

Three big moves in just one day



By RITA DeMONTIS
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Imagine the stress of packing up your home and moving to a new neighbourhood.

Now imagine moving a whole hospital — no, make that three hospitals — all in one day. Might as well say you're packing for a trip to the moon so out of this world does this sound, but for Colleen Tew — it really is all in a day's work.

Tew is vice-president of a company called Health Care Relocations, (Hcr-moves.com) a premier, Canadian-based firm famous for successfully moving hospitals and healthcare institutions from one place to the next.

Health Care Relocations has been around since 1993 and it has physically moved a good 300 hospitals from one place to the next — worldwide moves where every single second is accounted for, where timing is not only crucial but critical, and careful preparation is at the core of the millions of details that take place on the day of a move.

You can count on your fingers companies like Health Care Relocations — and this company's so good and so

in demand that, when the U.S. Army needed to move the President of the United States' hospital, Walter Reed Medical Centre, it was this Canadian firm with the stellar reputation who was quickly called!

"Our core focus is devotion to patient care, and, because my clinical background includes having built hospitals, I understand ... what a hospital's needs are, and what has to take place in order to facilitate a smooth transition," says Tew affably, who is currently working with officials from Humber River Hospital for the planned move of three Humber locations to its new digital home currently being built in the city's west-end.

And, although the new Humber Hospital's opening date isn't until the fall of 2015, Humber officials are already deep in the planning stages with the team at Health Care Relocations for the smooth transition of its campuses.

"Logistically you have to look at the bigger picture," says Tew. "We are moving three legacy sites into one, so the transfer plan is in place months in advance, and there's a period of four to five months before the official opening to ready the hospital before

you even get to the actual move. The new hospital will have all this beautiful new, state of the art technology, but the operational pieces have to be planned and programmed ... the actual hospital will be operational before the first patient enters its doors, and the whole event has to be seamless."

Toronto has seen its share of physical moves — it was just a few short years ago that Health Care Relocations did the famous moms and babies move to the Sunnybrook Hospital campus, and the company has moved such austere institutions as the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, the London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ont., the John Hopkins Oncology Center in Baltimore, Maryland, the Niagara Health System in St. Catherine's and recently, the Bridgepoint Hospital in Toronto, to name just a few of its successful moves. One of the largest projects the company has successfully completed was the US Naval Hospital - in Okinawa, Japan!

From the largest piece of equipment to the most fragile patient, it's all in a day's work, says Tew, adding that health care does not stop during the



move: "We know that at a certain time, we will close the emergency room at one hospital, and immediately open up the emergency room at the new hospital...throughout the day patients will never be without urgent or emergency services — everything will be maintained throughout the move."

On the day of the move, everything will be happening concurrently, and officials will have more than one stream of activity happening. The actual team involved with the move logistics is quite humble — but there will be a small army of individuals in place to make the move as seamless as possible.

Right now details are being worked out, but the plan is to move the

Humber legacy hospital patients is on a Sunday, says Tew, in order to facilitate maneuvering through a lighter traffic. One can only imagine the excitement of watching one ambulance arrive while another leaves on a steady schedule. "Patient census is brought down and those who can go home are discharged ahead of the move, while elective surgeries are planned for the new hospital."

"We've even put into the planning any unplanned birth labours happening!" says Tew, adding "everyone — from moms ready to give birth to those in palliative, are treated very special."

"As they say, as one door closes, another immediately snaps open."