

**Centre intégré  
universitaire de santé  
et de services sociaux  
du Centre-Ouest-  
de-l'Île-de-Montréal**

**Québec** 

## **JGH opens Wellness in Aging Centre to enhance care for the elderly**

***New Centre is nearly triple the size of the previous geriatrics facility***

**Montreal, July 6, 2021** - On the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of the original Jewish General Hospital (JGH) geriatrics clinic, a newly renovated space—nearly triple the size of the previous facility—has been opened to meet the needs of the growing number of elderly patients.

The ribbon was cut on Wednesday, June 30, at a dedication ceremony for the Susan & Aron Lieberman Family Wellness in Aging Geriatric Centre, made possible through the generosity of the Liebermans' children and their spouses—Ben and Nadine Lieberman, Helene and David Donath, Lorne and Chaya Lieberman, and Marty and Renee Lieberman.

The project was also undertaken with support from the Aron and Susan Lieberman Foundation and the Jewish General Hospital Foundation.

“We are humbled and honoured by today’s event,” Marty Lieberman told those who had gathered to dedicate the Centre. “We now have a unique opportunity to give back to this world-class institution.”

Speaking for members of his family, Mr. Lieberman said the donation was their way of living up to “the philosophy of ‘What can I do for our fellow people who are more vulnerable than us?’ Our aim is to help the elderly who are vulnerable, raise their spirits and help them live a longer and healthier life.”

Like the previous clinic, the new space is located on the ground floor of Pavilion E, just inside the Légaré entrance. However, the main door to the Centre is now in the short hallway that connects Pavilion E with the lobby of Pavilion K. Additional space has enabled the number of examination rooms to jump from four to 10.

This means that more patients can be seen quickly and simultaneously, not only by a geriatrician, but by a variety of healthcare professionals who can provide a rapid assessment. This substantially cuts waiting times and makes scheduling more efficient.

Like its predecessor, the Centre consists of four distinct—but sometimes overlapping—areas: a geriatrics clinic (for general care), a memory clinic, a senior oncology clinic and a mobility clinic (where gait and movement are assessed).

Dr. Ruby Friedman, Associate Director of Geriatrics (who has been on staff in the JGH Division of Geriatrics since 1985), says he also put a great deal of thought into crafting the term, “Wellness in Aging,” in the Centre’s name.

"It suggests that the overarching mission is not just to treat illness," says Dr. Friedman, "but to help each elderly person to maintain an optimum level of health and autonomy that is appropriate for their particular condition and circumstances."

### **Among the Centre's other notable features:**

- The overall design accentuates brightness, airiness and colour, which are intended to have a calming and reassuring effect on patients and families.
- Greater care has been taken to ensure privacy at all times, not just during examinations, but in preliminary sessions where a nurse checks the patient’s vital signs and gathers other basic information.
- To help patients properly orient themselves, the main corridor is illuminated, not just by ceiling fixtures, but by vertical lighting strips on the walls.
- Each of the two nursing evaluation rooms contains a scale that can weigh a patient who is seated in a wheelchair.
- Space has been set aside for research, which was not easily conducted in the previous facilities.
- To help in creating a reassuring environment, a small nook has been added in the reception area, where patients and their companions can make a complimentary cup of herbal tea.
- Included in the reception area—whose spaciousness facilitates compliance with measures for infection prevention and control—are several chairs with higher seats for those who have mobility problems.

Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg, President and CEO of CIUSSS West-Central Montreal, expressed his gratitude for the “timely and tangible recognition and demonstration on the part of the Lieberman family to draw continuing attention to the needs of the geriatric population.”

“There cannot be enough words to say thank you for something that this hospital needed and the people of Quebec needed,” added Harvey Levenson, Chair of the Board of Directors of the JGH Foundation.

“A bigger centre was certainly needed, and this one is much more welcoming, much more efficient and so airy,” says Riva Hecht, who has been bringing her 91-year-old husband, Thomas, to the JGH since the 1990s for regular care due to his Alzheimer’s disease. “It’s so much easier on me and on him, too, because mobility can be a problem,” says Mrs. Hecht. “The care has always been excellent, and now it also feels warmer, with the big TV and the poppies on the wall in the reception area. It was badly needed and we’re very fortunate to have such a facility.”

As an additional benefit, Dr. Friedman is hoping the new Centre will motivate more medical students and other healthcare trainees to consider a career in geriatrics, which tends to attract fewer people than many of the other specialties.

“The motivation that they need is right here,” he says, gesturing at the new Centre. “All they have to do is look around to see how serious we are about devoting funds, space and professional expertise to a field that will touch all of our lives someday.”

This focus on the elderly, whom the JGH has been treating for decades in disproportionately large numbers, has made the hospital a leader in geriatric medicine and research.

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Please see the link below for video of the dedication ceremony:

<https://youtu.be/ChiRsf8rWVo>

Please see the separate attachment for photos from the dedication ceremony.

For more information:

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