

## Profiles in Kidney Care – September 2008

### Profile: Fraser Health Nephrologists Head Up New Abbotsford Hospital Renal Unit

Kidney patients and caregivers in Fraser Valley east are celebrating the opening of a much-needed and long-awaited dialysis unit in the new Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre. The unit is the latest of several renal care improvements in the area over the last year, says Dr. Daniel Schwartz, who with colleague Dr. Charles Constantine provides nephrology services to the Abbotsford and surrounding population.

“When I started in July 2007 there was a community dialysis unit, but not much else,” says Dr. Schwartz, who runs an outpatient practice and a new pre-dialysis clinic with Dr. Constantine in addition to overseeing the hospital unit.

“Patients had to go to Royal Columbian or Surrey Memorial for acute dialysis care,” adds Dr. Constantine, who joined Fraser Health in January 2008. “Like all community dialysis units, the one in Abbotsford could only accommodate very stable patients.”

Dr. Schwartz trained at the University of Toronto then taught there, as well as working at Sunnybrook Hospital. Dr. Constantine went to medical school at McGill University and studied nephrology at UBC, then teaching and practicing at Dalhousie University in Halifax.



Both are in no doubt about their chosen career path.

“Even though I’m a specialist, there is the full spectrum of care to deal with, from chronic kidney disease to dialysis to transplant,” says Dr. Schwartz. “It’s one of the few specialties where you have that diversity.”

Dr. Constantine agrees: “I love the complexity of care, the idea of helping patients and families prevent and deal with complications of chronic illness,” he says. “There are so many physical and emotional and socio-economic factors that come into play.”

They are also enthusiastic about their roles with the Fraser Health renal program.

“When I first opened the practice I was overwhelmed by the number of patients needing care that hadn’t been available before,” says Dr. Schwartz. “Fraser East now has full outpatient nephrology care, an inter-disciplinary kidney care clinic, an in-centre unit, the community dialysis unit, and plans to provide peritoneal dialysis care in the future as well as expand home hemodialysis.”

The two nephrologists are also connecting with family physicians in the area, providing kidney disease management education and forging partnerships that will enable them to enhance



patient care.

“In my mind, there is the potential to offer world class kidney care in Abbotsford,” says Dr. Constantine. “Thanks to the support and commitment we’ve had from the health care and renal communities, this program is set to become a model of excellence.”