



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospital foundation receives \$30,000 boost from HMATA

December 16, 2024, Huntsville, ON – Visitors to the Huntsville area contribute significantly to the local economy — shopping at local small businesses, eating at local restaurants and staying overnight in local accommodations. With that boon comes a surge in hospital use, particularly in the summer months, as local residents, seasonal residents and visitors to the community seek medical attention at Huntsville Hospital’s emergency department. They may need treatment for minor injuries resulting from summer-activity mishaps, or for more serious accidents and health issues, but always they receive top-notch care from our local health-care team.

And as Huntsville grows, the need for workers across all sectors — hospitality included — grows with it, increasing hospital use further.

In acknowledgement of the impact both the tourism economy and Huntsville’s hospitality growth have on hospital staff and infrastructure, the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA), whose provincially legislated mandate is to promote and develop tourism in Huntsville, presented a \$30,000 donation to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation (HHF) on December 10.

“It means so much to the HMATA board and staff that we contribute to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, not only because of the incredible need for its growth and development, but also fundamentally because we recognize the impact bringing a lot of people to Huntsville has on the hospital,” said Kelly Haywood, executive director for HMATA and Explore Huntsville. “We are fortunate to have such an incredible hospital foundation raising funds to ensure residents and visitors alike have access to excellent hospital care, and we are thrilled to support their efforts.”

Since 2023, HMATA has donated \$80,000 to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation.

“We are so grateful for HMATA’s support. We really appreciate the recognition of how much hard work is being done by our professionals at the hospital,” said Katherine Craine, CEO of the Huntsville Hospital Foundation. “Our emergency department is quite often over capacity — especially in the summer when we have at least three times the number of emergency department visits. Twenty per cent of our overall emergency department visits are from outside of our area.”

HHF has been tapped to raise \$35 million for the upcoming build of a new hospital in Huntsville, but the actual amount needed will be much more over time, noted Craine. “We’ve also got to keep the current hospital running and the equipment coming in. The government does not pay for equipment at the hospital — that’s all through donations from our community to our Foundation.”

HMATA, Huntsville’s official destination management and marketing organization (DMMO), launched its public-facing visitor attraction entity, Explore Huntsville, earlier this year and is [currently accepting grant applications](#) from businesses and organizations with innovative ideas for events, initiatives and marketing campaigns that will draw people to town.

All of the funds distributed by HMATA are collected via the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax, paid by visitors to Huntsville at local accommodations.

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Photo caption:

Jeff Suddaby, HMATA board chair (left), and Kelly Haywood, HMATA executive director (right), present a \$30,000 donation to (from second left) Huntsville Hospital Foundation's Meaghan Byrnes, director of philanthropy; Katherine Craine, CEO; Trish Kruusmagi, development officer – events and community engagement; and Shelly Mclean, incoming board chair. (Credit: HMATA)

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About Explore Huntsville / HMATA:

Explore Huntsville is the tourism marketing entity of the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA), a non-share capital corporation created in 2019 to promote and develop tourism in Huntsville. HMATA receives a portion of the funds generated via the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax at local hotels, motels, resorts and short-term rental accommodations. Its focus is on attracting more visitors to Huntsville through sports and cultural events, new tourism product development and enhanced attractions and outdoor activities. The remainder of the MAT is retained by the Town of Huntsville and is earmarked for initiatives that promote and support tourism and economic development efforts benefiting both residents and visitors to Huntsville, as well as affordable housing initiatives. For more information about HMATA, visit huntsvillemat.com.

