

TMC: Dynamic Health Care Facility Offers Extraordinary Care

Windsor Star (A Division of Post Media) Dec. 6, 2012

By Carolyn Regan

“It started with an idea,” Ghassan Jafar will tell you. The idea was to gather the best team possible to create a comprehensive medical center that would house all the necessary medical services under one roof.

It came to him as he was driving from his home in Tecumseh on his way to work. “It was a soy bean field, I think,” he says. The rest of the idea just clicked into place. “Every time we have to go for blood work, to see a doctor, to go for an x-ray,” Jafar explains, “We have to drive into the city.” He and the team that developed the Tecumseh Manning Medical Center (TMC) truly believed that the rapidly growing population of Tecumseh and the surrounding vicinity would benefit from a medical center similar to that of South Walkerville Medical, but better.

Jafar and the TMC team felt that it would benefit everyone, not only in Tecumseh, but in the surrounding communities of Emeryville, Lakeshore, Belle River, Essex and even those on the outskirts of east Windsor. The newly opened medical building is closer for these residents, than driving into Windsor to receive services that for some, can seem very far away.

According to Jafar, it was a challenge to put the right medical team together combined with the right services in the best possible location. The TMC team collaborated with many doctors, consulting many specialists and as a result, they were able to accomplish what they set out to do. Jafar won't mention any individual names. A lot of dedicated individuals came together to create this center, and he believes they all deserve equal credit. To mention one or two would be an injustice to the collaborative effort that brought the vision for TMC to life.

Jafar set out on a quest for the highest quality medical center by starting with research. He began checking into and visiting other medical clinics throughout the province. He thought of a complex that would deliver a wide range of services in an esthetically pleasing building that was convenient, clean, modern and comfortable. “It's like you're walking into a five-star hotel in downtown Toronto,” he states. He wanted to create a place where people would not only feel comfortable, but one that would help ease the anxiety of having to undergo a medical appointment or treatment.

“When you go to a doctor, you're already sick.” Jafar didn't want just another building with claustrophobic corridors and dark, closed-in rooms. The open-concept is light, inviting and relaxing. And as Jafar points out, most people don't go to medical appointments alone. Many people require a companion; the elderly, children, or concerned relatives who are there for support. He realized that people have busy lives in which they are constantly connected. The TMC offers music, television, and Wi-Fi so that people can work while they are waiting. Drinks and light meals are also available for those who might need to grab a bite on the run.

The pharmaceutical services were specially developed to compliment the services offered in the building. "It is strictly a pharmacy for our patients care," declares Jafar, "Not a department store where they make you wait so you can buy whatever is on sale." The TMC pharmacy will service your immediate prescription. Patients who have just come from a medical appointment can get their medication right away. And because of the specialty services offered, Jafar wanted to make sure that the services of the pharmacy were in line with the vision of the total care package at TMC. The pharmacy will cover specialties such as the diabetes wellness program among others that may be prescribed by the specialists housed within the facility. The right people, with the right expertise will provide medication, med-checks, and consultations immediately on site.

The urgent care clinic will attend to most immediate illnesses, fractures and frequent complaints that require medical attention. "Remember, we are surrounded by schools," Jafar states proudly of the strategic location of the center. Parents will be able to attend to sick and cranky children without having to drag them across the city when they are most vulnerable.

Also provided at TMC is a full-service lab. Anyone who requires lab work can come in and have it done quickly and easily at a convenient location; especially if you have just come from an appointment with a physician who has given you a requisition. "It's just up the corridor," says Jafar. You don't have to go to another building on another day, possibly missing more time off work or from your busy day. Adds Jafar, "If he gives you an order for an ultra-sound or an x-ray, it's just down the corridor. If you have a prescription, it's right there." The phrase "one-stop shopping" is one you will hear often from members of the team that created TMC. "It's what people need in a medical center."

When the plans for the advanced concept of TMC were being developed, Ghassan Jafar felt it was extremely important to make sure that all the details were covered. He wanted to make sure that the completed project was well-planned and organized. Everyone on the team had some expertise which contributed to the development of the project. A wide variety of specialists were consulted, ideas were gathered, discussed, and every detail was analyzed.

"It was a consortium." Jafar doesn't like the word "leader." Everyone contributed, everyone was involved in bringing the vision to reality. He compared it to an orchestra. "It may have a maestro, but if one musician refuses to play, there won't be any music."

From the soy bean field to the Grand Opening which occurred on Friday, November 23, the TMC project was a 3-year process. Multiple sketches were drawn beginning with a building that was 20,000 square feet, and finally resulting in a building that was 60,000 square feet. "The interest grew as we progressed and multiple people wanted to be a part of it," Jafar explained. When the building reached its final size, he says, "That was our limit – we couldn't build any bigger."

A pharmacist by trade, Jafar was born and raised in Haifa, Israel. It was there where he graduated then moved to England for his post-graduate education. He and his family immigrated to Canada 30 years ago. He spent his first 15 years in Toronto before moving south to the Windsor area. Now a resident of Tecumseh, realizing the need for the medical services that the TMC provides became a personal endeavor.

On behalf of all the participants that helped develop the TMC, Jafar points out that they could not have done out without the help of the city services of the surrounding community. “The city of Tecumseh – they were really appreciative of the whole idea and they helped us and they worked with us.” The team was forced to coordinate between the codes required by the city and the province, and the wish-list of services in order to develop a plan that would deliver their vision. “And that’s exactly what we did.”

Cardiac Care Clinic: Dr. Mohammad Jaamour

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Part of the services at the new Tecumseh Manning Medical Center (TMC) will include a technologically advanced cardiac care clinic which will be headed by Dr. Mohammad Jaamour. The clinic will be a full service outpatient facility which will provide all the services that can be performed in an outpatient setting.

The cardiac center will be equipped with the latest advanced machinery including those needed to perform stress tests as well as an electrocardiogram machine (EKG), and digital imaging. Both are set up to work with wireless transmitters using Bluetooth technology and high quality signals.

According to Dr. Jaamour, “The center was built to meet higher standards than what has been used.” The east side of Windsor has been growing so fast that the community needs a facility with the services to provide them with the best health care in terms of cardiac testing, cardiac evaluation, and cardiac risk certification. Prior to TMC, there was no facility that provided that kind of service in the Tecumseh area.

“Everything the patient needs in terms of cardiac testing and evaluation can be done at TMC as an outpatient,” Dr. Jaamour explains. He adds that the only reason a patient might need to come into a Windsor hospital is for more in depth evaluation. Such would occur in the case of the patient who has been diagnosed with requiring intervention or an invasive procedure that cannot be performed on an outpatient basis. In the case of a cardiac emergency, the patient would have to go into the city of Windsor.

But as Dr. Jaamour points out, the purpose of the cardiac care clinic at TMC is to avoid a cardiac emergency. “We focus our work and put all our effort into doing the testing ahead of time – we call that risk stratification.” He strives to put early diagnosis to potential cardiac care patients. Dr. Jaamour’s work is very focused on preventative measures to catch and diagnose those cases early enough that problems requiring intervention can be avoided.

Dr. Jaamour feels that the kind of facility created at TMC will be successful in doing a lot to protect patients from developing acute cardiac problems – heart attack, heart failure, or in the case of an emergency, an episode that could cost them their lives.

“Preventative care is very important,” Dr. Jaamour says. “This is how we focus our work at the center.” He states that all the physicians are doing what they can to establish diagnosis and start the appropriate treatment before it’s too late.

“The main problem here in Windsor is the waiting list,” he adds referring to cardiac evaluation and testing within the city. “When a patient has a heart issue, it could be chest pain, angina, or an impending heart attack.” Dr. Jaamour expressed concern that a crucial amount of time can elapse before a patient is able to see a doctor and get the proper care. “The timing issue of heart care is essential.”

Dr. Jaamour and the group that helped bring the TMC to life do not want to see patients lost because of improper care received at crucial moments. He assures the community that the TMC has been set up to see that patients receive care before they need it. Other referring physicians have been made aware that TMC cardiac clinic will accept referrals at any time for any patient with suspicion of chest pain or an acute cardiac syndrome. Referred patients in desperate need of cardiac diagnostics will be immediately accommodated in order to maximize the preventative treatment plan.

Dr. Jaamour will maintain his current office at South Walkerville Medical Centre as well as managing the cardiac clinic at TMC. He intends to approach other cardiologists in the area who can take part in the operation of the facility and extend the health services to their own patients within the community.

A cardiologist for more than 32 years, Dr. Jaamour initially trained in England for cardiology and pacemaker implantation. He worked in Saudi Arabia for 10 years before coming to Canada in 1987 for training at the Montreal Heart Institute. He eventually immigrated to the United States and established a practice in Michigan. Along with his offices here in Windsor, he is also currently affiliated with Crittenton Hospital in Rochester Hills.

Dr. Jaamor was encouraged to come to Canada to set up a practice to help fill a noticeable lack of physicians. The issue began in 2004 when Windsor was crippled by a shortage of specialists. Among those who urged him to make the move into the Canadian Medical arena, was friend and colleague Dr. Fouad Tayfour, who was one of the founders of the project which brought specialized medical treatment to the community of Tecumseh with the opening of the TMC.

Diagnostic Radiology: Dr. Ragheed Mitri

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“We’ve been working a long time to see this reality,” stated Dr. Ragheed Mitri.

He is the youngest in a group which is responsible for the creation of the Tecumseh Medical Center (TMC). Dr. Mitri will be the diagnostic radiologist in charge of the diagnostic imaging office within the new medical center.

“It’s going to be exciting,” he added referring to the new state-of-the-art facility. Dr. Mitri is part of the Windsor Radiological Associates, and the Hotel Dieu radiologists. This latest addition to their clinic practice will be a small part in a total care package created for residents of the east end communities.

To Dr. Mitri, the location makes a lot of sense. With the rate at which the Tecumseh area is growing, the community desperately needed these services. The facility will also be accessible to residents of Belle River, Lakeshore and surrounding areas.

For some, especially those with mobility issues and the elderly, making the trip into downtown Windsor is not always the best option. Now those people will have access to the diagnostic care they need within their own community.

“I’m a diagnostic radiologist,” Dr. Mitri explains, “Someone who is trained specifically for imaging.” Now some of those diagnostic imaging services will be offered at TMC.

Dr. Mitri is excited by the level of unrivaled quality that this total care project will offer. “I’ve never been part of anything like this. It’s phenomenal.” Although cooperative care facilities have been created before, Dr. Mitri points out that it has never been to this scale. “It’s been done maybe with two or three family doctors and a pharmacy in the same building,” he says, “But TMC has family doctors, specialists, a lab, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, all in the same building.” It is, indeed, one stop shopping for the patient.

Dr. Mitri was born and raised in Europe. He received his undergrad education in the U.S. while there on a full scholarship. He attended medical school at Queen’s. He then attended Harvard for further medical training before finishing his education in Halifax. Dr. Mitri began working in this area in 2008. TMC has done well to find a talented and well-educated medical professional to be a part of its group.

The young doctor is excited about the future and he dreams of other facilities similar to TMC. He realizes that there are other communities that can similarly use the kind of services that have been created here. Once this medical center is running at full speed, Dr. Mitri foresees the possibility of replicating the model used for TMC in other communities that may need it.