VIHA Nurses Recognized for Nursing Excellence

VIHA is proud to recognize the award recipients of the 2011 UVic School of Nursing Alumni Awards, presented during National Nursing Week (May 9-15). The awards recognize nursing alumnnae who are ambassadors for the profession and who have made significant contributions to healthcare on a local, national or international scale.

The Award of Excellence was presented to Deanna Hutchings, clinical nurse specialist in VIHA’s end-of-life care program. A respected scholar, writer and clinician, Deanna found her passion working with hospice patients who taught her about “the beauty of this sacred time.”

Three VIHA nurses were awarded the Nursing Preceptor of The Year award; Tracey Adams, nurse practitioner with the Pender and Saturna Island Medical Clinics; Leanne Hale, family nurse practitioner with the Mayne and Galiano Island Health Care Centres and Anita Fernando, clinical nurse leader at Victoria General Hospital. On top of their daily work routines, these special nurses are teachers, mentors and role models for nursing students during their professional practicum.

Congratulations to all!

Battling Bugs From Coast to Coast

A passion for antimicrobial stewardship led medical microbiologist Dr. Jim Hutchinson from a wild rock in the Atlantic to another in the Pacific.

Dr. Hutchinson has joined the Infection Prevention and Control team in System Wide Integration (SWI) to help VIHA doctors improve how they prescribe antibiotics.

“The increase in resistant organisms, and the fact that fewer new antimicrobials are being developed, make it really important that we use these in the best way possible,” he says. “Looking at forests, fisheries and waste, the idea of using precious resources well is not foreign to islanders.”

In addition, the use of antibiotics also is directly correlated to the incidence of Clostridium difficile. Altering the normal intestinal flora through use of antibiotics allows the organism to flourish in the intestinal tract – antibiotics such as clindamycin, cephalosporins, and fluoroquinolones increase the risk most.

Hutchinson’s approach is to champion and model changes in prescribing behaviour, simplify prescribing guidelines, build interactive on-line resources and improve tracking of antibiotic use.

Prior to coming to VIHA, Dr. Hutchinson taught for 17 years at Memorial University in St. John’s, Newfoundland where he oversaw an antimicrobial stewardship program. He is a spokesperson on antimicrobial stewardship for the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease.

Welcome, Dr. Hutchinson!
Pride in Our Workplace... Not???

Do you get annoyed when you see cigarette butts and garbage strewn around your workplace, sometimes just feet from the nearest garbage bin? You should. As a health-care organization, our workplace environment should reflect the value we all place on health, healing and the provision of excellent care.

In March 2008, all VIHA sites and facilities became tobacco free, meaning that smoking is not allowed on any VIHA site; however, some employees continue to smoke on our sites, and some aren’t using cigarette traps or trash bins. Not just unsightly, cigarette butts blow into yards and properties, will not biodegrade and their carcinogens pose a danger to hungry animals.

When employees smoke and litter at our facilities it sends the message that visitors can do the same. If you smoke, please do so off site, carry an ash tray and dispose of fully extinguished cigarette butts and other garbage in the nearest trash bin.

We can all help to keep our air smoke free and our grounds safe and clean. Who better to model the best in health than the people who provide the very best in patient care every day?

Congratulations to VIHA’s MSIP team and to Dr. Marilyn Bater – winners of Excellence in BC Health Care Gold Apple Awards from the Health Employer’s Association of BC.

The MSIP team was honoured for the Peer Coaching program, which has promoted safe patient and material handling through ‘on the job’ coaching and mentoring. Moving this vital education out of the classroom and into the work environment has helped create safer work practices, and won the award for “Workplace Health Innovation”.

Dr. Bater was named a Health Care Hero for her leadership in raising the profile of geriatrics, and making excellence in seniors care a VIHA priority.

Congratulations also to the team at St Joseph’s General Hospital, who won the Merit Award for the implementation of Extenway bedside technology. This user-friendly touch screen combines phone, TV, and internet, and has huge future potential for education, discharge planning and access to personal health records. SJGH is the first hospital in BC to implement this cutting-edge technology.

NRGH Helps Volunteers Care for People With Dementia

Recently, over 60 volunteers at NRGH participated in a workshop to help them be more responsive to the needs of seniors with dementia, both as volunteers and as citizens supporting family or friends.

Presenter Lori Amdam Clinical Nurse Educator from Seniors Mental Health, received rave reviews from the volunteers both for the educational content of the workshop and her presentation style! One volunteer whose husband is suffering from dementia stated, “It was probably the best workshop I have attended!”

Lynne Tourond, Manager of Volunteer Services at NRGH extended a big thank you to Lori and the Seniors Mental Health program for providing this top-notch educational opportunity for such a large group of our volunteers and noted, “The ‘ripples’ will spread far out into our community.”
Get to Know Our Nurse Practitioners

Nurse Practitioners (NP) are a valuable asset to a patient’s care team. Working alongside physicians, registered nurses and medical office assistants, these interdisciplinary nursing professionals are providing client-centered care in primary and acute care settings across Vancouver Island.

In her role as a NP at the Ladysmith Family Practice Clinic, Fran Kernachan sees patients for episodic illnesses and chronic disease management. She’s also the primary care provider for a small number of patients.

“Coming from an acute care background working in Intensive and Coronary Care, I really enjoy my role as a NP working in primary care,” she says. “I particularly enjoy the long term relationships with people and their families, the focus on health and the work we do in an effort to prevent ED visits and hospitalizations.”

A NP at Valley Care Medical in Courtenay, Erica Maynard’s practice focuses on primary care and chronic disease management.

“In helping the client manage their own disease, they take control of their future and make paramount decisions that positively impact their health,” she says.

Kim Hunter is a NP in the cardiology program at Royal Jubilee Hospital, the first acute care setting in VIHA where NPs have become a part of the patient’s care team.

“The NP role is collaborative within a multidisciplinary health care team and requires ongoing communication and consultation with the surgeons, specialists as well as front line staff,” she says.

RJH School of Nursing Alumnae Celebrate the Past and Tour the Future

As part of their 120th Anniversary Reunion in May, over 700 RJH School of Nursing graduates, representing classes from the 1940’s through to the last class of 1982, toured the 5th floor of the new Patient Care Centre at RJH.

“…”

Fran Kernachan

“The graduates were impressed with the attention to detail in the PCC including the private rooms that allow for improved patient privacy, couches in the rooms for patients’ families, and the technology used such as the new Vocera communication system for staff.

During their careers, most of these graduates had been involved with planning and working in the other patient care areas at the Royal Jubilee Hospital site, so learning about the planning that went into the development of the PCC was greatly appreciated by the Alumnae.

Many nurses commented on the various infection prevention considerations built into the space and were impressed by how advanced the PCC is technologically. Many also mentioned that they would have loved to have worked a shift or two to experience the atmosphere, patient care tools and technology of the new PCC!

Cowichan Pacemakers Gain Ground

A small team from Cowichan District Hospital joined forces to run the TC 10K in May. The runners had a wonderful day with glorious Victoria sunshine and saw some great race times among their friends, family and co-workers.

This year’s team included Jayne Williams, Ivy Eriksen, Louisa Cole, Dario Romito, Jeff Reis, Carrie Reis, Marilyn Braithwaite, Deborah Shields, Danna Daniels, Rowena Gibbons, Gary Gibbons, Patricia Stirling, Doreen Thorne, Vanessa Wright, Jennifer Fox, Margaret Farris and Siobhan Barnard. Unfortunately Charlaine Lumb couldn’t run this year.

Next year, they hope to expand our team with a view towards raising funds for the Cowichan Hospital Foundation. All are welcome!
Re-Discover the Labyrinth at VGH

The earliest known labyrinth was carved into stone, and dates back to the year 2500 BC. The labyrinth is still popular today as a form of relaxation, exercise, contemplation, meditation and spiritual healing. Labyrinths’ effects can be powerful for patients and family members, or anyone seeking to calm their thoughts or find their way through a difficult time.

In 2004, staff contributed generously to the Healing Garden project to help VIHA complete its first labyrinth at Victoria General Hospital. It had to be dismantled when the new Trauma Centre was built, but it’s now being re-born next to the Emergency Department parking at VGH.

Patio stones and benches from the original labyrinth will be re-used along with reserved funds from the Healing Garden project. Much like any garden, it is a continuing process that will allow the labyrinth to be usable by Friday, July 8th. Many thanks to VGH Administration, McNutt Sod and Odell’s Soil and Sand, who gave generous financial or ‘in kind’ donations. Thanks also go out to Sheila Weitman of Weitman’s Landscaping for her generosity, time and expertise in the creation of the new labyrinth area.

The opening of this gift of spiritual healing and health will be Friday, July 8th. For more information, contact Karen Wilson, VGH Chaplain at 727-4278.

A Wee Better Hearing & Speech Month Celebration

Rhiannon Richardson and her new baby, Quinn, were the happy recipients of a basketful of lovely toys and treasures that give little ones a head start in listening and talking.

The BC Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audio-logists generously funded the gift package, which Karen Topp, Coordinator of Speech Pathology at VGH/RJH/SPH, was pleased to present to Rhiannon and her daughter on May 31st during Better Speech and Hearing Month.

For more information about speech/language pathologists, visit: http://www.bcaslpa.ca/.

Facilities Team Improves Patient Comfort While Saving Energy

Patients and employees are enjoying the benefits of the heating and ventilation retrofit currently underway at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital. As with any 50 year old building, there is always room for improvement, so when VIHA’s Energy Manager secured funding last October, Chief Engineer Bob Foglietta and his team sprang into action to launch the $560,000 project.

Patient comfort is important and everyone is pleased that they are getting better control over the temperature and lighting in their rooms. This provides a sense of empowerment and minimizes complaints.

The five-step plan includes upgrading individual room controls, which save about 50% of the original energy used; this allows the main supply air temperature to be lowered to 13°C. Room controls then modify the temperature to suit the needs of each area. We anticipate an impressive 3% decrease in electrical energy and 1% decrease in natural gas consumption by project completion in December.

Good going, team! Increasing comfort while saving energy is good news for everyone!
Welcome to VIHA

Welcome to all new and student employees. We are so pleased to have you as VIHA staff. Your safety is important to us. As your employer, we are responsible for providing you with the necessary equipment and safe work practices. Your supervisor is there to support the knowledge and skills you require to be safe in the work place. Your job is to practice safely and get help when you are unsure. Everyone is responsible for identifying hazards/risks and finding safe solutions.

No one expects to be injured at work, so our motto at VIHA is Safety First - Be Aware, Do Your Share. Be safe. Have fun.

~Lesley Moss, Executive Director, Occupational Health and Safety

Building Safe & Strong Teams Through Mentorship

There are two kinds of mentorship going on in the Emergency Department at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital – formal and informal. Recent graduates and other new employees are encouraged to find a formal mentor, someone to guide them as they figure out how to apply what they learned in school to their professional practice. But all team members are encouraged to seek out informal mentoring opportunities.

“We believe that we are all mentors, and we are all being mentored,” says Jill Breker, one of VIHA’s Mentor Champions. And she thinks this philosophy has helped the NRGH ED develop a team culture where everyone feels safe and supported.

“We strive to be a unit where people want to work,” says Darin Abbey, the Nurse Educator in the ED. “Every new person who comes to work here is shown our team SharePoint site, which includes our mentorship package. We promote the attitude that you don’t need to be an expert clinician to be a mentor – you don’t need to know all of the answers. You just need to be willing to help someone find the answer.”

Abbey gives an example of mentorship that many of us wouldn’t think of – the unit’s daily huddle. “Our huddle discusses safety concerns and patient priorities. It is a chance to role model expert communication and problem solving as a team, which is the best way to keep our staff and our patients safe”

The NRGH ED has a Mentorship Working Group that ensures mentorship remains a priority, and its Mentor Champions teach the Foundational Mentorship Workshop for other VIHA employees.

For more information on mentorship in VIHA go to the Mentorship Matters website.
New Employee Orientation is Getting a Makeover

Information and education shared at New Employee Orientation (or NEO) is critical in ensuring new staff learn about VIHA’s health & safety program and how to protect themselves from hazards in the workplace. Occupational Health & Safety Staff play a key role in NEO, and have taught thousands of classroom sessions covering topics such as general health & safety, violence prevention, and musculoskeletal injury prevention across the island.

But the latest research shows that adult learners only remember a small portion of what they are taught in a formal classroom setting, and the vast majority of learning takes place on the job.

Under the People Plan, OH&S is working with People and Organizational Development to redesign NEO. We’ll determine what training should remain in the classroom, and what can best be delivered through the Learning Management System using online education and resources, including point-of-need tools/reminders that ensure that new employees have the information they need to work safely. Not only will this improve how we learn, but it will also let us keep track of what education components health providers have completed.

This redesign should be complete by the end of the year. In the meantime, new staff must attend their local NEO sessions. For the NEO schedule go to: https://intranet.viha.ca/admin_resources/leaders/essentials/Pages/orientation.aspx

Mythbuster—The No Lift Policy


Facts:

- A patient lift is defined as lifting/carrying the patient’s entire weight or holding/supporting a significant portion of the patient’s weight.
- When certain criteria for manual handling are exceeded, patients must be moved using appropriate equipment, including overhead lifts, floor lifts, sit to stand lifts, hoovers, sliding transfer boards, transfer belts and slider sheets.
- Assessment of patient medical condition, physical and cognitive status (Pre-handling check), predictability and ability to assist with the task or move determines the safest method for a transfer or lift.

How Does Your Team Welcome New Members?

New team members can be particularly vulnerable to injury. They may not know who or how to ask for help, be unfamiliar with safe work procedures or equipment or feel a need to ‘prove themselves’. Many work teams have their own unique culture, ways of operating and habits of interacting. When someone new joins the team, how do they know what these subtle rules and expectations are? Does the team welcome their ‘fresh eyes’ and different ideas? The next time you are working with a new team member consider how you can welcome them, invite their ideas and opinions, offer your help and ensure their safety. Remember, you were once a new team member, too.

Spotlight on Safety - Disability Management Consultant Brian Connon

This month marks 20 years that Brian Connon has been with VIHA – 15 years as a nurse, and five as the BCNU shop steward at Royal Jubilee Hospital. This background is invaluable in his new role as a Disability Management Consultant, helping ill or injured health care providers get back to work.

Brian is a big believer in work/life balance, and spends his off work time running, travelling and backpacking in some of the world’s most rugged terrain, including trips to Patagonia, the Sierras, Andes, Pyrenees and the Rockies.

He’s thrilled with how he was welcomed by his new team in OH&S – a team he feels is absolutely dedicated to helping VIHA staff recover from an illness or injury by keeping them connected to the workplace. That, and the fact he won the OH&S playoff pool.