



Our Compass

Spring 2010

Compassionate care led by Catholic values

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Mission Awards Nominees Announced
- 4 Villa Caritas News
- 5 Making a Difference at St. Mary's
- 6 Shine!
On Healing the Body, Enriching the Mind, Nurturing the Soul
- 8 Award-winning Collaboration
- 9 Focus on Designated Assisted Living
- 11 Engaged in Change
- 12 Misericordia Pilot Project

Warm Heart Busy Feet

Award-winning volunteer stays active and connected to her community

*Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit-Bag...
It's a Long Way to Tipperary ...
You are my Sunshine....*

If you're especially lucky on a visit to the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital, you will catch 90 year old Dorothy Carleton singing one of these optimistic melodies.

You might even see her dancing.

A World War II war bride, Dorothy has a long list of songs from this era that she regularly performs for "the seniors" at the continuing care wing of the hospital, where she has volunteered in a variety of roles since the 1970's. "They are of the same generation as I," she adds.

"I love to sing," says Dorothy, who claims that "it's better than a tonic" to relieve any hint of sadness that life may bring. "And I like to do a little jig too when I perform," she says with a little chuckle. "I wave my arms around a little bit and put some action in."

"It's so rewarding to see them react," she notes. "Some of them can't, but a few really join in. It just does my heart good!"

This young at heart volunteer is also a long-time member of the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital Auxiliary that raises money for the facility through bake sales and a boutique of hand-made items. Dorothy is pleased to take her turn each week rolling a trolley of tasty treats around the facility.

"They especially like my Rocky Road squares," she says with pride.

Last summer Dorothy was presented with a Minister's Seniors Service Award for her work with seniors in Banff. These awards—handed out annually across the Province by the Minister for Seniors—recognize Albertans who volunteer their time to make a difference for seniors. "I couldn't believe that I had won," says Dorothy, "It was quite a shock. I assumed the award would go to a younger volunteer."

The widow of a retired park warden, Dorothy still lives in her own home in Banff and walks everywhere she can. "The secret to staying young is to keep active!" she asserts. To celebrate her 90th birthday last fall, Dorothy went on a hiking trip with her family to Mount Assiniboine, backpack and walking stick in hand.

"Everyone loves Dorothy," lauds Cindy Mulherin, Executive Director of the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital. "She brightens up the day with her cheerfulness and positive attitude. She is truly an inspiration to all of us."

Dorothy is quick to assert that she gets a lot of pleasure from her service to the hospital. "They make me very welcome...it's just a cheery place to be."

ON THE TEAM

Dorothy Carleton is one of 2,622 volunteers who serve in our Covenant Health facilities across the province. Volunteers are an essential part of our team—spreading joy and making a difference to our patients and residents. Thank you!



Dorothy Carleton, volunteer at Banff Mineral Springs Hospital



Our Compass

We are pleased to share with you the first issue of *Our Compass*, our new provincial newsletter for Covenant Health staff, physicians, volunteers and Board members. *Our Compass* will bring you news, stories, ideas and moments of reflection to inspire, inform and engage you. As the name implies, we hope that what you read here will help you get your bearings, give us a sense of the direction as a team and will remind us all of those enduring values that guide our work. We encourage you to share the questions you have wrestled with and the stories of

people and experiences that have helped you find your way. Tell us about your successes as a team or an inspirational team member you'd like to honour. Submissions are welcome from all!

Thank you to all of you who submitted to our contest to name the newsletter. Congratulations to Donna Mooney, Cardiology Technologist at the Grey Nun's Community Hospital, who won the Covenant Health jacket and vests for her team.

Fran Ross
Vice-President, Communications

*Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.*

— HENRY FORD

Charting the Course

It was such a pleasure to meet with so many of you last month at the many staff forums we held across the province. Each time we get together I am more and more impressed with the great questions and good discussions. Thank you for welcoming me into your workplace, and for your openness in sharing your perceptions and your willingness to pose—and tackle—some tough questions with a positive attitude and a heart for service.

I heard from many of you that you appreciate being involved in decisions—difficult as they may be. I also heard that you are ready to do more for your patients, residents and communities, that you are excited about growth and possibilities.

As a leader and as a colleague, I am inspired by the great attitude and ideas of our team. Your excitement came through in the latest Covenant Health staff video, “Lighting Our Way,” which we launched at our staff forums. So many of you had the courage and commitment to share your enthusiasm on camera and voice your hopes for the future in this video. If you haven’t seen it, we’ll be sharing this video at meetings and via other means in the coming months. Enjoy!

We have made such progress in the past year. We have grown and matured through some challenging times. Our success in reducing our costs and becoming more efficient without significant impact to our staff or patients is a testimony to your individual commitment, and more importantly, to your efforts to truly work together as a team.

This kind of engagement and teamwork will make all the difference as we move forward to achieve our vision.



Very soon we will be celebrating team members who demonstrate a profound sense of calling and commitment through our first Covenant Health Mission Awards. I am pleased to see so many nominations, and am looking forward to learning more about the stories and the team members behind these nominations.

I encourage you all to participate in our employee engagement survey in October to help us understand what you think about working for Covenant Health. Please watch for more information in the coming months on this important initiative that

will provide an opportunity for you to give us your perceptions and to shape your own work environment.

Wishing each of you and your families a happy spring and a blessed Easter,

Patrick Dumelle
President and CEO



You make us Proud!

First-ever Covenant Mission Awards Nominees Announced

Twenty-five individuals and nine teams from across the province have been nominated for the inaugural Covenant Health Mission Awards. The awards recognize people who are outstanding examples of living the mission in all they do. There are six awards—one for each of Covenant Health's values: Compassion, Respect, Collaboration, Social Justice, Integrity and Stewardship.

"The Covenant Health Mission Awards are a tribute to the vital role of our mission and values in our work," says Gordon Self, Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality. "Catholic health care has a long and rich history in Alberta and these awards tell the story of the many individuals and teams who remind us that

we are part of something sacred, hopeful and inspiring."

Each Covenant Health facility was invited to submit up to four nominations for the Covenant Health Mission Awards. "I know that for each of the nominations we received, there are many more stories of individuals and teams who demonstrate our mission through their compassion and exceptional services," says Gordon. "I look forward to hearing more stories with each year's Mission Awards."

In the coming weeks, a selection committee will review and select the Covenant Health Mission Award recipients from the nominations that were received. The six recipients will be announced at a gala event in Edmonton on April 15, 2010.



COMPASSION

Patty Schulte, Killam
Jody Tetz, Trochu
Angela Suchit, Edmonton (St Joseph's)
Cathy Billows, St. Albert
Palliative team on Unit 9Y (team),
Edmonton (Edmonton General)
Connie Glasier, Castor
Colette Fetaz, Castor
Michelle Pickering,
Lethbridge (St. Michael's)
Linda Jacobson,
Lethbridge (St. Therese Villa)
Kathy Henderson, Camrose
Patient Relations (team),
Edmonton (Acute Care)

RESPECT

Lisa Steffes, St. Albert
Dr. Chris Lord,
Edmonton (Edmonton General)
Staff of 10 Y (team),
Edmonton (Edmonton General)
Bonnie Mende, Banff
Dr. Margaret Lynne Marriott, Banff
Shelly Donahue,
Edmonton (Acute Care)
Leanne Tilley, Bonnyville
Wendy James,
Lethbridge (St. Therese Villa)

COLLABORATION

Lorraine Tailleir,
Edmonton (St Joseph's)
Julie Morales, St. Albert
Banff EMS (team), Banff
Teresa Lucier, Edmonton (Acute Care)
Trudy Rupp, Bonnyville
Jeff & Shannon Fehr (team), Bonnyville
Janelle Marietta,
Lethbridge (St. Michael's)
MRSA Saferhealthcare Now (team),
Camrose

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Linda Pearson,
Edmonton (Edmonton General)
Rev Brian Hunter, Camrose

INTEGRITY

Marilyn Weber, Castor
Kiyoko Koike, Banff
Mission Alive Team (team), Camrose

STEWARDSHIP

Our Lady of the Rosary Staff (team),
Castor
Hospitality and Clinical Nutrition
(team),
Edmonton (Acute Care)





Artists rendering of the new Villa Caritas under construction on the Misericordia Community Hospital campus in Edmonton

Villa Caritas

to serve Geriatric Mental Health Patients



Villa Caritas, Covenant Health's new 150-bed facility in Edmonton will serve geriatric mental health patients and residents when it opens later this year.

“Establishing this program is a step towards meeting our vision to respond to the needs of vulnerable people in our society,” says Patrick Dumelie, Covenant Health President and CEO. “This is a significant opportunity for us to continue to develop responsive, patient-centred programs to serve seniors with complex needs.”

Adding more mental health beds

Villa Caritas will provide acute mental health services and complex and specialized continuing care. The program will focus on addressing the mental health and medical needs of geriatric mental health patients and, when possible, to return them to the most appropriate care setting in a timely manner.

The program will involve the transfer of 106 geriatric mental health beds from Alberta Hospital Edmonton, as was recommended by the Alberta Hospital

Implementation Committee in January this year. The opening of the facility will result in an increase of 44 geriatric mental health beds in the city.

Our current mental health services

“Villa Caritas will build on our expertise as a leading provider of mental health services,” says Patrick. He notes that Covenant Health already provides mental health services through two geriatric assessment units in Edmonton, 100 acute

mental health beds in Edmonton and Camrose and specialized dementia care for seniors throughout the province.

Villa Caritas features

Villa Caritas, which is located on the Misericordia Community Hospital campus in Edmonton, features large patient and resident rooms, with big windows and a private bathroom. The facility has dedicated therapeutic space for recreation, life skills and rehabilitation services, common dining rooms, bright and open multipurpose rooms, green space and an on-site chapel for family gatherings.

Next steps

A Villa Caritas Steering Committee, with representatives from Covenant Health, Alberta Health Services (including Alberta Hospital Edmonton), is guiding the:

- development of the program, including the enhanced capacity
- completion of construction
- transition of patients from Alberta Hospital Edmonton

The Committee's work will involve gathering input and seeking advice from staff, physicians and the mental health community. Our President and CEO Patrick Dumelie and Marianne Stewart, Vice-President, Edmonton Zone, Alberta Health Services co-chair the Steering Committee.

Vision for mental health

Covenant Health supports a vision for mental health services that includes:

- Removing barriers to access services because of the stigmatism associated with mental health
- Ensuring integration with the rest of the health system
- Enhancing the continuing care and supportive living options for seniors with mental illness
- Supporting an effective transition to appropriate care environments
- Augmenting the capacity for mental health research

Making a difference at St. Mary's

Widow explains the lasting power of compassion and respect

World War II veteran. Teacher. Principal. Volunteer. Hobby farmer. Husband and father. Don St. John played many roles throughout his life. But at St. Mary's Trochu he was known as a loving family man with a sharp wit and a joyful spirit.

"Simone...Patty...'Little' Kelly..." Don's widow Eleanor, 86, speaks the names of his caregivers at St. Mary's with loving reverence. "They were so good to him," she beams.

Don received continuing care at St. Mary's Health Care Centre in the five months before his death in December at age 89. "He would hardly ring his (call) bell before someone was at the door and ready to help. He loved them." She especially liked how the staff would return their affection with caring pats and kisses on the top of his head.

Don had difficulty walking and his hands trembled—but his mind was clear and strong until his final days. "He knew his family. He knew the staff. He was cognitive. I was so thankful for that," Eleanor says.

Eleanor, a former recreation therapist and consultant, is passionate about health care for seniors and about the high standard reached at St. Mary's.

What makes quality continuing care? Eleanor is quick to explain that it is created by "staff who interact, who are cognizant of the needs of their patients...who respond and go the second mile."

"Not only was the physical care excellent," she affirms, "but when he would occasionally soil himself, the staff would do anything to make him feel good and to salvage his dignity. I just can't tell you enough good things about the people in that facility."

"We enjoyed many laughs together," says Recreation Therapy Aide Kelly McRae who encouraged Don to participate in sing-alongs and other recreation activities. "He made me feel special. He was one of my favourite 'Grandpas' at St. Mary's."

One day Don's eight-year-old great-granddaughter joined him for one of the group recreation activities: painting small wooden birdhouses. It helped build both a treasured memory and keepsake.



The late Don St. John in 2009 while a resident at St. Mary's Health Centre in Trochu

"My grandson and I just sat and watched them (working together)," Eleanor recalls. "The interaction the two of them had that day was very special."

Kelly keeps a photo of Don in her office. "He is smiling in the picture, which tells me that I made a difference that day," she explains "It is a little reminder of the reason I am here."

A Leader's Prayer

Leadership is hard to define.
Lord, let us be the ones to define it with justice.
Leadership is like a handful of water.
Lord, let us be the people to share it with those who thirst.
Leadership is not about watching and correcting.
Lord, let us remember that it is about listening and connecting.
Leadership is not about telling people what to do.
Lord, let us find out what people want.
Leadership is less about the love of power and more about the power of love.

Lord, as we continue to undertake the role of leader let us be affirmed by the servant leadership we witness in your son Jesus. Let us walk in the path He has set and let those who will, follow.

Let our greatest passion be compassion.
Our greatest strength love.
Our greatest victory the reward of peace.

In leading let us never fail to follow.
In loving let us never fail.

Amen

On Healing the Body, Enriching the Mind, Nurturing the Soul

Shine!

By Janine Landry, Clinical Educator, Grey Nuns Community Hospital

I'll never forget the day I walked into the Grey Nuns Hospital and noticed the words "Healing the Body, Enriching the Mind, Nurturing the Soul" posted on the wall. This statement helps to guide my decisions and actions I make everyday, and in all areas that I work. As a clinical nurse educator, I have made it my habit to instruct our newly hired staff to locate this statement, read, understand, respect it and most importantly...to live it!

I love nursing! I have a special passion for Emergency Room nursing, and I'm pleased to work at a faith-based community hospital. I don't feel like I have a job, but rather I look at it as an amazing opportunity to learn and grow both professionally and personally. My purpose in life has always been to "make a difference". The following is a true story that encompasses all that I believe in, and live, as a registered nurse.

In Emergency we often have repeat visitors and one particular gentleman comes to mind. Fred was a "high maintenance" kind of guy who always appeared cranky. He had silky white hair, bright blue eyes, and wore a constant frown on his face.

He often demanded a lot of attention. Fred had a chronic condition and he visited us regularly. At that time, I was working on the floor and I was often assigned to be his nurse. Fred had a habit of being somewhat gruff when he spoke to people and he never called me by my given name, Janine. Although I would remind him, he still chose to call me a myriad of other names.

One day while Fred was in the department awaiting admission to the medical unit, I served him his breakfast tray. He snarled and refused to eat it. I looked at him and said "Fred, you're not eating". He grumbled under his breath and declared that "he didn't want to eat this."

"Fred, may I remind you that you're at the Grey Nuns Hospital, and did you know that every meal prepared here is made with love...and this breakfast was made especially for you?" I quickly and firmly responded. "Really...it was made with love?" he asked? Not surprisingly, Fred ate all his breakfast, and later on he ate his entire lunch. When his wife and friends came to visit him, he would tell them how amazed he was to find out that all his meals were made with love. Every time his wife and daughter would come and visit him, I would look at them and wink and they would smile back and giggle.

One day, Fred looked up at me with his big bright blue eyes and asked me if I was a tree hugger. I said no! "Would you ever hug a tree?" he continued I thought about it, and I said "you know, for the right reason and at the right time, yes, I guess I would hug a tree, because a tree symbolizes creation, growth, and change." Fred looked up at me and said "If I was

a tree, what type of a tree would I be?" I quickly replied "Oh...without a doubt... you would be an ol' crabapple tree!" Fred started to laugh—a joyful sound that came from his toes.

A few weeks later as I was walking in the main lobby of the hospital, I suddenly heard a familiar gruff voice calling out to me. I turned around, and sure enough it was Fred and his wife. He asked me to close my eyes and to put out my hand. When I opened up my eyes, Fred had placed the shiniest, most perfect red apple in my hand. I was speechless, but realized that we really had no need for words: our eyes spoke volumes. I'll never forget that moment.



Fred looked up at me and said "If I was a tree, what type of a tree would I be?" I quickly replied "Oh...without a doubt... you would be an ol' crabapple tree!" Fred started to laugh—a joyful sound that came from his toes.



Janine Landry (centre) is a Clinical Educator at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital

A few months later when Fred returned to the Emergency Department, I learned that his wife had recently passed away. Fred was depressed and acutely ill, his chronic condition had worsened. The Cardiologist informed me that Fred was dying and that he was made aware of this. I quickly notified his daughter and then I went to his bedside to support him, but he shouted “get out, get away from me, and leave me alone!” I respected his wishes by leaving the room; but I intentionally left the curtain slightly open so that I could continue to monitor him from the nursing desk. While I was charting I sensed that he was watching me, so I looked up and just like the time before, our eyes silently spoke to each other.

Fred was deteriorating quickly and his daughter hadn’t arrived yet. My shift was over but I couldn’t imagine leaving him alone, so I went into his room to say “goodnight.”

Although we both knew it wasn’t really “goodnight”, I asked him if I could come and sit next to him and he simply raised his finger and nodded his head. I sat next to him, and for the longest time neither one of us said anything. I held his hand and

looked into his blue eyes and said “what do you need?” His response was “this ol’ tree needs a hug!” So I held him tightly in my arms for the longest time, and when his daughter arrived, I gently laid him back and said “good bye.” Next, when I stood up, the most amazing thing happened, Fred looked up at me, and despite his labored breathing he whispered “Thank-you...Thank-you, Janine.” This was truly a precious moment for me because it was the first and only time Fred called me by my given name.

Shortly thereafter, he died. I will never forget this experience because when I walked away I was thinking about the time we had spent together, and although there were many challenging times with this gentleman, I realized that I had grown to respect him. He died with dignity, because I knew who he was, I took the time to get to know what was truly at the “core” of this man. In essence, I got to know what was in his heart...and he was truly a gift to me!

A Labour of Love is an act of love, not duty. We can all experience this by being connected to others through the presence of the Spirit. I believe God wants us to spread Love!

Professional Achievement

Congratulations to Greg Hadubiak, FACHE, Sr. Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Edmonton Acute Care on achieving recertification this year as a Fellow in the American College of Health Care Executives.

Earning the esteemed distinction of board certification in healthcare management signifies a “commitment to excellence, professional development and to the ongoing evolution of the profession,” explains Michael Rowan, FACHE, CEO of Catholic Health Initiatives in Denver, Colorado.

Greg first earned his Fellow Credential in 2007, earning the right to use the FACHE designation behind his name. He also holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree and a Master’s Degree in Health Services Administration.

Fellows are required to re-certify every three years, participate in at least two healthcare and two community or civic activities, and to either complete at least 24 hours of continuing education or re-take their Board exam. For more information, visit ache.org



Award-Winning COLLABORATION

Misericordia team recognized for excellence in pharmacy practice



The Outpatient Geriatric Assessment Team from left: Dr. M Abbasi; Cheryl Sadowski, Pharmacy; Mary Ann Salton, Unit Supervisor; Lisa Robanske, Unit Clerk; Gwen Berdan, Occupational Therapist; and Liz Sharma, GAU Assessment Nurse.

Congratulations to the Outpatient Geriatric Assessment team at the Misericordia Community Hospital in Edmonton, recipient of the 2010 "Partners in Practice" Apex Award for excellence in pharmacy practice!

The Alberta College of Pharmacists and the Alberta Pharmacists' Association gives this award each year to a team that has demonstrated collaboration between one or more pharmacists and other health professionals to improve patient care or safety.

The winning Misericordia team includes a physician, pharmacist, nurse and an occupational therapist. They work together to "assess and support the most frail and vulnerable seniors in our community, helping them to remain in

their own homes for as long as possible," explains Gordon Stewart, Director of Pharmacy Services at the Misericordia, Grey Nuns and Edmonton General sites. "Having a Pharmacist as part of that team is crucial in order to assess for any drug related problems."

The award will officially be presented on May 15 in Calgary, and each member of the Geriatric Assessment team will receive a certificate to recognize their role in optimizing patient care and safety.

Collaboration is highlighted in the Covenant Health set of official values which also includes compassion, respect, social justice, integrity and stewardship. For more information, visit CovenantHealth.ca

Ask a Good Question

What does the provincial 2010 budget mean for Covenant Health?

The Government of Alberta's 2010 budget provides for stable and predictable funding for health that is tied to greater accountability, more transparency, and patient-focused outcomes. The five-year funding plan includes one-time funding to eliminate the provincial accumulated debt in health care, predictable operating funding for Alberta Health Services and new province-wide performance measures for the health system.

While stable funding is great news for Covenant Health and

provides some predictability, our challenge to be good stewards and effective providers remains the same. We have done an outstanding job of reducing costs, finding efficiencies, managing overtime and operating programs and services within approved budgets.

With your continued good work, we will be well-positioned for 2010 and beyond. We will continue to move forward with the remainder of our budget plan—including various initiatives that will help us enhance our approach to

providing safe, efficient care and will allow our staff to practice to their full scope. We will rely on vacancy management to complete the required changes over a period of time, while ensuring the least impact on our team. Our Voluntary Early Retirement

Program for in-scope staff is part of that effort.

Over the next few months, we will be working with Alberta Health Services to develop our 2010-11 budget and to meet the accountability and performance requirements laid out in the five-year plan.

We are pleased to introduce this new feature column based on the fantastic interactions we have had at our President's Forums. We encourage you to send in your good question about a burning issue that would be of interest to all of us. Email us at goodquestion@covenanthealth.ca or fax to 780.735.7821. While we can't promise we will run them all, they will be shared with our Senior Leaders for information and follow up and will help us plan topics for future articles and President's forums.



focus on... Designated Assisted Living

Alberta's Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place outlines ways of delivering continuing care services in the province that offers greater choice and enables seniors and individuals with disabilities to remain in their own homes and communities.

One such option is Designated Assisted Living (DAL). The DAL model and what it offers to residents is relatively new and often misunderstood.

Designated Assisted Living is both a philosophy and an approach to providing health services within a housing environment. It provides a residential setting where people can maintain control over their lives while also receiving the support they need on a daily basis. Twenty-four hour on-site professional nursing service is provided by licensed practical nurses and personal care is offered by a team of on-site care workers. Home Care Registered Nurses provide daily case management services and are available on-call as needed.

"DAL is an appropriate alternative for many seniors who previously did not have an option other than placement in a traditional continuing care facility," according to Al Pierog, Vice President Continue Care and Rehabilitation. "For those residents, whose needs may be complex, but are manageable, DAL provides a home-like environment where residents enjoy both privacy and independence, knowing that support is available if needed."

DAL is a great option for individuals who may require chronic disease management; or have complex physical needs that cannot be met at home; and/or may be living with varying levels of dementia. Individuals are assessed for placement based on the level of care they require. Similar for those in continuing care facilities, residents in designated assisted living pay an accommodation fee that is determined by the government and includes meals and housekeeping. Optional services, such as cable TV, are available at an additional cost.

Although designated assisted living is new for many in the province, it is not new to Covenant Health. Currently operating 228 funded designated assisted living (DAL) beds, including 200 beds at St. Therese Villa in Lethbridge, our organization is a leader in the development of options to support healthy aging and seniors' health-care services.

"Covenant Health has the capacity, expertise and relationships required to successfully develop and operate designated living facilities in the province. As a significant partner with Alberta Health Services, we can meet the needs of seniors in Alberta with compassion, respect and innovation," says Kevin Cowan, Senior Consultant, Covenant Health Senior's Strategy.

The DAL model at St. Therese, developed by St. Michael's and the former Chinook Health Region, has quickly garnered accolades and interest across Alberta. It is the model forming the basis

for two new Covenant Health initiatives. A newly designed 100 bed DAL facility in Lethbridge will offer a home-like, residential experience for people who desire choice and involvement in personal decision making.

In addition, Covenant Health has been awarded \$4 million through a government capital funding grant for the development of 60 new designated assisted living spaces at Killam Health Centre. As we work with the health centre's team and the community to develop a comprehensive plan for Killam as part of our Rural Health Strategy, this initiative will be at the forefront.

Like St. Therese Villa, our new facility in Lethbridge and the new development in Killam will be purpose built and feature design elements to meet residents' needs and support their safety and security. Designated assisted living focuses on the residents and the people who bring pleasure, meaning and purpose to their lives.

Looking Ahead

As a leading provider of services for seniors—including continuing care, designated assisted living and supportive living—Covenant Health is hoping to develop over 500 new spaces in the coming years as part of our Seniors Strategy.



Residents enjoying a recreation activity at St. Therese Villa, a Covenant Health Designated Assisted Living facility in Lethbridge

Finding Peace

Spiritual care team
provides meditation
sessions for staff

**Urgent issues.
Competing priorities.
Intense emotions.
Breathe!**

Chaplain Deb Kirkpatrick knows that brief “time outs” for rest and focused breathing can help her manage often-stressful work days.

With the goal of helping other interested team members tap into the benefits of the ancient practice of meditation, Deb and the spiritual care team at the Misericordia Community Hospital in Edmonton are offering free weekly “drop-in” sessions.

Set in the hospital chapel, Deb leads 20-minute meditation sessions each Wednesday at noon. “Some are based on practices developed by different religions,” she explains. Others are used for stress reduction in hospital programs around the world, such as the Mindful-based Stress Reduction Program developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre. “This method is prescribed by doctors for cardiac patients, people who suffer from chronic pain, and patients who suffer with anxiety issues,” she explains.

However, all of the different meditation traditions “have led me to being attentive to the present moment: body, mind and soul,” Deb explains, adding how the practice has been helpful in managing her own work day.

“If my mind is busy going over a meeting that took place yesterday, or the



Chaplains from left: Deb Kirkpatrick, Dr. Darlene Pranke and Wendell Gelderman practicing the art of meditation in the Misericordia Community Hospital chapel

plans I have to make for tomorrow, I can not be in the present. But it is in the present moment—the here and now—where I experience peace, joy, stillness, the Divine, emptiness, fullness...love. Meditation deepens my spiritual journey!”

About 25 staff—including front line nurses, allied health professionals and

support workers—have participated since the program was launched last fall. And the response has been very positive. “Work in a hospital is busy and hectic, and the chance to just stop in the middle of the week is most welcome,” says Deb. “We see this as one way that our spiritual care team can support the well-being of our staff.”

Simple meditation exercise

1. Get comfortable—either sit or lay down. If you are sitting, keep your spine straight and let your shoulders drop;
2. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable;
3. Bring your attention to your belly. Feel it expand gently when you inhale and fall when you exhale;
4. Keep the focus on your breathing, and “being with” each breath for its full duration—as if riding the waves of your breath;
5. Every time you notice that your mind has wandered, notice what took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and your breathing;
6. If your mind wanders a thousand times, then your “job” is simply to bring it back to the breath every time;
7. Practice this exercise for fifteen minutes at a convenient time every day for one week, and see how it feels to incorporate a disciplined meditation practice into your life.

Adapted from from Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, Delta paperback reissue, Jan 2005, page 58

Engaged in CHANGE

By Gail Cameron, Director of Maternal, Neonatal & Child Health Programs, Grey Nuns and Misericordia Community Hospitals

We were proud to open our new Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Grey Nuns Site last year. This was part of a three-year plan to enhance our Women's and Child Health Programs and to provide our patients with the best environment, and to support the child birth experience. We wanted to help families feel at home.

The change was significant. We expanded from a unit with a large open space, to one that is 10 times larger and provides single room care for all neonates.

Early in our planning, it was clear that our staff were concerned about the coming changes. We decided to plan early-on for success in the transition, and engage our team in the process. Staff formed a variety of ongoing

International Attention

This February, Gail Cameron gave a presentation on "changing a culture to operate a new unit" to an international audience in Clearwater Beach Florida at the 23rd Annual Gravens Conference on the Physical and Developmental Environment of the High Risk Infant. Robin Snell, architect for Parkin Group, gave presentations on the units' innovative design and cost-effectiveness.



Members of the new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit team (NICU) at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital from left: Dawn Schaffrick, Gail Cameron, Dr. Abe Pelioski, Val Harrison, Helen Elleno

committees aimed at making the new unit our own and ultimately to help us make the transition into a Family Centered Care Unit. We have had great success!

Social Committee

The goals are to celebrate the team and to carry on the team spirit of the old unit into the new. Committee activities include:

- Birthday club, thank you notes, birth and engagement notices, etc.;
- Remembering the old unit with photographs;
- Photography wall with pictures of all staff on the unit;
- Brief biographies of new staff included with their picture in the staff lounge area.

Family Centered Care Committee

The goal is to include the family into the care of their infant. This committee helps teach parents to care for their infants

in hospital and at home. Committee activities include:

- Design of individual name placards for each baby's room;
- Poster board for moms to leave messages for the nurses;
- Development of a parent buddy system so that new parents have a contact with someone else to avoid isolation of private rooms.

Celebrating the New Unit

Before moving in, current and retired staff and their families got a tour—and the first look—of the new unit. Next, all hospital staff, media and senior administrators and the public were given tours. We also held a competition to design a wordmark for the NICU, with the theme 'growing babies with love'. The theme was put on team scrubs, jackets, t-shirts and vests which are worn each day with pride!

We're taking our pulse!

Employee Engagement Survey Coming this Fall

Our employees are the heart of our organization and we're taking our pulse by finding out what you think about working for Covenant Health. All employees can answer the employee

engagement survey in October. The survey is a useful tool to measure teams' successes and discover areas for growth.

This is your chance to have your say—good and bad—

about your work experience. The survey, conducted by Gallup, is completely confidential and only takes five minutes. Best of all, your answers will help shape your

work environment.

This initiative is part of our work to *Build and Engage Our Team* by "creating a fulfilling work environment characterized by respect and compassion."

Supporting SENIORS

Misericordia pilot project helps prevent repeat visits to emergency



More than 9,000 seniors visited Misericordia's Emergency Department last year.

The quest to better serve and support these often vulnerable patients inspired the Misericordia Community Hospital emergency team to participate in a provincial pilot study that is yielding encouraging results.

Serving those most vulnerable

The Covenant Health senior team and Board of Directors have identified Respond to those in Need—including efforts to be of greater service to vulnerable populations—as one of the five strategic goals of the organization. For more information, visit CovenantHealth.ca

"We all prefer to be in our homes and we find that people have a better quality of life when they are able to remain in the community," says Carleen Brenneis, the director of Transition Services, Seniors' Health, Edmonton Zone.

"With this initiative, we are trying to determine whether a person really needs to be admitted and, if not, what equipment, supplies or connections with home care will enable them to function at home."

Since Dec. 10, a care co-ordinator has been working in the Emergency Department to liaise with elderly patients. This nurse works with Emergency and Home Care staff to safely discharge patients and support them at home.

After two full months of running the pilot, Heather Hackett, Senior Manager of Patient Services at the Misericordia says her team is enthusiastic about participating and is excited about the results. "We have been able to re-direct several patients back to their homes and avoid a number of unnecessary admissions. And the link with Home Care to add services to facilitate safe discharges for these patients has worked well."

Jean Lupul, 89, was one of the first patients helped by the Misericordia's new program. Her daughter, Violet Sorochoan, appreciated the support.

"The co-ordinator had all the information from Home Care and was able to assist us with some extra help for my mom at home. I don't know what people would do without this service. It's an excellent program," Sorochoan says.

The approach is new to the Edmonton area, but has proven effective in Calgary and Red Deer. Prior to the Edmonton project, only one per cent of seniors visiting Misericordia left with referral for home care; in the Calgary program, referrals are 18 per cent.

Provincially, seniors account for up to 20 per cent of all emergency department visits. They come in for various reasons –

Lillian Chadwick, a visitor to the Misericordia Community Hospital emergency department in Edmonton, receives support from emergency nurse Dana Bergquist, left, and Home Care co-ordinator Megan Miller

falls, digestive problems, circulatory issues, heart problems and diabetes are among the top complaints.

Complications from conditions like these can affect their ability to live at home and often result in hospital admissions.

"Sometimes a simple adjustment to a senior's routines, care or medications will allow them to stay where they are most comfortable," Brenneis explains.

"Having Home Care coordinators in both the Emergency Department and the community, allows us to paint a better picture of why a patient might be having repeat visits," says Leanne Rudrum, a Continuing Care manager for the Red Deer program (AHS), which has operated for nearly two years.

Gail Blanchard, an Edmonton Zone Home Care manager for Alberta Health Services, says the care co-ordinator is an advocate for seniors who may not be able to understand or communicate their needs very well.

"This can have a significant impact on their quality of life," she says.

The Misericordia's pilot project will run until March 31 and could continue beyond that date.



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Our Compass is a quarterly publication for Covenant Health employees, physicians and volunteers. It is also available by email on request to ourcompass@covenanthealth.ca

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send letters to: *Our Compass* Newsletter 3033 – 66 Street, Edmonton, AB T6K 4B2 or email ourcompass@covenanthealth.ca

Newsletter Survey

This is the first issue of *Our Compass*. Please tell us what you think. Visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AC4XK7522> and fill out a 10-minute survey by May 3, 2010. Thank you!