

## **New Internet tool tracks patients' surgery at Sunnybrook**

Sitting in a hospital waiting room waiting for updates on your loved one's surgery can be stressful. A new online tracking system at Sunnybrook called "OR Status" is the first in Ontario to help reduce anxiety by keeping families in the loop on a patient's surgical progress.

The real-time updates can be viewed online on a computer or handheld device, allowing family and friends to track the progress of a patient from the comfort of their home or from any location where they have Internet access.

Debra Anger registers people for surgeries at Sunnybrook, and part of her job is now providing each patient with a unique surgery booking number that they can share with whoever they like. "It eases a family's anxiety because they have a little bit of control with what's happening with the patient," says Debra, Patient Administrative Associate at Sunnybrook, adding that she has seen the positive impact firsthand.

Once a family has the booking number, they can view the operating room tracking board online at [sunnybrook.ca/orstatus](http://sunnybrook.ca/orstatus). Family and friends can see exactly when a patient enters and leaves the operating room, with the information automatically refreshed every minute. A staff member or volunteer still comes to the waiting room to provide family and friends with information, but the service provides another option for families, especially for those with loved ones outside the city or even the country.

For Christine Andrews, whose mother had a knee replacement surgery, the online tool meant increased peace of mind. "My sister and I could leave the hospital waiting room to go for a coffee or stretch our legs without worrying as we knew exactly when our mom went into the operating room. We felt much more involved in the process, and didn't have to find a volunteer to ask about her status," says Christine.

From a technology perspective, the first-in-Ontario web initiative is novel for several reasons. "It provides real-time information, at a low-cost, by tapping into our existing patient tracking system," explains Jonathan Katz, Project Leader in the OR Data Centre at Sunnybrook, and predicts that this new online offering could potentially be used by as many as 10,000 families each year. "Sunnybrook staff are already documenting everything real-time so offering this online service to our patients and families just made good sense."

Christine Andrews agrees. "If you can have one less thing to worry about during the stressful time around surgery, it's wonderful. Peace of mind is a priceless thing."