

# Foundation needs donations for medical equipment

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It goes without saying that when economic times are hard, extra money is difficult to come by.

No one knows this better than Sandra Sabo, chief operating officer for the St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation. Like all Niagara hospital foundations, the organization is charged with raising huge sums of money to support hospitals and their operations.

In a recession, the job is that much harder, but for Sabo, the economy's downturn isn't the only challenge.

On the one hand, her mandate is to help raise millions for the new hospital being built in west St. Catharines. But a hospital is only as good as the skill of its staff and the quality of its medical equipment.

So the foundation is also raising money for a host of medical machines, from CT scanners to specialized beds. Most of the public attention is on the new hospital building, making it harder to get donations for machines.

"I would say about 50% of our donors are making their donations out to the new hospital in St. Catharines," Sabo said. "But the fact is there is an ongoing need for new equipment and part of the frustration comes from the fact that the government does not fund equipment purchases."

Hospitals are constantly upgrading or replacing aging equipment, she said. The foundation is currently raising funds for computed tomography, or CT, scanners.

Two were purchased by the NHS for \$2.6 million, with one installed in St. Catharines and the other in Welland. The hospital foundations in both cities are still raising money to cover the costs.

The St. Catharines foundation is also raising money for three Bipap machines, which assist patients with respiratory problems, at the cost of \$24,000 each, and 16 electric beds for \$7,500 apiece.

Funding for all this comes from community donations, and Sabo said the equipment is critical in improving health care in the city.

The CT scanners, which are faster, more accurate and use less radiation than older models, reduce the impact on patients, she said.

For more information or to make a donation, call the foundation at 905-323-3863 or go online at [www.scghfoundation.com](http://www.scghfoundation.com).

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