



## Friends From an Unlikely Place

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It started as a dream, became a plan, and could end in a fjord's worth of opportunities to advance patient care at West Park.

In 2016, as a result of partnering with the MaRS innovation hub in downtown Toronto, West Park hosted a small group of Norwegian entrepreneurs who were in the process of creating healthcare technologies.

Only two years later, the relationship between West Park and Norway is blossoming to Viking level.

“We’re seeing not only new projects coming in from existing relationships, but also projects from other Norwegian companies who want to facilitate entry of their technology for the Canadian market,” says Research and Evaluation Manager Tim Pauley. “The number of partnerships we’re looking at could reach a significant scale.”

The past two years has seen West Park developing an unlikely alliance with the Scandinavian country, one that is beginning to snowball into a plethora of opportunities.

Earlier this year, West Park hosted the Norwegian Minister of Health and Care Services, Bent Høie, and Her Excellency Anne Kari Hansen Ovind, Norway's Ambassador to Canada, to showcase the Norwegian products the hospital is testing: MOTiview, an exercise bicycle that promotes physical activity among seniors and people with dementia; and the Ably Smart Bed, which is designed to reduce pressure ulcers, falls, and nursing physical workload. Funded by the Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation, the cumulative budgets for these trials are among the largest research grants the hospital has ever won.

*Norwegian Minister of Health and Care Services Bent Høie, left, visited West Park earlier this year.*

As a follow-up, 12 politicians representing the Norwegian Standing Parliamentary Committee on Health and Care Services visited West Park Wednesday. Their goal: to learn about these technologies, as well as the structures of Ontario healthcare.

“These politicians are coming abroad to get inspiration that they can bring back to Norway to improve healthcare,” says attendee Else Kveinen, the Minister Counsellor from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa. “West Park is interesting because of the patient journey. It focuses on innovation, and that's precisely what we're interested in.”

The politicians gathered in the Enbridge Auditorium to find out about the hospital's models of care, IT programs, and E-Health strategies, as well as the ways West Park is pushing forward its innovation agenda. Following the presentation, the committee took a tour of the grounds.

Additionally, the hospital is beginning to attract other international relationships. Members of Enterprise Ireland visited the hospital last month to understand how to test Irish healthcare technologies in a Canadian landscape.

Jan Walker, West Park's CIO and Vice President of Strategy and Innovation, says that international relationships like these have multiple benefits for the hospital.

“West Park is known as a hidden gem in the West End. Connecting with others internationally to advance care for our patients is not only about innovation, but about increasing awareness of the great work we do here at the Centre.”

*-- Story by Thomas Boyer --*

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