

# NURSING IN THE

## Disaster management in Peterborough

There was organized chaos at Peterborough Regional Health Centre on Oct. 16. A staged bus crash with 15 victims, played by Fleming College students, arrived in the emergency department with simulated critical injuries to assess the effectiveness of the hospital's existing emergency plans. ER manager **Colleen Armstrong** says the experience was "valuable," adding "this (mock disaster) gives staff the chance to get involved. We want to hear from them about how this went." Working in collaboration with Peterborough EMS and the Fleming College Emergency Management program, staff tested their Code Orange plans, playing out the logistics of how to move around existing patients in the emergency department to make way for victims with critical injuries. "The Code Orange plans implemented during the mock disaster, this is the base for the plan to deal with more extreme circumstances," says Armstrong. "I'm hoping to get a lot of learning out of this." (*Peterborough This Week*, Oct. 16)

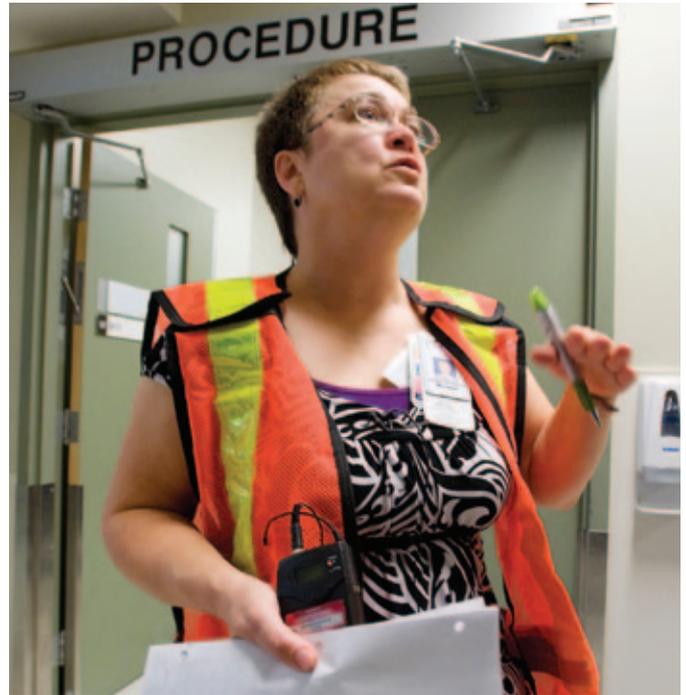


PHOTO: QMI AGENCY

**Colleen Armstrong leads colleagues through a mock disaster to test emergency preparedness at Peterborough Regional Health Centre.**

## RNAO president explains phase out of CCACs

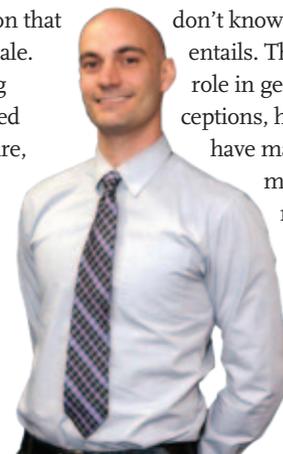
RNAO President **Rhonda Seidman-Carlson** openly praised the recommendations in the association's *Enhancing Community Care for Ontarians* (ECCO) report, published in early October (see pg. 24 for further detail). The comprehensive document recommends that Ontario's 14 Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) functions be phased out and 3,500 personnel (most of them RNs) move to existing primary care organizations over a three-year period. Primary care is a "health sector that knows its

patients most intimately," says Seidman-Carlson. "Care coordination and system navigation is anchored best within primary care." The report proposes a temporary Primary Care Transitional Secretariat be set up within each Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) until the model is fully functional. In response to the report, some CCACs say this "is not a workable policy proposal." However, Seidman-Carlson says "(implementing the recommendations) means primary care providers will be the ones ordering home care and support services, linking and following-up with

specialists, and facilitating people's transitions from their homes to nursing homes." (*Canadian Healthcare Network*, Oct. 11)

## Perceptions of male nursing

**David Mastrangelo** (right) is an RN who has worked for 10 years in a profession that is predominantly female. Throughout a nursing career that has spanned the sectors of acute care, public health and long-term care, Mastrangelo has aimed to improve the image of men in nursing.

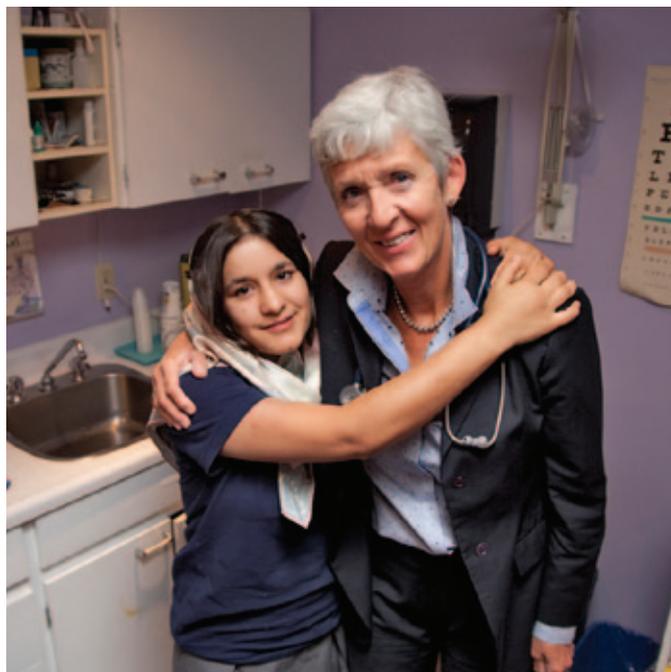


He is the interim president of RNAO's Men in Nursing Interest Group. In that role, he recently spoke with *CBC Toronto's Metro Morning* about the gender-based stereotypes the public has about nursing. He says the limited number of men working in the profession may be linked to the fact that people simply don't know what nursing entails. The media play a role in generating misconceptions, he says. "We don't have many images of male nursing in the media, but overall we're moving forward," he told CBC's Matt

Galloway. When Mastrangelo started his career, three per cent of RNs were men. Today, that figure is five per cent. “Luck,” he says, played a large part in how he fell into nursing. “I wanted to be a paramedic,” he recalls thinking before an interview for a hospital placement. His interviewer suggested he go into nursing, and he says he’s had countless “a-ha-moments” since. (Oct. 19)

## Retired RN celebrates several decades of helping HIV/AIDS patients

This fall, the AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and area (ACCKWA) celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The committee planned a year of anniversary events, and retired public health nurse **Dianne Roedding** was on hand at several to offer support. Two decades ago, Roedding was hired to educate people about a virus that few understood. She recalls the emergence of AIDS in the Waterloo region in the late 80s, saying: “Back then, people thought AIDS was confined to people in the ‘five H’ categories — hemophiliacs, hookers, homosexuals, Haitians and heroin addicts.” Today, there is a much better understanding of the virus thanks to events such as World AIDS Day. ACCKWA formed in 1987, and Roedding began working for the region’s public health AIDS program in 1988. It was a time when stigma was pervasive, and treatment non-existent. “(People



**Tui Noonan receives a warm embrace from young refugee Roya Shams, a teen who turned to her school nurse for support shortly after arriving from Kandahar.**

with HIV/AIDS) were facing rejection from family, from community and from faith organizations,” she says. “So we had to build that support.” (*Kitchener Post*, Oct. 4)

## School nurse comforts Afghan teen

**Tui Noonan**, a school nurse at Ottawa’s Ashbury College, treats students’ ailments with both medication and sensitivity. The latter was certainly a necessity working with Roya Shams, a young refugee from Afghanistan who struggled to fit into a new culture when she arrived in Canada in January 2012. “I felt for her,” says Noonan, the wife of a diplomat who says she knows what it’s like to feel like an outsider. “She would often come up

here (the school dispensary) and have a chat. She’d talk about her family (who still live in Afghanistan). She was worried about them. Her mom’s got a cardiac condition. She was so tired often when she came to school because she was up in the middle of the night calling home.” Roya fled her war-torn country after her father, an Afghan police commander, was killed by insurgents. Before his death, he encouraged Roya to brave Taliban threats and go to school in Kandahar so she could later help fight for equal rights. Thanks to support from Noonan, and from her teachers, tutors, friends and a growing extended family in Canada, Roya has come out of her shell since her arrival almost a year ago,

and has even spoken at a school assembly about life in Afghanistan. (*Toronto Star*, Oct. 26)

## Guarding against the flu virus

As flu season ramps up once again, Brantford RN **Ruth Gratton** feels positive about the crowds of people who turned up for their free flu shot at the Brant County Health Unit’s (BCHU) first clinic in mid-October.

“People are usually so thankful for the clinics,” the BCHU manager of infectious diseases says. “There is rarely a wait.” Getting the shot this year is extra easy because pharmacists are now permitted to administer the shots. Gratton warns that the nature of the flu virus is unpredictable and it’s a lethal danger to some, especially the elderly. She advises that everyone should get vaccinated every year to protect themselves and their families from the virus. “The burden of illness is horrendous,” she says. “Everyone is susceptible to it.” (*The Brantford Expositor*, Oct. 17)

## And in other flu news...

Twenty-nine long-term care homes in the Simcoe-Muskoka region were recognized at an awards ceremony in October for participating in a challenge issued by the district health unit to increase the number of health-care workers getting their flu shots. **Mandy Deeves**, the coordinator for the Regional Infection Control Network of North Simcoe Muskoka, says: “This

# NURSING IN THE NEWS

## OUT AND ABOUT



### PROTESTING FOR REFUGEES' RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

Hamilton chapter members spoke out against government cuts to health services for refugees at a rally in late September. They are among thousands of nurses across the province outraged that the federal government has curtailed health services for those who need it most. (L to R) Leanne Siracusa, Sue Grafe, Jodi Pipes, Siobhan Eastman and Alison Diamond.



### BEING GREEN

On Oct. 10, RNAO's Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group (ONEIG) hosted its *Greening Health Care* event at Toronto General Hospital. Participants learned about some of the green initiatives implemented at University Health Network's three hospital sites. Ed Rubinstein, UHN's

energy and environment manager (left) was on hand to share tips, as was ONEIG co-chair Sima Patel.

event provides an opportunity to highlight and recognize the commitment our health-care facilities have to their staff and community by supporting immunization." This is the second annual Simcoe Muskoka Influenza Immunization Challenge. Two area hospitals received honourable mentions at the ceremony for boosting their staff immunization rates by 10 per cent over last year. Generally, the immunization rate among health-care workers in Simcoe Muskoka is almost 10 per cent above the provincial average of 60 per cent. (*Stayner Sun*, Oct. 9)

### Deceased homeless remembered

**Abe Oudshoorn**, assistant professor at Western University's School of Nursing, and founder of the London Homelessness Outreach Network, calls the planned creation of a homeless memorial a "statement." It's a fitting tribute to those who deserve to be

properly acknowledged, he says. When a local homeless person dies, the social agency that has worked closely with the individual may stage a service. If next-of-kin is not found, and the homeless person does not have any money, the city arranges for burial. Usually, there isn't a funeral service or grave marker. "Everyone has value. But sometimes, there's no one to tell that story," says Oudshoorn. The committee raised about \$9,000 of the necessary \$15,000 to build a memorial, appearing as a rock and plaque in one of London's parks. The memorial will give people a physical site to mourn the passing of a friend or kin, he says. (*The London Free Press*, Oct. 22)

### Wingham chemo clinic marks its 10th anniversary

A decade after opening its doors to thousands of cancer patients, the chemotherapy unit at Wingham and District Hospital threw

a luncheon to mark the milestone. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony in October highlighted the achievements of cancer survivors and clinic staff over the past decade. RN **Linda Wall** was the unit's first nurse. Wall, a former retiree who returned to work to ensure chemo patients receive essential care, says she's "...very proud of this moment, to be able to provide this service to the community." Operating

as a satellite site to the South West Regional Cancer Program, the Wingham oncology program has been open since November 2002, and is appreciated by patients who now receive care closer to home. Several Wingham-area cancer survivors were present to mark the anniversary. "The patients are the heart and soul of this program," says Wall. (*Wingham Advance-Times*, Oct. 24)



Linda Wall (centre) was the first nurse hired at the Wingham and District Hospital chemotherapy unit. She celebrates its 10th anniversary with nursing colleagues Kathy Blake (left) and Barb Pletch.

PHOTO: PAULINE KERR, WINGHAM ADVANCE-TIMES