

Waterloo Region Record

'It's a revolution': \$1M donation from Chamberlain Family Foundation drives digital hospital innovation

The new program allows for the digitization of pathology slides holding tissue samples.

Updated Jan. 8, 2025 at 3:08 p.m.



Savas Chamberlain speaks as his wife, Christine, looks on during an event in Kitchener on Tuesday recognizing the Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation's \$1 million donation toward a new digital pathology program at Grand River and St. Mary's General hospitals.

Brent Davis Waterloo Region Record

By [Brent Davis](#)Reporter

A \$1 million donation from the Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation is driving a new digital pathology program at Grand River and St. Mary's General hospitals.

The announcement came Tuesday during a donor recognition event held at the Charcoal Steak House in Kitchener.

“Never in my career did I imagine witnessing the dawn of digital pathology at Grand River Hospital,” said Dr. Dimitrios Divaris, medical director, integrated pathology and laboratory medicine, for the two hospitals. “The barriers felt insurmountable.”

The program involves the digitization of pathology slides holding tissue samples, allowing high-resolution images to be shared with other experts remotely.

“Digital pathology isn’t just a technological upgrade, it’s a revolution,” Divaris said. “It enhances efficiency, precision and collaboration, ultimately leading to better diagnoses, targeted treatment and improved patient care.”

The technology comes from Huron Digital Pathology, based in St. Jacobs, and pairs slide-scanning hardware with AI-powered software including SlideVault, an image management system that allows for secure storage and organization of the images and makes them available to pathologists through a web browser, a release said.

“We operate in a space where innovation must be driven by collaboration, determination and the incredible potential of the med-tech ecosystem right here in Waterloo Region,” said Carla Girolametto, the hospitals’ integrated director of innovation and research.

“This initiative is a testament to the power of Canadian innovation.”

Addressing the audience alongside his wife, Christine, Savvas Chamberlain said he has a passion to fight cancer and to introduce new technologies into the battle.

“We are all unfortunately familiar with cancer. We all have family with cancer experiences, or personal experiences with cancer,” said Chamberlain, who is the chief executive officer of Waterloo-based Exel Research Inc. and a former University of Waterloo professor and founder of Dalsa Corp. (now Teledyne Dalsa).

“There are so many different types of cancer. Quicker diagnosis makes a lot of difference in the survival rate of the patient.”

Christine Chamberlain said her family and their foundation are committed to bringing digital pathology programs to other hospitals.

So far, they’ve signed an agreement with Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, with several others in the works, she said.

“Our goal right now is to have an Ontario hospital-wide digital pathology network, and in the future ... to make it across Canada, again using Canadian innovations, Canadian know-how, Canadian people.”

The program is also supported by OBIO, a Toronto-based not-for-profit organization that supports early-stage and venture-backed companies in the health sector.



Brent Davis covers business and breaking news for Waterloo Region Record.