

# Open Letter to Nurses

## July/August 2007



In this Open Letter, we are recognizing and congratulating the many nurses who have received nursing awards this past spring and congratulate a group of nurses who have recently earned their CNA certification. We'll also learn about a new project that is going to help reduce the amount of medication errors. First, I will tell you about the changes to Basic Life Support (BLS) certification and recertification that are coming into effect this fall.

Many of you have probably read the article published in the Winnipeg Free Press in April about the region's plan to examine how it coordinates CPR training. A new policy about CPR training has now been developed. To let you know about the changes, we are reprinting a memo from Dr. Brian Postl.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) has been standard practice in cases of cardiopulmonary arrest for nearly half a century. Training in this important life saving skill has been widely available and obtained by members of the public and professionals through a variety of sources throughout this time. Since the early 1970s, health care providers have had an obligation to retake CPR training each year to fulfill our requirement for annual Basic Life Support (BLS) recertification. This is also currently necessary for staff who are graduates of nursing and allied health programs who have previously obtained CPR training as a condition of enrollment for their program.

In recent years, the practice of CPR has seen several changes including the use of emerging technologies such as automated external defibrillators (AEDs), as well as changes to the types of training available for specific groups. While CPR training remains an important skill and is widely available, these changes provided a timely opportunity for us to take a look at our current practices and requirements for staff in this area.

To ensure the application of CPR best practice in health care settings, effective September 4, 2007 employers in the Winnipeg health region will refocus their efforts to provide enhanced training in Code Blue emergency response specific to the role of the health care provider and their area of work. A Code Blue identifies a medical emergency in which a team of medical personnel works to revive an individual in cardiopulmonary arrest. We strongly feel that more training in Code Blue response will result in an enhanced level of safety for the patients in our care. This refocus will also allow for enhanced standardization of Code Blue processes amongst sites and programs in our region.

Based on our consultation with sites and programs, some designated staff will still require annual renewal of Basic Life Support (BLS) and/or advanced levels of life support training. These designated staff will be notified by facilities later this summer. Educators within the region will focus on providing Code Blue training and training designated staff members in BLS and/or advanced levels of training. All staff within the region will receive Code Blue training/orientation specific to their role and area of work, and as a result BLS registration and renewal for non-designated health care staff will no longer be necessary.

The Winnipeg Health Region supports the Heart and Stroke Foundation's position that all members of the public should be able to provide emergency assistance through CPR. Current CPR skills will be a preferred qualification at the point of hire, as deemed appropriate to the position. It is also our recommendation that all staff possess (at minimum) the 'Family and Friends' category of training. This level of training does not require annual renewal. Further information related to the 'Family and Friends' level of CPR training will be made available for staff. Employers will concentrate on refocusing training on Code Blue response as outlined above. The CPR Training policy is being updated to reflect these changes and will be posted on Insite when finalized.

Attached, please find a Frequently Asked Questions to assist with any questions you or your staff may have on this matter. If you have other questions, please contact Shauna Boitson at [sboitson@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:sboitson@wrha.mb.ca) or 926-7045

**Lead, don't follow.\***

That piece of sage advice is just one of the many ways we can prevent medication errors.

As nurses, we play an important role in preventing medication errors. Whether we are writing orders from telephone conversations, or writing orders directly, there are many steps we can take to prevent serious, and even fatal, medication errors. Abbreviations and symbols, illegible handwriting and incomplete orders all contribute to medication errors.

A recent baseline audit of 10 facilities in the Winnipeg health region has shown that approximately one per cent of prescriptions are illegible, 44 per cent of orders are incomplete and 26 per cent contain banned abbreviations.

Recognizing that many medication errors can be prevented, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has created a Medication Order Writing Standards policy. The policy will help staff make sure that the details of medication orders are clear and legible, which will increase patient safety. Included in the policy is a list of banned abbreviations, acronyms and symbols.

The policy can be found on the Insite under the regional policies section. Look for posters in the workplace highlighting the different ways you can prevent medication errors.

For further information, please contact Lora Jaye Gray, Project Pharmacist at 926-7136, or lgray@hsc.mb.ca.

\* Always use a leading zero for doses less than one, e.g. 0.2 mg.  
Never use a trailing zero for doses that are a whole number, e.g. 2 mg

**Award Winning Nurses**

Congratulations to the following nurses who were recognized recently for their contributions to the profession:

Doris Sawatzky-Dickson will receive an Award of Distinction at the International Neonatal Nursing Conference in New Delhi, India in September.

A number of nurses were recognized at the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba's Professional Nursing Awards in May, and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses Awards, those recognized include:

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| <b>CRNM Professional Nursing Awards</b>  | <b>CRPNM Awards</b>   |
| Outstanding Achievement Award<br>Noreen Wallwin RN of Thompson   | For Excellence in Psychiatric Nursing Practice<br><br>Mary Fuhr, RPN, BScPN<br>Garry Mitchel, RPN |
| Lifetime Achievement Award<br>Val Horner RN of Winnipeg  | For Excellence in Psychiatric Nursing Leadership<br>Barbara Martens, RPN                          |
| Interdisciplinary Team Award<br>Nor'West & WRHA Inkster Team of Winnipeg   | For Excellence in Psychiatric Nursing Education<br>Kim Ryan-Nicholls, RPN, RN, BN, MDE, PHD(C)    |
| Community Caring Award<br>Gail Fones RN of Winnipeg<br>Excellence in Professional Nursing<br>Caroline Chartrand RN of Sifton<br>Renata Cook RN of Winnipeg<br>April Frego RN of Winnipeg<br>Ivy Harrison RN of Winnipeg<br>Cathy Hopfner RN of Ste Rose du Lac<br>Jo-Ann McKenzie RN of Winnipeg<br>Sylvia Oosterveen RN of Winnipeg<br>Carla Pindera RN of Winnipeg<br>Patricia Setlack RN of Ste Anne<br>Michelle Todoruk-Orchard RN of Lockport<br>Pam Walker RN of Souris<br>S. Dawn Winter RN of Brandon<br>Dr. Roberta Woodgate RN of Winnipeg | Volunteer Appreciation Award<br>Judy Judd, RPN<br>Pat Searle, RPN                                 |

The region is proud of your many accomplishments.

We would have been pleased to acknowledge the award recipients from the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba, but no awards were given out this year.

**CNA Certification – think about where it could take your career**

Certification confirms the currency of your knowledge of your specialty, demonstrates your commitment to your profession and shows your desire to challenge your skills and knowledge at a national level. Many nurses who certify also find themselves better equipped to take on positions of greater responsibility. Certification gives you another designation you can put after your name (and a nice pin).

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) offers certification programs in 17 nursing specialties. Registered Nurses who meet the eligibility requirements can write an exam in their specialty area to earn certification from the CNA.

Recently, four visiting nurses from the Seven Oaks/Inkster community areas and one nurse from the Point Douglas community area received CNA certification in Community Health Nursing. Please extend your congratulations to Melany Lowen, Karen Taylor, Val Arklie and Tammie-Lee Rogowski on this achievement. For these nurses, and the many others who achieve certification each year, this is the cumulation of many hours of study and a lengthy examination process. In the end, it is their patients and clients that benefit from these nurses' greater understanding of the needs of their clients and the larger community. We are proud to employ many CNA certified nurses, and we hope more of you will pursue certification as part of your career.

The application deadline for the 2008 Certification year is October 19, 2007. You can request an application guide by visiting [www.cna-nurses.ca](http://www.cna-nurses.ca), or by calling 1-800-450-5206.

With summer having just arrived, this is a good time to wish you all a safe and happy one. I hope you all get an opportunity to fit some rest and relaxation in.

Sincerely,



Jan Currie, Vice-President and Chief Nursing Officer

Look for my next letter in the fall. I appreciate hearing your comments.

Submissions are welcome.

You can reach me via email at: [jcurrie@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:jcurrie@wrha.mb.ca); via fax at: (204) 926-7007; or mail to:

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## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **Why is Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) changing its policies and procedures regarding CPR training?**

For many years, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) has been standard practice in cases of cardiopulmonary arrest. Training has been widely available, and many health care providers have been required to take CPR training and recertify on an annual basis. Also, certification in Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers has been a condition of persons enrolled in nursing and allied health programs.

However, in recent years, many changes have occurred to the practice of CPR. This includes the use of emerging technologies such as Automated External Defibrillators (AED), as well as changes to the types of training available and certification requirements.

To ensure that we keep abreast of these changes and continue to provide the best possible care in our healthcare facilities, we are instituting a number of changes to our policies and procedures regarding CPR training.

### **What are the changes and which staff do the changes affect?**

Following is a summary of the changes that we are implementing in the Winnipeg Health Region:

#### *Code Blue Training:*

A Code Blue is the name of a medical emergency in which a team of medical personnel works to revive an individual in cardiopulmonary arrest. Employers within the Winnipeg Health Region will focus on Code Blue training applicable to their role for all health care providers.

### *Recertification of CPR and BLS for Healthcare Providers:*

As a general rule, employers within the Winnipeg health region will require fewer staff to recertify in CPR on an annual basis. Some health care providers will be designated to require annual recertification of Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers and/or other advanced levels of life support training. Employers will pay for the cost of BLS and other advanced training that is required for ongoing employment.

### *“Family and Friends” Training:*

WRHA supports the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s belief that all members of the public should be able to provide emergency assistance through basic life support. Therefore, the WRHA recommends, at a minimum, that all health care providers certify in the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s Family and Friends category of training.

Annual renewal for this level of training is not required. The region will make Family and Friends reference material available in the workplace. There are a number of ways staff can take this training, including kits for at-home training or through a private trainer.

### **Who did you consult with about these changes?**

Since June 2006, direct care staff, nurse educators, physicians, allied health professionals, nursing leadership council, human resources, regulatory bodies and WRHA senior management have been involved in discussions about the new guidelines. The WRHA has also surveyed what training other health regions provide, what training the educational institutions require for admission, the requirements in the various collective agreements as well as information available through the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

### **When does the change come into effect?**

Effective September 4, 2007, we will no longer require recertification of CPR as a condition for ongoing employment. There are some exceptions as noted above - staff that are designated to maintain recertification will be notified by the employer.

### **What is the BLS requirement for new hires?**

CPR certification will be considered a preferential qualification at the point of hire for positions where appropriate.

### **How does the change benefit patients and staff?**

By providing more training in Code Blue response, we are enhancing patient safety. Staff will benefit from receiving training that is specific to their area of work and their role within the health care team.

### **Will I have to pay for CPR training?**

Employers will pay for the cost of CPR training that is required for designated staff.

The Region does not *require* any health care provider to take the Family and Friends level of training. Staff wishing to take the Family and Friends course will have to pay the cost of training.

### **How does this change affect certification and recertification in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)?**

Staff required to certify and/or recertify in ACLS will need to maintain BLS for Healthcare Providers (C) certification. The employer will support this training. Please note – the Family and Friends course does not satisfy the prerequisite for ACLS.

### **What role do the educators play in this new policy?**

Educators who currently teach recertification courses in the workplace will teach Code Blue training once the policy comes into effect. They may also train those staff designated as requiring recertification of BLS and/or advanced levels of life support training.

The policy for CPR training will be available on the intranet.