

# Open Letter to Nurses

Information for nurses working in the Winnipeg health region.

September 2009



Forty-one years.  
Thank you all.

~ Jan Currie.

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Before I start the next journey in my life, indulge me by letting me tell you a few things about my time in the Winnipeg health region...

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I've enjoyed my time here.

Yes, there have been tough times - this year for example has been full of challenges for many of us. But I've enjoyed even working through the more difficult moments of my career, thanks to the people I have been able to work with.

Nurses are a unique group of caregivers and I'm proud to be one. Graduating from the University of Manitoba in (1972), after four years of study, my nursing career began at Health Sciences Centre in the Rehab Hospital. I was a general duty nurse. Back then, there was no maternity leave for nurses and so, when the head nurse left her position behind to start her family (a good move by the way as she now has an Olympian daughter), a shift in the positions occurred and I happily took the opportunity presented to me to become the assistant head nurse.

Well, after that and through the years, one thing led to another, bringing me to where I am today as the Chief Nursing Officer on the senior management team of one of the largest health regions in the country.

Who knew?

I've taken on the opportunities and challenges provided to me and I've always continued to learn from them. I'm blessed to be finishing my career in the position I am in and proud of what I accomplished here.

Most important to me in accomplishments is that over the years I've been involved in hiring others. I found a great satisfaction in empowering people through employment. I understand the joy felt in being able to go home and say, "I got a new job!" and appreciate the importance a paycheque plays in caring for the needs of one's family.

I've been involved in mass hiring, full program team hiring, and hiring to start brand new initiatives in our region. On several occasions, that hiring was at newly built facilities - Concordia Hospital, Seven Oaks General Hospital, Deer Lodge Centre and WRHA. It was great to find nurses spaces where they could do their jobs well.

Mentoring nurses to do their jobs well and to continue growing in their careers, as I grew in mine, has also been a highlight for me. Getting into the right area of nursing to suit one's personality and skills, then continuing with education and new roles is important to us all. It's exciting to

see opportunities for nurses, especially now, are so great. Our contributions are well recognized.

I've seen so many exciting changes in our health care community, including Winnipeg health care systems becoming one united health region. It takes many people working together to develop something like that and I have been there from the beginning to see and help this region take shape and grow stronger program teams. It's been my pleasure to be part of bringing people from across sectors together; people who never had an opportunity before to meet each other, share stories and ideas, and work together for better health care. This health region truly represents collaboration and stability.

Nurses are proof of what collaboration and stability can do. Year after year, working all together from across sectors, registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, and licensed practical nurses have made and can continue to make services better for patients.

Also, I have witnessed the nursing profession grow bigger and

better in our region. We are now nearly 8000 strong! I am proud to have been part of bringing more nurses to Manitoba from other provinces, part of the growth of advanced practice roles, and part of the start of interprofessional work to get health care providers from all sectors remembering why we all are here. I hope this work will continue to be developed for a stronger future for patients, for the health region and for all health care staff in the region.

One other thing I've done in my role as Chief Nursing Officer is be a spokesperson for the Winnipeg health region. I've tried to represent nurses and all health care workers positively to the public and media, and have often been told I am a calm and reassuring voice on health care issues. To this I have replied, "That's being a nurse."

Sometimes people just don't realize the incredible training nurses have and the amount of dedication it takes to work in the field of health care. I hope I have been a consistent voice for the nursing profession and that I have influenced professional nursing within our region in all domains of practice, administration, education and research.

I've dedicated myself to the nursing profession for 41 years and

I've enjoyed my time here.

So, what will I do with my time when I leave? Well, now I plan to enjoy more time with my family. I'll bake my son the valentine-shaped cookies he missed when he was in grade school. He's twenty-one now, but he says he still wants them and he's making a list of other things he missed out on back then too.

Most importantly, I plan to just relax. For 41 years, my alarm has been set to wake me up every morning for health care. Now, I will sleep in every morning until I feel like getting up.

I'll enjoy this new focus in my life, but of course I will miss you all. I know I have never done anything by myself here. I have worked side by side with great people to accomplish great things - year after year.

Forty-one years.

Thank you all.



Jan Currie



Jan was announced in *Concordia News*, April 1986, as Director of Nursing for Concordia Hospital.



Have fun stories or photos of Jan? Send them to: [wrha\\_nursing@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:wrha_nursing@wrha.mb.ca)

You have likely seen the announcement that Lori Lamont has been named as my successor. I have watched Lori grow in her current role as Executive Director of the PCH program and I know she will grow beautifully into this new role.

Welcome and all the best, Lori.

Did you know?

Jan started one of the first regional communications tools in the WRHA.

It started in 2001 and still runs today as a tool to distribute important information to all nurses across the Winnipeg health region. It's Open Letter to Nurses!

Jan's favourite inspirational quote right now is:

"There are times, when in order to keep ourselves in existence at all we simply have to sit back for a while and do nothing. And for a man who has let himself be drawn completely out of himself by activity, nothing is more difficult than to sit still and rest, doing nothing at all. The very act of resting is the hardest and most courageous act he can perform."

~Thomas Merton

SAVE THE DATE!

JAN'S FAREWELL RECEPTION IS ON  
OCTOBER 13, 2009  
AT NIAKWA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB  
FOR TICKET INFORMATION OR TO RSVP,  
CONTACT TERRI KOLODY  
[tkolody@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:tkolody@wrha.mb.ca) or call 926-8024



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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