



Open Letter

to nurses in the Winnipeg Health Region

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Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer

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I recently attended a reunion of nursing classmates. It was fascinating to see how, in spite of starting in the same place, what different paths our nursing careers have taken.

The nursing profession offers rich and diverse opportunities that are truly remarkable. Among our group, some were practicing in acute care settings, public health, not-for-profit organizations and others had administrative positions. Most still worked in Manitoba but also in other parts of Canada and the United States.

It was fun to talk about how we had all started with the same undergraduate degree and took our practice to such different places. Some nurses around the table opted to pursue additional education. Others looked at ongoing continuing professional development to enhance their practice.

It made me feel proud and positive about the profession I've chosen. Each individual nurse has the chance to consider choices and opportunities that are a good fit for his or her interests, expertise and passion.

That's what so exciting about being a nurse...those who think that a nurse is a nurse is a nurse don't completely understand the remarkable variety of ways a nurse can impact the health of people in our community. The health and wellbeing of the people we work with - be that an individual, group or health system - that's at the heart of nursing.

That's why person-centred care (Collaborative Care) is so important. Along with asking ourselves if we truly understand the concept of person-centred care, our challenge as nurses is to realize the person and

their needs are central and translate our systems, organization and practice to reflect that.

We all think we understand person-centred care, but do we? Can we explain it? Are we truly approaching our work from this perspective? What does it look like in our practice? What are the barriers that get in our way?

Doing the right thing isn't always easy. And I'd like to inspire you to make it easier to do the right thing. Ask the questions that could prompt change and proactively address barriers to person-centred care. Respectfully challenge the systems by asking how you can do it better. What truly adds value to the person's health care experience?

Seeing things through the eyes of the person is a start. Within one care delivery model, assessing the patient experience revealed that a person was asked the same information seven times. From a Collaborative Care perspective, this means trusting our colleagues to collect the information, thus enhancing the care experience and also making our work more efficient.

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WASH YOUR HANDS!

Clean hands...one of the most effective ways to prevent spreading illness and infection. Please wash your hands!



Have you visited lately?

It's been a year since we launched the updated nursing section on the Region's website. We've continued to build on this one-stop for everything you need to know about nursing in the Region.

Why is this a website to bookmark and visit often? You may be surprised to find out all of the Regional resources that can help support you - the nursing calendar...the Open Letter...Inspire articles...the education portal...where to apply for continual education funding...EAP resources...STAR discounts and more.

We're constantly updating the site with the latest in nursing news, self care resources and education opportunities. You'll find the resources you need to support your employment, your professional development, your practice and even your health right at your fingertips. And you can even find information to help you further develop your leadership skills or reach the career goals you've set for yourself.

Nursing is physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding. You'll want to be sure to check out the Your Health section under Lori's Links, which offers a wide variety of tools, resources and concepts to help support your health and wellness.

To find out why www.wrha.mb.ca/nursing needs to be your first stop for nursing

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Winnipeg Health Region.*

Lois Glover, RN



nso Information at your fingertips nursing skills online POWERED BY ELSEVIER/MOSBY'S

Need information to support your nursing practice? The latest evidence-based information is available at your fingertips with Nursing Skills Online (NSO). Known also as "Elsevier" and "Mosby's Nursing Skills", NSO supports your nursing practice and helps you educate patients. To access, visit www.wrha.mb.ca/nursing and click on the NSO banner. Questions? Visit the NSO link under Clinical Education (at wrha.mb.ca/nursing) to access FAQ.

Watch Health Care Connection for more information on how to use this valuable tool.



Brenda Weiss, RN

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* A question to consider is what in this process is of value to the patient? We may look at how we can improve our process and efficiency but unless we consider if the patient finds these improvements valuable, we're missing a key piece of information. In some cases, we may need to explain our processes to help the patient understand their value, because we can't always assume they know.

Teams also need to talk about how to organize services in person-centred ways. We need to engage the people we're working with to hear their perspective on how we can do these things better. Visit www.wrha.mb.ca/collaborate for tools and resources to help further how you and your colleagues can better collaborate and improve your health outcomes.

Being efficient and effective is sometimes a difficult balance while ensuring the care you deliver is compassionate and caring. Making a human connection can make challenging, difficult conversations a little easier as you consider respect and dignity of the person you're caring for.

Compassion is a word often associated with nurses. And maintaining the appropriate level of professionalism while delivering care is an integral part of dignity in person-centred care. Too much caring and compassion isn't optimal. It can result in disrespectful care when a nurse loses perspective and objectivity. Moreover, it can lead to compassion fatigue, and diminish a nurse's capacity to be effective.

That's why it's important nurses consider the importance of compassion and dignity in care. To help encourage you to think in this direction, I'd suggest visiting www.dignityincare.ca for helpful tools and resources.

The day you decided to pursue a nursing career, you chose an exciting, dynamic journey. Your options and opportunities are endless as you work to improve health and wellness for individuals, groups and communities. Within that, it's important to recognize the need to care for your health and wellness and extend compassion to yourself as well.

I invite you to reflect on your nursing practice. This may provide interesting themes for you to consider, powerful choices you can make to further person-centred care or things you can do to enhance caring and compassion in your work.

And then? Share what you discover. Talk about it with your colleagues. And drop me a line at wrha_nursing@wrha.mb.ca.

THERE'S MORE!

This issue of the Open Letter, we've looked at ways we can enhance your reading experience to provide you with even more ideas and inspiration. We have a number of tools and resources and elements you don't want to miss, so visit wrha.mb.ca/nursing to access them.



Robyn Sharpe, RN



Tracy Thiele, RPN



Jenny Savage, LPN.

in the Spotlight

CELEBRATING one of your nursing PEERS



ANN EDIGER, RN, BSCN

Palliative Care Nurse in Community

Ann has been a nurse for 34 years. After graduating, she worked on a surgical ward as a staff nurse. In the late 80s she obtained her BScN from Brandon University. She practiced nursing in Latin and South America. Upon returning to Canada, she worked first in home care and then palliative care, where she has worked for 15 years.

How is palliative care delivered in the community?

It's a team effort. Our goal as a program is to help people live well until they die, to keep them comfortable until death.

Each client has a case coordinator who oversees the physical, social and psychological health of an individual, and a primary nurse. Physicians, nurses, social worker, clinical nurse specialist, coordinators, program manager are part of the interdisciplinary team. The primary nurse makes regularly scheduled visits but the client has access to a palliative care nurse 24/7.

How has palliative care changed?

We've come a long way in understanding pain control and symptom management. We're also more open to speaking about death and dying and a person's physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs as they're dying.

"I was drawn to end of life care. I sensed the need to provide better care for people who are dying. It's a good fit for me."

How do you deal with the intensity of your work?

I'm part of a large team and while we help the client and family cope, we also help each other cope too. My self care involves a regular exercise program and my faith is very important to me.

What are your reflections on nursing?

Nursing has been an interesting and fulfilling career, with opportunity to work in diverse settings. Throughout my career I've met many awesome people who have had a huge influence on who I am and how I practice nursing.

What gets you up in the morning?

What will I encounter today? What will this day bring me?

Visit wrha.mb.ca/nursing to read the longer version of Ann's profile and meet another one of your nursing colleagues working in palliative care...Monique Bourke.

EVENTS

Wound Care Education
January 2013 – June 2013

New Grad Day for Nurses 2013
February 1, 2013

Visit the Nursing Calendar at wrha.mb.ca/nursing for details and nursing related events.

