

A new health service on-island

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Residents of Haida Gwaii can now have ultrasound on-island

For years people living on Haida Gwaii have traveled off-island to have an ultrasound. An average year might see 140 people travel to the mainland for diagnostic ultrasound services.

That all changed last week with the announcement island residents will now have access to diagnostic ultrasound services because of a new portable ultrasound unit purchased by the Haida Gwaii Hospital and Health Centre.

The purchase of the unit was made possible through support from island residents, the Gwaii Trust and the Hospital Days Foundation.

Gwaii Trust donated \$25,710, Hospital Days through a single donation from the estate of Flo Iverson donated \$25,000 and Northern Health from its capital allocation from the provincial government added the final \$25,000.

"My sincere thanks to Hospital Days

Foundation and the Gwaii Trust for their hard work in raising the funds." Health Services Minister Abbott stated in a press release.

"The community partners made it possible to purchase the portable ultrasound unit that will benefit Haida Gwaii residents."

Support for the funding application came from a student researcher, David Creighton, who reviewed thousands of off-island ultrasound referrals.

"In the application to the Gwaii Trust for funding, it was noted that Island residents needing diagnostic ultrasound had to travel by air or ferry at great expense to Prince Rupert, Terrace or Vancouver. It was estimated that more than \$65,000 is spent annually on that off-island travel," Creighton stated.

The portable ultrasound service operates on two to four scheduled days each month. Scans are performed in Masset and sent electronically via Northern Health's Picture Archive and Communications System (PACS) for reading by either Prince Rupert or Prince George radiologists.

Ultrasound is a diagnostic tool commonly used for examining soft tissue structures, including obstetrical imaging and examinations of heart functions. Physicians often base forms of treatment on diagnoses from ultrasound tests.