

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Niagara Health Foundation Launches Patient Comfort Fund to Support Frontline Needs

\$100,000 gift from Councillor Joe Kushner honours legacy of former Regional Chair Jim Bradley

April 7, 2026 - Niagara, ON – The Niagara Health Foundation is proud to announce the launch of the *Patient Comfort Fund*, a dedicated initiative designed to support frontline needs, essential supplies, and one-time requests that enhance the comfort, dignity, and well-being of patients and families receiving care across Niagara Health.

At its core, the Patient Comfort Fund addresses the small but meaningful gaps in care—those everyday needs that fall outside traditional healthcare funding but can make a significant difference in a patient’s experience.

The fund was made possible through a generous \$100,000 donation from St. Catharines City Councillor Joe Kushner, given in honour of the late former Regional Chair, Jim Bradley.

“The teams at Niagara Health identified a need for funding that goes beyond our core mission of raising funds for equipment and research,” said Andrea Scott, President & CEO of the Niagara Health Foundation. “This was consistent feedback from frontline staff, and we knew we needed to respond. To meet this need—while continuing to fund critical equipment—we had to create something new.”

Recognizing the importance of launching the fund with strong support, Senior Development Officer Matt Harris connected with long-time Foundation supporter Joe Kushner.

“Conversations about this fund began around the time Jim Bradley passed away,” said Harris. “Losing Jim was still very much on our minds when I first approached Joe. We felt this fund would be a meaningful way to honour Jim’s legacy and something he cared deeply about.”

Both Jim Bradley and Joe Kushner played instrumental roles in bringing the hospital—now known as the Marotta Family Hospital—to St. Catharines.

“In 2006, I chaired the committee responsible for building the new hospital,” said Kushner. “We knew we couldn’t fund the City’s one-third share of the \$305 million project through fundraising alone, so I proposed a hospital tax.” The tax was introduced that same year and helped secure provincial support for the project. The hospital officially opened in 2013.

“None of this would have been possible without Jim Bradley,” Kushner added. “He was our MPP at the time and a powerful advocate for the new hospital.”

Beyond his leadership in bringing the hospital to life, Kushner has remained a dedicated donor and supporter of local healthcare.

“The hospital is a place we all rely on,” he said. “It has brought higher quality care to our community and access to tests and treatments that were once only available outside the region.”

In recent years, Kushner’s connection to Niagara Health has become deeply personal.

"I have faced several cancers—skin, brain, prostate, and most recently, throat cancer," he shared. "Throat cancer was especially difficult because I was unable to eat or swallow. I required 25 radiation treatments and numerous tests, and I am grateful I could receive that care close to home."

He expressed deep appreciation for the care he received from Niagara Health staff.

"The care I received at Niagara Health could not have been better. I am incredibly thankful to the healthcare workers for their compassion and expertise."

When approached about supporting the Patient Comfort Fund, Kushner immediately saw its value.

"This fund will help vulnerable people in our community and make hospital stays a little easier," he said. "It will address the many small but important needs that fall through the cracks of operating budgets—needs that truly matter to patients and families."

For Kushner, the fund is also a tribute to a longtime colleague and friend.

"Jim Bradley was a thoughtful leader and a mentor to me from the day I joined City Council. He was generous with his time and quietly supported many causes. The Patient Comfort Fund ensures that legacy of care continues—supporting patients and families when they need it most. It is a meaningful way to honour a man who cared deeply about our community and who I was proud to call a friend."

The Niagara Health Foundation invites the community to support the Patient Comfort Fund and help enhance care experiences for patients and families across Niagara. To learn more about the Patient Comfort Fund or to donate in support of this initiative, visit www.patientcomfort.ca

About Niagara Health Foundation

The Niagara Health Foundation raises funds to support patient care across Niagara Health's hospitals in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Through the generosity of donors, the Foundation helps fund essential medical equipment, technology, and facility enhancements that enable world-class care close to home. From life-saving equipment to innovative programs, every donation helps ensure Niagara residents have access to the best possible care, right here in their community.

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