

## **Peace Arch Hospital collaborates with Vancouver General as it strives to become a Centre of Excellence in women's health**

"The recovery time with a traditional abdominal hysterectomy is anywhere from six to eight weeks," explains Dr. Roy Jackson, Head of Gynaecology, Peace Arch Hospital, and Medical Director for the Southern Health Centre in White Rock. "I want to introduce a minimally invasive procedure at Peace Arch so that our patients spend less time in hospital, experience less pain, and have a quicker recovery time – up to four weeks quicker."

Dr. Jackson is talking about performing a laparoscopic and vaginal hysterectomy using Erbe Biclamp forceps\*. This is different from a Laparoscopic Assisted Vaginal Hysterectomy (LAVH\*\*) which has been around for over five years. "Most gynaecologists are familiar with vaginal hysterectomies," says Dr. Mark Heywood, an Oncologist and Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia, as well as the head of Gynaecology at Vancouver General Hospital.

This newer technology allows LAVH to be offered to women who previously may not have been candidates for a vaginal approach and would have required an open procedure, with the associated extended hospital stay, greater pain and discomfort and longer at-home recuperation. "As with any new technique and new equipment, there is a learning curve," continues Heywood who was recently at Peace Arch Hospital teaching Dr. Jackson and other surgeons how to perform the minimally invasive procedure.

With the traditional abdominal hysterectomy, the patient is in the hospital between three to five days. With the non-invasive procedure, the patient can go home in 24 hours, with a recovery time of between three and four weeks. Another plus for the patient is the scarring – or rather, lack of scarring. Instead of having a large incision – between 10 and 15 cm long – the Laparoscopic Assisted Vaginal Hysterectomy only requires four 1cm incisions.

This isn't the first time that Dr. Jackson has approached other specialists to come to Peace Arch Hospital to teach innovative new procedures. Dr. Dennis Miller, Medical Director of Milwaukee Urogynecology, a specialist in prolapse and incontinence surgery also mentored Jackson on a revolutionary new procedure for pelvic floor prolapse, a condition that often leaves women with symptoms of pelvic pressure or pain.

"It's my role as head of Gynaecology to ensure that we continue to collaborate with innovative surgeons to enable the Gynaecologists at Peace Arch Hospital to offer the most advanced and innovative procedures to the community," adds Jackson.

*\*Erbe Biclamp forceps open up options to more patients because they effectively and easily seal blood vessels and other large tissue bundles providing haemostasis - something that prevented doing minimally invasive hysterectomy in a cost-effective manner. There are other devices that provide haemostasis but they are single-use, disposable, and expensive.*

*\*\*Laparoscopically Assisted Vaginal Hysterectomy is a procedure using laparoscopic surgical techniques and instruments to remove the uterus (womb) and/or tubes and ovaries through the vagina (birth canal).*