

Media Release

COPD Health Services in Northwest Toronto gets support from TD to help improve people's health and ability to breathe better

April 22, 2024 –A new COPD collaborative health program between West Park Healthcare Centre and Black Creek Community Health Centre (BCCHC) is being made possible thanks in part to a generous \$750,000 donation from TD Bank Group (TD).

The three-year Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Collaborative Care project is aimed at improving respiratory health among residents of Northwest Toronto through increased disease screening, diagnosis, education and management of progressive respiratory diseases, including emphysema and bronchitis. COPD is the third leading cause of death worldwide and one of Canada's fastest growing health threats.

The program will be centred at BCCHC, a primary care site located in the Black Creek community (Jane and Finch neighbourhood), a community that faces significant socio-economic barriers to health care and determinants of health. Previous studies found people at an increased risk of not recognizing the warning signs of lung disease; not being screened or diagnosed; and therefore, not treated causing increased use of emergency and acute hospital services.

"Our 2020 study found significant challenges for people living with COPD in transitioning between primary, tertiary and acute health care to access the care they need to improve their health," says Dr. Doris Forlemu-Kamwa, Senior Director, Primary Healthcare, Black Creek Community Health Centre. "West Park is a great partner to build a new model of COPD care for the residents of northwest Toronto."

The program will help community residents avoid interruptions in their care by assisting them in navigating the health system and accessing respiratory rehabilitative care, including at the BCCHC and West Park. West Park Healthcare Centre is home to the largest lung rehabilitation program in Canada and is one of the top three pulmonary rehabilitation research centres in the world.

"Although there is no cure for COPD, with pulmonary rehabilitation we can help people manage their symptoms and increase their exercise capacity, mobility and health-related quality of life," says Dr. Roger Goldstein, Director of Respiratory Medicine at West Park. "We help people to breathe better and remain living independently in their own homes, where they want to be."

"Through the TD Ready Commitment, our corporate citizenship platform, we are proud to champion innovative solutions that help make equitable health outcomes possible for all," says Alicia Rose, AVP Social Impact, Sustainability & Corporate Citizenship, TD Bank Group. "West Park's collaborative project with Black Creek Community Health Centre will help increase access for communities facing barriers to care, helping people improve their lung health and reducing the need to access acute hospital services."

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This is the second leadership donation that TD has made to West Park Foundation's *Get Your Life Back Campaign*. In 2017, they donated \$800,000 to create the Resource & Learning Centre supported by TD in West Park's new hospital building, which opened on April 15, 2024.

"We are grateful to TD for their ongoing support of West Park, our community and especially our patients who work hard to get back to their lives following serious injury and illness," says Doug Earle, CEO of West Park Foundation.

"Their support of West Park's and Black Creek Community Health Centre's innovative, collaborative project will help improve access to care, and strengthen our health system overall with the results of the project being presented to Ontario Health."

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