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## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Unique MRI marks a BC first at Richmond Hospital's Milan and Maureen Ilich Medical Imaging Centre**

**(Richmond, B.C.)** – B.C. Lions Guard and former NFL player Bobby Singh was at Richmond Hospital today to mark the grand opening of the Milan and Maureen Ilich Medical Imaging Centre, a facility which now boasts the first publicly available “oversize” MRI in the province.

At 6’3” and 320 lbs, the 2000 Superbowl Champion and 2006 Grey Cup Champion was the perfect candidate to demonstrate the open and patient-friendly design of Richmond’s new MRI.

Singh, whose three children have all been born at Richmond Hospital, and has received multiple MRI scans during his 10 year football career, was amazed at how comfortable he felt in the machine.

“I’ve always had trouble physically fitting into an MRI machine because of my size,” Singh said. “In this MRI, I did not feel cramped or uncomfortable.”

The only hospital in Western Canada with an open bore MRI, Richmond Hospital is the first in British Columbia capable of imaging larger patients (up to 550 lbs) as well as patients who suffer from claustrophobia. The \$2.5 million MRI not only delivers unprecedented high-quality diagnostic images with no radiation, it can also accommodate patients who have issues with pain and mobility, and those dependent upon medical equipment.

The \$4 million MRI campaign was the largest fundraising campaign to-date for Richmond Hospital Foundation. With the help of generous gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations, and major gifts from local philanthropists Milan and Maureen Ilich, the campaign came to a successful finish in just two years. Doctors at Richmond Hospital now have access to technology that they have been longing for. It enables them to identify disease at an earlier stage and intervene sooner.



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By reducing wait times for MRIs, patients will have faster access to diagnosis and treatment, leading to improved health outcomes.

Thursday's opening of the new state-of-the-art Milan and Maureen Ilich Medical Imaging Centre also marks an exciting turning point for the community of Richmond, where, before today, more than 1,500 residents every year travelled to hospitals in Vancouver to receive their MRI exams.

"We are thrilled to have this important equipment in our hospital. It will truly transform patient care. It's been a long time coming and everyone in this community and those patients who cannot have a scan elsewhere due to their size will benefit," said Lisa Westermark, CEO Richmond Hospital Foundation. "It is only through the support of our donors that this purchase was possible. Thank you all."

With over 84,000 exams done at the Milan and Maureen Ilich Medical Imaging Centre in 2008 alone, thousands of lives from Richmond and surrounding communities will benefit from the world class care provided by Richmond Hospital.

**The Richmond Hospital Foundation** is a registered charity that is committed to raising money to fill the gap between government funding and the greater needs of Richmond Hospital. Over 85% of new and replacement medical equipment of Richmond Hospital is funded by the Richmond Hospital Foundation.

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**Pictures:**

Terry McCrossan, Dr. Jeremy White, Bobby Singh, Lisa Westermark, Dr. Ian Dunn

**Uncut B-roll, photos and backgrounders are available upon request.**

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