

WELL AWARE – SPRING 2017

May 23rd, 2017

The North Bay Regional Health Centre is pleased to provide you with our quarterly e-newsletter update! NBRHC Well Aware is designed to keep you up to date on changes to our services, new initiatives and news that impacts our communities

New award recognizes NBRHC volunteers

A new award at the North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) provides an opportunity to recognize the important contribution volunteers make to the organization.

“Volunteers have been a valued part of our hospital community for over 100 years,” says Kim McElroy, Manager of the Communications and Volunteer Department. “From providing service in acute care and regional specialized mental health programs, supporting fundraising initiatives and sharing their expertise as board members, volunteers continue to be an integral part of the team.”

This commitment and dedication to the Health Centre was the inspiration behind the creation of the Volunteer Involvement Award.

This award was developed by the Volunteer Involvement (VI) Committee, a group of eight volunteers responsible for fostering a culture of volunteerism at the NBRHC. The Committee decided to create the Volunteer Involvement Award to formally recognize volunteers on a regular basis and highlight their ongoing commitment to the organization.

“Our volunteers generously share their time and talent, delivering compassionate and respectful service to our patients and their families,” says Ron Walsh, VI Committee member. “We wanted to thank our volunteers for this selfless gift of time, because it continues to touch the lives of our patients and strengthen our community.”

This past fall, the VI Committee met to review the nominations for the first award. The names of the nominees and nominators were concealed, so their decision was based solely on the information provided in each submission. The VI Committee was proud to announce James Bunker as the first volunteer to receive the award.

Bunker is a volunteer with the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) at the Health Centre. This program targets hospitalized seniors 70 and older who are at risk for delirium and physical deterioration. Specially trained volunteers like Bunker engage patients in meaningful activities to keep their mind and body as active as possible while in hospital.

The aspiring nurse was eager to make a difference in the lives of patients and joined the HELP to gain hands on experience to complement the more technical aspect of his schooling. “I have learned a lot from my volunteer experience that is helping prepare me for a career in the medical field,” says Bunker. “My one-on-one interactions with patients has offered me a unique perspective on the patient experience that’s so valuable, and it will inform my approach as a professional.”

Melissa Hallett, the Elder Life Coordinator at the Health Centre nominated Bunker for the Volunteer Involvement Award, because he has shown a remarkable ability to connect with patients in a sincere and compassionate manner. “James takes the time to really listen to our patients, and I’ve noticed as a result patients are often more willing to complete the essential components in the delirium prevention program,” says Hallett. “This is important because participation in the HELP can enable our patients to maintain their cognitive and physical functioning – promoting recovery and reducing their length of stay in hospital.”

For Bunker being a volunteer in the HELP and contributing to a patient’s recovery is a rewarding experience. “I am fortunate to have the opportunity to do what I love while helping make a patient’s stay a little better,” says Bunker. “The recognition is extremely humbling and to be acknowledged by my peer volunteers is really special.”

The Volunteer Involvement Award is presented by the VI Committee on a bi-annual basis (fall and spring). If you know a volunteer at the Health Centre that deserves recognition, you are encouraged to nominate them by completing the online nomination form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/viaward>

We Are All Patients

As CEO of the North Bay Regional Health Centre, I receive a lot of feedback from patients, staff, volunteers, physicians and community members – some good, some not-so-good. In one of the not-so-good examples, a patient said she ‘hoped I ended up having to use the hospital myself’. As it turned out, I did—and it made me think: we are all patients of this great hospital.

It’s no secret our team at the North Bay Regional Health Centre has faced extremely challenging times over the last few years. Through it all, I have always maintained that our dedicated team of more than 2100 staff, 142 doctors and 300 volunteers are the *best in health care*. Recently, I had the opportunity to assure myself that this was indeed the case.

On a Saturday in February I developed an infection in my leg, which brought me to our Emergency Department. Once I was registered and triaged, I took a seat in the waiting room. It was a busy night in our Emergency Department and when it was my turn I was brought back to a room where I was cared for until I saw the physician. I was able to go home that night but was to return for IV antibiotics the next day.

During the next 20 hours at home, it was apparent to me that my condition had gotten progressively worse. I followed the directions given to me the day before and returned to the Emergency Department where I was once again triaged and cared for as I waited to see the physician.

This time my condition was deemed more serious and I was admitted to the Critical Care Unit (CCU) where I stayed for two days. Anyone who has been a patient knows the feelings of vulnerability and uneasiness that can accompany a hospital stay; you’re being cared for by strangers, in unfamiliar surroundings, eating different foods, not sleeping in your own bed. All this together with being in pain can make the hospital an uncomfortable environment.

That being said, our incredible team made my stay as comfortable as it could be—from the dietary and environmental services staff, to my primary care nurses on the CCU, the porters, staff in Diagnostic Imaging, the

Lab, and all the physicians I saw during my stay—every person I came into contact with provided the most professional care.

I am confident the care I received is the same expert and compassionate care everyone can expect to receive at NBRHC. We are so lucky to live in a wonderful community like North Bay. At some point all of us are patients of the North Bay Regional Health Centre. I can confidently say as both CEO and a recent patient, we are *the best in health care*.

Special thanks to my care team:

- Kim Morrow – ED Reception
- Angela Dwyer – ED Triage Nurse
- Derrick Larose – ED Reception & Triage Nurse
- Melissa Cross – Exam Nurse
- Robynne Lavoie – Exam Nurse
- Stephanie Bon – CDU Nurse
- Whitney Morland – CDU Nurse
- Jeff Larsen- Phlebotomist
- Liz McCarthy- Phlebotomist
- Stacy Zapshalla – Diagnostic Imaging
- Monika Vongraffen-Cornthwaite CCU nurse
- Wanda Wigle – CCU nurse
- Christine Chaylt – Unit Leader CCU
- Leslie Bethune – CCU Manager
- Yasser Mohamed – Pharmacist
- Tracy Shannon – ED Registration
- Elise Robbins – ED Registration
- Laurie Devine – Processed Admission
- Also a special thanks to the many physicians who provided care for me—specifically:
• Dr. Truong, Dr. Lamont, Dr. McKenna, Dr. Creech, Dr. Fung, Dr. Cowan, Dr. Buck and Dr. Shepard.

Why Am I Waiting in the Emergency Department?

Have you ever sat in the Emergency Department (ED) and asked, “*Why am I waiting?*”

At first glance, the ED waiting room at the North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) may look quiet, but behind closed doors our team of emergency staff are caring for many people of different ages, and with variety of illnesses or injuries. Last year, we had 58, 764 people visit our ED seeking emergency care.

Our staff are committed to providing safe, high quality care as quickly as possible to our patients. We are proud of being one of the highest performing ED in the province when it comes to wait times.

Wait times is referred to the time a patient spends in the ED, from the moment they arrive and register to the point at which they are either discharged or admitted to hospital. In January 2017, the average wait time spent in

our ED was between 2.7 and 4.3 hours depending on the complex conditions (compared to the provincial average is 2.3 to 6.2 hours).

In a new video titled, *Why Am I Waiting in the Emergency Department?*, Dr. Mike Evans explains why some patients may be waiting longer than expected. This unique and engaging whiteboard video was jointly developed by St. Michael's Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and Reframe Health Films.

[Watch the video here.](#)

NBRHC Welcomes Ontario's First Patient Ombudsman



Patient Ombudsman Christine Elliott is shown above (second from right) with Marie-Claire Muamba (right), Senior Investigator with the Patient Ombudsman's office; Paul Heinrich, (second from left); President and CEO, North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC); Brent Webster, NBRHC Patient Advocate (left); and Cynthia Stables, NE LHIN Senior Director (middle).

In March NBRHC welcomed Ontario's Patient Ombudsman, Christine Elliott during her cross-province tour. Hosted by the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), Elliot and her team visited with patients, staff and members of the NBRHC Senior Leadership Team. She was here to learn more about patient-centred initiatives taking place at the Health Centre and to educate us about the role of the Ombudsman in the patient complaint process.

“I appreciate the opportunity to visit the NE LHIN and learn more about the innovative and unique ways patients and caregivers are being involved in healthcare planning across Northeastern Ontario, and how they’re improving the system overall. It’s very important for my office to be as inclusive and accessible as possible, and a large part of that commitment is understanding local healthcare needs and priorities,” said Elliott.

Elliott officially became Ontario’s first Patient Ombudsman on July 1, 2016. The role of her office is to receive and respond to complaints from patients and caregivers about public hospitals, long-term care homes and Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) to help meet the needs of people who have tried and not had their concerns fairly resolved through existing complaint mechanisms.

Local support group giving back and raising awareness about organ donation

Mary Beaucage knew something was wrong the day she woke up one summer morning almost four years ago. “I had trouble moving and I couldn’t get myself dressed. I was looking at my phone and I knew I had to call someone because I needed help, but I couldn’t even dial the numbers,” explains Beaucage.



Janis Herzog (left) with Mary Beaucage and Claire Stewart at the NBRHC during BeADonor month.

When a concerned co-worker called on her, Beaucage said she was incoherent. She was rushed to the North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) and suffered a seizure in the Emergency Department. Three days later, Beaucage woke up from a coma in the Critical Care Unit (CCU) and learned she was diagnosed with diabetes induced kidney failure at stage five.

“I started dialysis immediately, three times a week, four hours per treatment as I waited for a kidney transplant,” says Beaucage. “During this time, I started to do my own research on the disease and treatment options, and I made a Facebook group to educate my family and friends on what was going on with me.”

Beaucage’s cousin, Janice Pulak followed her online and decided to get tested to see if she could be a possible kidney donor. “We were almost a perfect match, as close as we could be without being siblings,” says Beaucage. “It was pretty amazing.”

Almost a year and a half after learning her cousin was compatible, Beaucage received her new kidney. While recovering from her transplant, Beaucage received a Facebook message from Claire Stewart.

Stewart, a liver transplant recipient for nearly two years at the time, knew firsthand what Beaucage was going through. “When I first moved to North Bay I didn’t know anyone who received an organ donation. I felt really alone and isolated, and I didn’t know if what I was going through was normal,” explains Stewart. “I saw Mary on the news and all the things she was talking about made sense to me, so I looked her up on Facebook and we started chatting.”

The two women have bonded over their shared experience and their support for each other has been the foundation of their friendship. “We realized the importance of having a face-to-face connection with someone who’s gone through the same experience. Every time I sit with Mary and she says something I think, ‘I remember going through that,’” Stewart reflects. “Just knowing I have a partner I can bounce stuff off of, to me that’s worth a million bucks.”

The pair decided to create a support group for other transplant recipients and their caregivers in the North Bay area called *Nipissing Gift of Life Association*. “For the first year I was here, I would say ‘it must be a secret in North Bay of who’s had a transplant,’ because it was hard to find other people,” says Stewart.

“It’s only been within the last six months that we’ve been able to connect with other recipients and their families,” adds Beaucage. “We went to the Trillium Gift of Life Summit this past January and we met some local people that were all sort of trying to find each other, but didn’t know how.”

The group has since grown to 16 members. “Our meetings are informal and it’s a safe place for recipients and their families to get together and talk,” Beaucage explains. “I think a big part of what we’re trying to bring out is supporting each other through the difficult times and we want to support each other through the successes too.”

For Janis Herzog, Clinical Support Lead for the Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) and Clinical Nurse Educator, CCU at the NBRHC hearing Beaucage and Stewart’s stories is important. “Today in Ontario, there are over 1,500 people waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant,” says Herzog. “When people share their experience, it has great impact on the rest of the community and helps raise awareness of the need of organ donations.”

This year alone, between April and December, staff at NBRHC were able to assist in the facilitation of 29 eye donors. “This means the quality of life for potentially 58 people improved through the gift of sight,” says Herzog.

North Bay is currently tied at 54 percent with Parry Sound for the highest number of residents in Ontario who have registered to be an organ or tissue donor. Beaucage and Stewart have been active in raising awareness about organ and tissue donation in the North Bay area to help increase the percentage of registered donors.

“A recent BeADonor campaign revealed that as many as 1.8 million Ontarians mistakenly believe they are registered organ donors, because they have signed a paper card in the past. These cards are no longer in use as they often were not available when needed,” says Stewart. “Now people can easily register online at www.BeADonor.ca or in person at any Service Ontario location. If those 1.8 million Ontarians were added to the registry, as many as 45 percent of the eligible population would be registered.”

Beaucage, Stewart and Herzog were available at the NBRHC throughout April to mark BeADonor month. “We set up booths to encourage people to register as organ and tissue donors or check their status, and have that very important discussion with their families so their wishes are known,” says Beaucage. “By registering your consent, you are making the caring and selfless decision to try and help save other lives after your death, and remove a decision that others would have to make on your behalf. It only takes two minutes of your time to make a difference.”

For more information on events during BeADonor month or on the *Nipissing Gift of Life Association*, visit their Facebook page or email nipissinggola@gmail.com