every day by raising funds for enhanced technology, programs and services at the Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, Women’s Health, Carewest continuing care centres and other community health programs and facilities. For information on Calgary Health Trust, visit [www.calgaryhealthtrust.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthtrust.ca).*

- 30 -

**For further information, contact:**

**Calgary Health Trust contact**

Erin McFarlane

Communications Advisor

403-943-0636 (office) or 403-990-8335 (cell)

[erin.mcfarlane@calgaryhealthtrust.ca](mailto:erin.mcfarlane@calgaryhealthtrust.ca)