

# Open Letter to Nurses

February 2008



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**CNA celebrates 100 years, Nurses' stories project, Women's Hospital consultation process, WRHA Professional Advisory Council, Nursing Informatics, 2008 Spacelabs Innovative Project Award.**

2008 is well underway and shaping up to be an exciting year in nursing. Not only will the year ahead honour the history of the nursing profession, but it will also promote the evolution of nursing and its practices.

This year marks the centennial anniversary of the Canadian Nurses Association. As part of the celebration, the CNA journal, *Canadian Nurse*, is recognizing 100 active nurses across Canada. Four of these will be from Manitoba. The January edition highlighted Jodi Dusik-Sharpe, Nurse Clinician in the Neurosurgery Clinic at HSC in Winnipeg. Congratulations Jodi!

Also, in the last issue of *Canadian Nurse* was an article outlining unique work being done by Clinical Nurse Specialists in the WRHA Palliative Care Program. In addition to providing advanced practice nursing services in the Winnipeg health region, these nurses have had pioneering nursing roles in online health information. In partnership with Canadian Virtual Hospice (CVH), a bilingual website providing an interactive network for people coping with life-threatening illness and loss, the nurses handle the complexities and challenges of online communication, particularly in the sharing of information about palliative and end-of-life care with health professionals and general public. Their work is an example of many new and exciting opportunities for nurses in the future. Please take time to visit the CVH website, [www.virtualhospice.ca](http://www.virtualhospice.ca).

They weren't the only nurses in media - the Nurses' Stories Project, *That's What It Means To Be A Nurse*, went live on the nursing channel on January 7, featuring some stories from nurses at St. Boniface General Hospital. *That's What It Means To Be A Nurse* draws on the power of storytelling to address the high-pressure of nurses' jobs. To view the powerful stories visit [www.nursingchannel.ca](http://www.nursingchannel.ca), click on Program and then on That's What It Means To Be A Nurse.

The public consultation process regarding the design of a new Women's Hospital, to replace the 60-year-old Women's Hospital in Winnipeg, has been completed. Over 300 people participated on line, by mail, by phone and at four public meetings. Many women shared positive comments about the nursing care they have received. It was a reminder about the profound impact of any healthcare experience on patients and their families. Nurses are a huge part of that care, and can often make the difference!

The public's suggestions about the design are now being compiled for review. HSC will conduct a similar process for staff input. All input will help in building a new structure which can serve both patients and staff well - perhaps for another 60 years!

Another discussion forum is the **Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)** of WRHA. PAC recognizes the need for discussion of inter-professional issues and actions related to clinical practice, education, research and leadership where appropriate including new models of care. It also provides a link for the professions' issues to the WRHA Board. PAC has now met 12 times. Discussions have included delegation of function, utilization, and inter-professional education.

Thanks to nursing representatives on PAC, Wendy Rudnick, Leanne Johnson, Carolyne DeKeyster, Pam Lavoie, Marilyn Allan and Linda Dando, for your contributions to the process.

A newer area of nursing to pay attention to is **Nursing Informatics**. Informatics links nursing practice with clinical technology, from IV administration pumps to Electronic Patient Records. The success of a clinical technology solution depends on sponsorship of clinical leaders and engagement of clinicians to ensure the system design and resulting work processes are intuitive and relevant, resulting in best practice care delivery.

The Manitoba Nursing Informatics Association (MNIA) is an acknowledged special interest group of the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) and is affiliated with the Canadian Nursing Informatics Association (CNIA). One of the goals of MNIA is to facilitate educational opportunities to all nurses in Manitoba. An upcoming education seminar, All About Databases, will take place in March. For information about this seminar or about the association visit MNIA's new website <http://www.mnia.ca>.

While on the topic of educational opportunities, congratulations to Victoria General Hospital on being selected for the **2008 Spacelabs Innovative Project Award**, presented by the Canadian Association of Critical Care Nurses! This award is presented to a group of critical care nurses who develop a project that will enhance their professional development. It's the second win for VGH – they also won in 2006. This year's award is for their submission of a Megacode Simulation workshop and educational video to be used to facilitate Code Blue training. Great work!

As part of the WRHA simulation development project software is being developed with CAE. This work will help us to further develop on-line and simulation training for CPR.

This is certainly a great year to renew the spirit in our work by celebrating not only our history but also the strides in information, education, and technology nursing has and will see, and the input of fellow nurses on these areas. In the last issue of *Canadian Nurse* there was a pull-out poster celebrating the work of nurses. I encourage you to get yours out and find a place to put it up – the hospital, a community centre, in schools – to celebrate yourself and your colleagues.



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Access to the current issue and past issues of Open Letter to Nurses is available on INSITE.

Submissions and comments are welcome.

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