

Nursing excellence

College of Nurses of Ontario and a local connection

Liz Haugh and Sheila McCabe are two local nurses who have promoted nursing excellence, quality client care, and high professional standards in nursing through their years of work as elected members on the council of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).

The CNO is the governing/regulatory body for all nurses in Ontario. The council is composed of 18 public members, 14 RNs and 7 RPNs from around the province. The council provides leadership and guidance to protect the public's right to quality nursing services.

Windsor and Essex County are fortunate to have excellent local representation at the CNO. Liz Haugh, director Of Health Promotion at the Windsor-Essex County Public Health Unit, and Sheila McCabe, a professor of nursing at St Clair College, have each held a seat on council for two full terms. This means a total of 12 years of uninterrupted representation from this area at the policy-making table for the CNO.

During her term on Council, McCabe was chair of both the Registration Committee and the Discipline Committee. The former assesses applicant qualifications to practise nursing in Ontario. The latter is a quasi-judiciary committee which holds hearings into allegations of professional misconduct or incompetence, and then determines penalties or conditions to be imposed.

Haugh was a member of the Discipline Committee for many years before becoming its chair, replacing



Liz Haugh, Registered Nurse, Windsor-Essex County Public Health Unit has been a policy maker with the College of Nurses of Ontario for many years.

McCabe on Council. Haugh moved on to the Executive as RN Vice President and then finished her last two years on Council as President.

Both McCabe and Haugh say they are grateful for their CNO experience. Despite all the hard work and traveling involved, both agree that the self growth and the benefits of really seeing nursing issues from a provincial

perspective was worth it.

The Windsor Essex County area has a proud history of local nurse leaders on the CNO council and hopes that it continues to speak out for the interests of the public. Nominations are this June. McCabe and Haugh are eager to mentor any nurses interested in running for positions on council or statutory committees.



Registered nurse, Doug Mercer takes his passion for work beyond the hours of scheduled duty.

Beyond call of duty

You have to have a sense of humour to be a nurse today, says Doug Mercer. A nurse at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital for the past 11 years, Mercer has earned a reputation as someone who goes beyond the call of duty.

In addition to his duties as a nurse, the St. Clair College grad and married father or two, is part-owner of an Amherstburg restaurant, Caldwell's Grant, finds time to volunteer with the University of Windsor Cardiac Club, and does on-call work for Trillium Gift of Life Network, which facilitates organ donations in Ontario.

He also works at the West End Urgent Care Centre, which he calls a dream job, "because no one spits on me and I haven't been punched!" as compared to the situations that can arise at a major hospital.

"It can be stressful in this profession," says Mercer. "Cutbacks have meant you have to do more with less. It's hard when you're trying to give the proper care. When I was first out of school, you could provide the kind of care you knew was best; now, it's much harder and you have to prioritize who you will treat first."

The nursing staff in the hospital's

ER, in which Mercer works, is a key part of why he enjoys his work. "The great people that I work with is probably one of the biggest things that helps me."

In response to that positive environment, Mercer has been enthusiastic in helping with fundraising when certain staff members have needed assistance due to personal circumstances. He has called upon friends who owned bars or restaurants to help through fundraising events. "It's what we do for each other; we're like a family."

As a male nurse, Mercer is in a minority. There has been a slow but steady increase in the number of male registered nurses employed in nursing in Ontario. In 1995, 2,072 males were employed as nurses; by 2004, that number had risen to 3,556.

"I decided to be a nurse on a whim," recalls Mercer. "I didn't know what I wanted to do and signed up for it at the college. Then I got a summer job as an orderly and really enjoyed it."

Some patients appreciate having a male nurse, he says. "Some are more comfortable with that, just as others might prefer a female nurse. Overall, it's been a very rewarding experience."

High tech answers the call

When Mo Pierce, nurse manager at the Pelee Island Medical Clinic, needs an expert opinion, she has a high-tech option that is as easy as picking up the phone.

The remote clinic has a video link with Leamington District Hospital which is utilized for not only emergency room consultations, but in a range of other ways that provide cost-efficient patient care and professional development.

The system is comprised of computers which are hooked up to cameras and set up in both medical centres - one at the clinic, two in Leamington. When needed, the computer's phone number is dialed, creating the connection.

It was an initiative pushed by Pierce a few years ago, having read about teleconferencing technology being used in Northern Ontario's health care system.

"I kept it in the back of my mind, and when the hospital began to get more high tech, I approached them about this." With the help of the hospital's information technology specialist Mark Randall, a system was developed and put in place for less than \$10,000. "It's been an invaluable tool," says Pierce, who has been with the clinic since 1973.

The video system is an effective way to consult with emergency room doctors. "It's a great visualization tool for the ER doctors," says Pierce. "If we have a patient come in with a puncture wound, the doctor can view it via our camera, and decide whether or not we need to transport that patient to the hospital." The result is a savings in both time and money.

In non-emergency situations, the clinic can book a video session ahead of time with a Leamington Hospital physician. Clients are able to consult with Leamington health professionals on such things as mental health, nutrition and diabetes management.

The clinic, staffed by two RNs, is also able to take advantage of professional training offered to the Leamington Hospital staff, by viewing and participating via the video link.

"For example, our staff has had access to oncology courses," says Pierce.

"Leamington District Memorial Hospital and the Pelee Island Clinic has taken advantage of technological advances in patient care," says Janice Dawson, program director in Leamington's Emergency Department. "A video link between the Pelee Island Clinic and the Hospital has been established which provides a means for consultation with the Emergency Department. The video link makes resources at the hospital accessible to Pelee residents without them having to leave the island, and has been successfully utilized in providing patient counselling and patient education. It also gives us the capability of providing educational opportunities to the clinic staff and allows participation on organizational committees."

The teleconferencing system has won accolades, including the Ontario Hospital Association's Techno Award for providing excellent technical support.



Janice Dawson, Registered Nurse, Director Leamington District Memorial Hospital demonstrates the video link system used to keep in touch with Pelee Island Medical Clinic.



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