

## **Steinbergs give \$2-million to fight breast cancer**

### **Donation to be used for special mammography machines that will allow radiologists to find cancers that are difficult to detect**

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A former X-ray technician whose experiences with breast cancer patients left a haunting impression has donated \$2-million to North York General Hospital to provide the latest technology in detecting the disease.

Charlotte and Lewis Steinberg's donation - to be announced today - of three mammography machines, including two with special tomosynthesis technology, will allow radiologists to find cancers in patients where they can be troublesome to detect.

"I saw how they suffered, how it affected women; it really was extremely hard for these women," said Ms. Steinberg, who as an X-ray technician at Montreal's Jewish General Hospital in the 1950s, worked in the radiation department where breast cancer patients were treated. "... Some of them lived and some of them died."

Unlike others who make donations to the cause of breast cancer, the Steinbergs have no personal history of the disease.

"None of us has breast cancer," said Ms. Steinberg, who has three grown daughters. "I just think it affects so many women."

Approved by Health Canada in March 2009, tomosynthesis technology is a modification of a digital mammography machine, providing three-dimensional images instead of two-dimensional ones.

The ability to produce clearer images can help doctors locate suspected cancers in women where it has traditionally been difficult, such as those with dense or heterogeneous breasts.

Difficulty interpreting mammograms often necessitates further investigation - a repeat mammogram with more views, ultrasound, MRI and even biopsy - but with the new tomosynthesis, some of that will be avoided.

"It will be able to scan through and pick out problems that may have been hidden," said Liz LaMere, chief radiologist and medical director of medical imaging at North York General Hospital. "It's really the breasts which are much more difficult to interpret, where it will become much more helpful."

For North York General Hospital, the donation by the Steinbergs means the purchase of three digital mammography machines - two with tomosynthesis imaging technology and a third that will be used during biopsies. They are slated to be operational in the fall.

Calgary has a tomosynthesis technology up and running and three more units are to be installed in Edmonton.

Loren Niklason, director of Tomosynthesis Programs for Hologic Inc., said a large screening study, evaluating how many more cancers are detected with tomosynthesis compared to digital mammography, still needs to be conducted.

With conventional mammography, about 70 per cent of cancers are detected; that percentage is even lower for those with dense breasts, Dr. Niklason, a medical physicist, said in a telephone interview from Bedford, Mass.

"There's certainly a lot of room for improvement," he said. "If tomosynthesis can be shown to improve that, then that's where we're headed, where we want to show an improvement."

That's certainly what the Steinbergs are aiming for: detecting more women with cancer earlier when their chances of being cured are high.

Mr. Steinberg, whose grandmother created Steinberg Inc. in 1917, also owned with his family the Miracle Food Mart chain in the 1970s and 1980s in Ontario.

He said it was important to provide a practical donation, where patients could benefit soon.

The Steinbergs donated \$4.3-million to North York General over the past 11 years, including this latest \$2-million donation, as it is their local community hospital.

"We're hoping that other people, after they hear what we've done, will consider even in tough economic conditions to give something to the hospital," said Mr. Steinberg.

"We know people are hurting, charities are hurting and everybody has to push a little harder."

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