

# Heart attack victim credits digital tools for exemplary care

Access to electronic health records across the continuum supports seamless care for patient

July 18<sup>th</sup> began as a typical summer day for Brett Smith but ended with heart surgery assisted by new digital tools that enhance patient care.

Brett, a life-long Chatham-Kent resident, spent the afternoon walking 18 holes of golf at a course in Blenheim, Ontario. "It was 31 or 32 degrees Celsius, so you know, quite warm," said Brett. "We had dinner at the course, and I headed back home around 8:30."

Sitting in his chair an hour later, Brett started to feel very hot. He tried several ways to cool off, to no avail. "I had hydrated I thought pretty well," explained Brett, who felt he "got overheated." When his arms started hurting, he told his wife, Lynn Benoit-Smith, he wasn't feeling right. She took his blood pressure, which was very high. "I told him I think you have to go to the hospital," said Lynn.

The couple arrived at Chatham-Kent Health Alliance (CKHA) at 10:30 pm, and Brett was quickly assessed in triage by a nurse, who performed an electrocardiogram. Brett said moments later, the on-call physician "came straight up and said 'Mr. Smith, you're having a full-blown heart attack.'"

Moments later, Brett was loaded into an ambulance and rushed to Windsor Regional Hospital's (WRH) Cardiac Catheterization Lab. There, a team was

prepped and ready for surgery, armed with results from tests conducted at CKHA. By the time Lynn arrived in Windsor, Brett was recovering after having two stents inserted in his right coronary artery.

"The magic 90 minutes, time is muscle," said Lynn, a former acute care nurse. "Although it was more than 90 minutes since his symptoms began, it was definitely less than three hours."

Using the cSWO Program's Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™, clinicians at WRH were able to access Brett's electronic health record (EHR) and compare post-op echocardiograms with tests conducted during his heart attack at CKHA. Those comparisons helped form the basis of Brett's post-op care. By the time WRH discharged Brett, he had a follow-up appointment with his cardiologist, Dr. Howard Van, who already had all of Brett's test results and discharge summaries in his Electronic Medical Record (EMR) thanks to OntarioMD's Health Report Manager.

"That fact that the doctors are using EHRs and that they are widely contributing, consuming, and expecting that information," Lynn continued. "It makes such a difference to patient care because we feel (the clinicians) are reading from the same song sheet."

Brett is continuing his post-op care with his family physician in Blenheim and at the Chatham-Kent Cardiac Rehabilitation Clinic. Both access his EHR through ClinicalConnect to view the results of tests conducted by Dr. Van.

As well, Brett's pharmacy in Chatham, also a ClinicalConnect user, can review lab results to fine-tune doses of the seven medications he now takes daily.

Since his heart attack, Brett and Lynn have golfed their home course in Chatham "but only nine holes and we had to use a cart," said Brett.



Brett Smith and his wife Lynn Benoit-Smith stand outside the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Emergency Department where Brett suffered a heart attack weeks earlier.

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