

# NURSING IN TH

Carol Mifsud's cancer diagnosis has not deterred her from participating in annual ride.

## RN rides a third time to find cure for cancer

A diagnosis of incurable Stage 4C follicular thyroid cancer has not stopped RN **Carol Mifsud**, 52, from participating for the third time in the *Ride to Conquer Cancer* in Ontario. She will hit the road again this upcoming June. Mifsud has already raised \$18,000 and is hoping these annual rides will be a way she can raise awareness about cancer and the importance of finding a cure. "I'm using my voice and my experience to spread the word and find a cure. At the very least, if it's not going to save me, it might save somebody else," said Mifsud, who practised as an RN for 23 years. The annual ride, a two-day cycling trip from Toronto to Niagara Falls, has already raised millions of dollars for Toronto's Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. Mifsud says it's vital people begin to act because of the staggering statistics around cancer. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, two in five Canadians are expected to develop cancer during their lifetime. One in four Canadians is expected to die from the disease. (*The Globe and Mail*, Nov. 6)



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CONQUER CANCER

### Owen Sound hospital promotes baby-friendly environment

Owen Sound Regional Hospital can officially call itself "baby-friendly" after earning the title from the *Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario* in October. The hospital is the fourth in Ontario to receive the designation after nurses and other staff completed 10 steps aimed at ensuring all levels of the organization promote and support a baby-friendly environment. **Sue Snowdon**,

woman and child care unit manager, says staff are committed to ensuring skin-to-skin contact between mother and child immediately after birth. They are also committed to supporting breastfeeding, which produces immediate and long-term health benefits. "We've completely changed the culture on the unit," Snowdon says. "It's now absolute habit in the staff that we don't separate moms and babies... unless there's a medical reason." The designation process took more

than three years to navigate, adds Snowdon. Hamilton's St. Joseph's Health Care, Kitchener's Grand River Hospital, and Toronto East General are the three other hospitals that hold the title. (*Owen Sound Sun Times*, Oct. 28)

### Colour-coded uniforms to end confusion at hospitals

Nurses and other hospital staff at the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance will now be easier to identify after all four of the alliance's hospitals, including

St. Mary's Hospital, adopted colour-coded uniforms. The decision comes in response to patient feedback, noted Chief Nurse Executive **Donnalene Tuer-Hodes**. "We looked at our patient comment forms and there was a common theme that patients did not know who the nurses were," she said, adding patients said they were also confused about the specific roles of other staff in the building. One prime example, Tuer-Hodes points out, was when a patient gave a staff member personal

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BY VICTORIA ALARCON

information because she thought she was talking to a nurse. She was actually talking to housekeeping staff. Under the new system, hospital staff will be divided by profession into about 15 colour-coded groups, with everyone wearing black pants and a specific coloured top. For example, nurses will wear white tops, while occupational therapists will wear burgundy. Tuer-Hodes believes it will only be a matter of time before other health-care organizations follow in their footsteps. (*CBC News*, Oct. 29)

## Health unit opens dialogue about teen pregnancy

To present the results of its recent study on teen pregnancy, the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU) hosted a public information session on Nov.

24 at the Porcupine Dante Club in Timmins. In front of colleagues and community members, public health nurse and lead author of the study, **Laurie Dagg-Labine**, revealed that Timmins and the surrounding area has consistently had the highest number of teen pregnancies in the province, with rates that are more than double the Ontario average. “It’s not just about birth control and condoms. This is not why we have a high pregnancy rate,” said Dagg-Labine, who notes a lower education rate, insufficient housing, and high poverty rates play a role in teen pregnancies. The public health nurse says an information session, set up to get feedback on the findings from people in the community, will be used to produce a strategic teen pregnancy action plan. (*Timmins Press*, Nov. 25)



**Laurie Dagg-Labine (third from the right) stands alongside her nursing colleagues at a public information session in Timmins, hosted by the Porcupine Health Unit.**

## Caregivers receive recognition for their hard work

Formal and informal caregivers were recognized as “Heroes” in November, part of the Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre’s (CCAC) third annual *Heroes in the Home* program. With about 200 people in attendance, the CCAC recognized 67 inspirational and dedicated caregivers this year. Community RN **Madeline Shanks** was one of

them. She says her role as a nurse is a reward in itself. “They tell me I give above and beyond for them, but I just enjoy my job. I love being with the patients and looking after them,” she said. Shanks, who has 28 years of nursing experience, says a satisfying part of her job is being there when people recover. She also finds palliative care very rewarding, especially when she is able to help clients fulfill their wish to die in their

## Letter to the editor

*The National Post published a letter written by RNAO CEO Doris Grinspun on Nov. 20, applauding the new federal health minister’s commitment to “progressive” health policies.*

## Federal health minister promises action

Not only is the new federal health minister a breath of fresh air, her common-sense approach to the health file is welcome after a long, dark decade of federal inaction. Jane Philpott’s promise for “progressive” health policies and an “activist agenda” is exactly the kind of leadership we’ve been waiting for.

The federal government has a central role to play in health. It has the power to protect and strengthen our publicly funded, not-for-profit system and ensure it is fair and equitable to all, regardless of where they live. As the minister points out, there are gaps in the system. Two such glaring omissions are universal pharmacare and home care, which are essential if we want serious health reform.

When Philpott sits down with her provincial and territorial counterparts in January to negotiate a new *Health Accord*, we hope they build on the interprofessional primary care system that resulted from the previous agreement and include pharmacare and home care. Only then will Canadians experience a true health system rather than the current patchwork of programs across the country.

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homes. “My nursing career is put to use and patients seem to really appreciate it,” Shanks said. Since the *Heroes in the Home* program began in 2013, the Erie St. Clair CCAC has recognized more than 200 people. (*Chatham Daily News*, Nov. 12)

## Kingston General Hospital launches teddy bear campaign

Teddy bears are making a difference for kids at Kingston General Hospital (KGH) and Hotel Dieu Hospital. In November, the organizations’ auxiliary launched *Show Children You Care*, its 2015 *Teddy Bear Campaign*. The goal is to encourage the public to sponsor a teddy bear for \$100 to help fund new pediatric equipment while also providing comfort and



companionship to children receiving treatment. Nurse practitioner **Lynn Newton** says the new equipment is important because it allows hospital staff to analyze vital signs right at the bedside. “Kids get sick really quickly, but they also get better quickly too, and these machines will allow us to provide better and more efficient treatment to get them home sooner.” This year, the campaign runs until

Dec. 21 with the goal to raise \$20,000 (200 bears) to purchase four CARESCAPE V100 monitors. Over the past

11 years, the auxiliary has raised more than \$250,000 for children and youth in the pediatric program, allowing

for the purchase of a variety of specialized equipment. (*Kingston Whig-Standard*, Nov. 9) **RN**

## OUT AND ABOUT



### FELLOWS REUNITE

Each year, RNAO’s *Hub Fellowship* offers a member the chance to shadow CEO Doris Grinspun for a week. In November, past winners came together for a one-day retreat to network and catch up. Since 2003, HUB has sponsored 11 fellowships. Among past winners at the retreat in November were: (L to R) Bahar Karimi (2014); Claudia Wong (2015); Gurjit Sangha (2006); Grinspun; Cheryl Yost (2003); Sue Grafe (2013); and Norma Nicholson (2008).



### MPP MEETS WITH BOARD MEMBERS FOR QPOR

RNAO board members Beatriz Jackson (left) and Angela Cooper Brathwaite (right) met with MPP Granville Anderson on Nov. 13 as part of *Queen’s Park on the Road (QPOR)*. The pair talked to the Liberal MPP about RN replacement, the need for NPs to prescribe controlled substances, and the call for a national pharmacare program.



### A SHOT IN THE ARM

Raquel Divers (left), a member of the nursing resource team at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), gives RNAO President Vanessa Burkoski, LHSC VP of professional practice and chief nursing officer, her annual flu shot during a clinic visit in October.