



Open Letter

to nurses in the Winnipeg Health Region

LORI LAMONT
Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer

MAY/JUNE 2012

Every time I meet with people in our community, I'm struck by the impact nurses have on the lives of the people they care for. Whether people are in the community, hospital or personal care home/long-term care facility, nurses can have a deep and lasting impact on people's lives.

Nurses bring their unique skills and knowledge to provide high quality and compassionate care to individuals, families, groups, and communities. Nurses have an ability to connect with people, put people at ease and establish a rapport with people who are in need of care to quickly establish relationships under sometimes difficult or stressful circumstances.

As a nurse, you really do make a difference in people's lives. The impact of your presence and efforts as you share moments of a person's life when they're at their most vulnerable is powerful. With the calm, confident presence you offer, you can help make a happy time happier and a difficult time perhaps that much less difficult. It is important that we are always careful to give each situation our best and not betray the trust people have in us.

The Canadian Nurses' Association (CNA) has declared May 7 – 13, 2012 National Nursing Week. Every year in May during the week of Florence Nightingale's birthday

(May 12), the nursing profession is recognized for the role we play in supporting and encouraging people's health.

This year, the CNA's theme is "Health of a Nation", which invites each nurse the chance to consider how their nursing practice can positively impact the lives of the people and the community they work with.

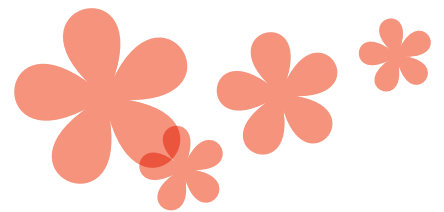
I was recently asked why I'm proud to be a nurse. My answer was that in the work that I do, I make a contribution to the health of individuals and our community here in Winnipeg. There are many ways and opportunities to do that. As a nurse, I have the ability to positively impact people's lives in so many different ways.

Nurses are often the health care professional who frequently has the most face to face time with the individual receiving care. As part of this year's Nursing Week message, I would ask you to consider how you're able to build health and wellness through your nursing practice. Regardless of your practice setting, there is a chance for you to encourage individuals to participate in their health in meaningful ways.



Edie Pankratz,
TB Primary Care Nurse

Building Health



The Winnipeg Health Region has been building health and wellness for several years in a variety of ways. As just one example of such a commitment, community health centres and ACCESS Centres offer community based primary care and bring health information and resources right where it's needed.

On November 17, 2010, the Manitoba government made a promise that all Manitobans will have access to primary care by the year 2015. Nurses and nurse practitioners working to full scope in primary care clinics, QuickCare Clinics and TeleCARE Manitoba will help bring us one step closer to each individual having a primary care provider by 2015.

What does this promise mean? It means comprehensive, quality care and better access to primary health care. It means being able to access high quality care when you need it. For the 14 percent of Manitobans who don't have a primary care provider, this is comforting news. It means when people said they wanted to be able to see a health care provider in the evenings and on weekends, someone paid attention.

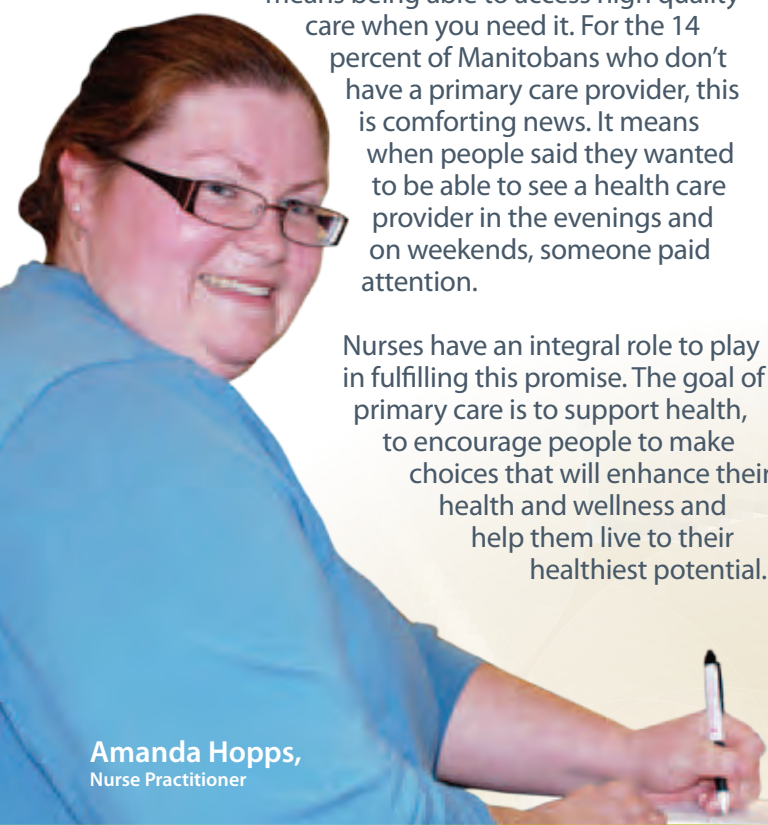
Nurses have an integral role to play in fulfilling this promise. The goal of primary care is to support health, to encourage people to make choices that will enhance their health and wellness and help them live to their healthiest potential.

"Nurses are key members of the primary care team. Nurses holistically assess a person's health and work collaboratively with other members of the health care team to ensure that the individual receives person-centred care. Nurses provide health education and can work with clients to develop their capacity to self manage their health and symptoms. Nurses have a major role to play in chronic disease management, as well as counselling, navigating the health system and referrals to appropriate resources," says Margaret Kozlowski, Director of Family Medicine-Primary Care Community for the Region.

At the heart of primary care are relationships: with the individual, with the family, with other health care providers and with community resources. Using their knowledge, skills and expertise, nurses can partner with people to manage and improve their health. Nurses can help individuals living in the community manage a chronic disease. We ensure people and their family understand their treatment. We can encourage them to develop ways to modify their lifestyles to fulfil their healthiest potential.

Part of health care reform is a greater focus on health prevention and promotion, in which nurses have a large role to play. "Although clients may have health conditions, nurses support people to manage their health," says Kozlowski. "Prevention includes education, coaching about healthy lifestyles and connecting clients to appropriate services and various programs that will meet their needs. It also includes screening for diseases, supporting and encouraging a healthy lifestyle, healthy diet and healthy weight."

You have a chance to help empower people to live healthy lives by providing them with information, education, support and linking them to resources. Regardless of their setting, I would encourage every nurse to think about this part of their nursing practice. How can you help the people you work with fulfil their healthiest potential? The CNA Primary Care Toolkit may be helpful in doing that. To read it, visit www.cna-aiic.ca/ and type "Primary Care Toolkit" in the search bar.



Amanda Hopps,
Nurse Practitioner

Your Health and Self Care

In the spirit of health promotion, it is important to acknowledge the importance of a healthy nursing workforce.

The very nature of nursing involves constant change. Nurses can often feel the pressure of these changes acutely because change takes time. That can create stress within the system but also for individuals. While it's important to continue to

move with the pace of change, it's also important for nurses to consider how important stress management and self care are.

Your health and wellness also need to be priorities. To help support you with that, we've created a section of resources highlighting the importance of self care. Visit www.wrha.mb.ca/nursing. Click on "Lori's Links" and then Your Health.

Join the Conversation

To truly make our health care system better, a stronger emphasis must be placed on health promotion and illness and injury prevention. How can we build health and how we can enhance and add to the primary health care system to meet the population's needs? With an aging population and a greater acuity, it is necessary to look at how health care can provide service in ways that don't rely on emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Conversations and decisions made around health care reform are happening at both the national and provincial levels. They will impact the way we practice. Nurses need to have a strong voice in contributing to these discussions as we think about the future. Each nurse needs to think about their role, their nursing practice and what health care reform means within that. Ponder what you would like your nursing practice to look like in five, 10 or 15 years.

You Rock

Be sure to mark May 7 – 13, 2012 on your calendar. Nursing Week allows you the chance to recognize and acknowledge the incredible work we and our colleagues do everyday. It also allows you the chance to attend the many education and celebratory events being planned. Now more than ever, nurses need to recognize the importance of lifelong learning, so I encourage you to participate. The pace of today's health care is quick and we need to ensure we're consistently keeping up with the latest knowledge that impacts our nursing practice.

It's also an opportunity for us to celebrate our profession so be sure to visit www.wrha.mb.ca during Nursing Week for a special nursing tribute video.

I want to encourage nurses to continue to celebrate and rejoice in the successes and to continue to find ways to be part of the solutions to those challenges we face each and everyday. I'd like to invite you to think about why you're proud to be a nurse. And email me your thoughts at wrha_nursing@wrha.mb.ca.



Irma Charney,
Primary Care Nurse

Think Before you Type

Facebook. Twitter. Blogs. Commenting online. Before typing and posting, what's important to remember?

Key things to remember: not using social media during work hours, not using your employer's equipment for social media, not breaching the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) or the Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act. Then there are your professional ethical obligations – guarding privacy, not to breach the PHIA, not to continue a PHIA breach, and to report breaches you become aware of. Failure to be mindful of those issues could have implications with not only your employer but also your professional regulatory body.

And let's not forget that the internet is a public forum. "What you post is in writing in an electronic, worldwide forum. Once it's out there, it's virtually impossible to take back," explains Karen Clearwater, Senior Legal Counsel – Human Resources Department for the Region. "This is not like having a private conversation in your living room. You cannot easily control distribution of information."

Be aware of online risks, pitfalls and how to protect your privacy and the privacy of others. Educate yourself about privacy when using social media so you can be confident about your online activity.

in the Spotlight

CELEBRATING one of your nursing PEERS



MELISSA ADAMSON

Melissa Adamson, RN, BN
Primary Care Nurse

Melissa's eight year nursing career began in labour and delivery. Following that, she worked in a crisis stabilization unit. When an opportunity arose in primary care, Melissa pursued it. She is currently the only nurse at 601 Aikins. She is a member of the Primary Care Nurses Practice Council, and enjoys the chance to consult with other primary care nurses.

What does a primary care nurse do?

Along with educating people about diabetes management, I also do Sexually Transmitted Infection testing and treatment, sexual health education (prevention, promotion and harm reduction), pregnancy testing and counselling, immunization, telephone triage, prenatal care and well baby checks.

What do you want people to know about nurses working in primary care?

We meet the patient's health needs in a holistic manner as a member of a team of health care providers with different perspectives and scopes of practice. Our roles within the clinic are geared to the community's needs. I became a certified diabetes educator because this community has a high population of people with diabetes. I work closely with the nurse practitioner and physician, who I've learned so much from.

Why did you decide to work in primary care?

For health promotion and illness/disease prevention, because when you're getting a diagnosis or an update about your health, there's a lot to take in. A patient needs to feel there's an open door to ask questions and get information.

"I'm educating and empowering people to take charge of their health."

Learning is a slow process that requires repetition. I take things in small bits: provide some information that they can process. They can come back and ask questions, which gives me the chance to explain things again or in a different way.

What are your reflections on nursing?

Nursing is versatile. No two nursing roles are alike. There's such a variety of work - you can always take on new roles, learn something new and challenge yourself. Each experience I've had in my career seems to build upon the other.

EVENTS

May 3, 2012

Manitoba Nurses Union
Annual Education Day

May 11, 2012

College of Registered Nurses of
Manitoba AGM and Education Day

College of Registered Psychiatric
Nurses of Manitoba AGM and Awards
Luncheon

May 29, 2012

First Line Managers' Day

June 6, 2012

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of
Manitoba AGM and Education Day

Visit the Nursing Calendar at
www.wrha.mb.ca/nursing for
more details.