

MEDIA RELEASE

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Niagara Health recognizes excellence and collaboration at awards dinner

Members of Niagara Health's team who go above and beyond to help patients with their physical, emotional and personal needs are being recognized as part of this year's 10th annual Interprofessional Practice Awards.

This year's award recipients include physiotherapists, discharge planners, dietitians, nurses, social workers, speech language pathologists, recreation therapists, diagnostic imaging technicians, pharmacists and occupational therapists. Through their work, these members of our team demonstrate how essential a collaborative approach to healthcare is to providing extraordinary caring for our patients and their families.

"Congratulations to all of the nominees and award recipients. Their work is truly inspiring and highlights the importance of working as a team to help build a healthier Niagara," says Dr. Suzanne Johnston, Niagara Health President. "We know there are strong benefits for patients and their families when healthcare professionals from all disciplines work together and share knowledge and best practices, which is what Interprofessional Practice is all about."

The banquet, held at John Michael's Banquet and Conference Centre in Thorold on Tuesday was an opportunity for Niagara Health to acknowledge teams and individuals who exemplify the Interprofessional Practice competencies of interpersonal and communication skills, patient client-centred care and collaboration.

"The quality of nominees this year is reflective of the extraordinary caring that is being provided across our organization," says Nancy Fletcher, Niagara Health Director of Professional Practice. "In partnership we accomplish more and we thank all our Interprofessional Practice colleagues for their ongoing collaborative efforts to improve the patient experience."

Please scroll down for a detailed description of this year's award recipients.

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Interprofessional Practice Award recipients 2016

Individual Practice

Rosalie Bilodeau, Physiotherapy Assistant - Greater Niagara General

With a helpful attitude and dedication to those she serves, Rosalie often takes a lead role in adapting the plan of care to meet the age-specific and cultural needs of her patients. For example, she recently took the initiative to work with other staff members, a patient and their family to devise a strategy to help work around the patient's physical limitations to meet their personal hygiene needs. Rosalie coordinated the extra time and equipment needed to create a strategy that was not only effective but also worked best for the patient.

Jacob George, Discharge Planner – Welland Site

Jacob spends a great deal of time with each member of the interdisciplinary team to better understand their specific roles and scope of practice so he can better assist in enhancing the care delivered and the overall patient experience. Whether it's staying late, missing breaks or coming in on his own time, Jacob consistently goes above and beyond to meet the needs of those he cares for.

Mark Plantinga, Registered Practical Nurse – St. Catharines Site

Mark consistently demonstrates accountability, multidisciplinary collaboration and a values-based approach to quality patient and family care. One example of how Mark continually demonstrates caring and compassion for his patients stems from a team discussion about creating more awareness about areas where there are palliative patients. Mark designed a symbol to be placed outside of palliative rooms to indicate to those nearby to be as quiet and respectful as possible when passing by.

Kathryn Pummell, Social Worker – Greater Niagara General

Kathryn is always ready to advocate for her patients and their families. She put together a binder for each unit she is responsible for to provide patients and families with contacts for community support services. Kathryn has also been known to call various used clothing stores to collect donations for patients. She also helps her patients file their income taxes and assists with other personal activities that they find difficult to do on their own.

Patti Wasylowich-Champoux, Charge Diagnostic Imaging Technologist – Greater Niagara General

Patti intuitively knows when a patient needs extra emotional or physical support, and immediately exudes a warm and caring attitude, while being positive and respectful of each person. She ensures her patients are comfortable and at ease, while providing confidentiality and dignity, especially for those who cherish their privacy. She relates exceptionally well to patients of all ages. Patti communicates openly and transparently in all her conversations and is a collaborative and cheerful team member.

Innovation Award

Andrea Forgione, Pharmacist – St. Catharines Site

In her role, Andrea acts as a facilitator, educator, moderator and innovator. She works proactively with programs to ensure the Medical Reconciliation (MedRec) processes are in place to support safer patient care. She recently worked collaboratively with our Information Communication Technology and Decision Support teams to use new software technology to allow staff to prioritize their clinical work and efficiently identify which patients require a best possible medication history.

Education Award

Robin Owen, Clinical Dietitian – St. Catharines Site

Robin is a team player who often asks her colleagues if she can assist them with providing patient care when workloads are busy. Among the many projects she worked on this year, Robin developed a dietary education tool for patients called Niagara Meal and Food Support Services. She collaborated with other disciplines to design a handout for patients in need of meal services at home. It's now being used in other disciplines to help patients receive the meal services after they've been discharged.

Team Practice Award

Douglas Memorial Hospital allied health team, Complex Care Unit:

Cheryl Allen, Discharge Planner

Kathryn Pummell, Social Worker

Kristi Baughn, Physiotherapist

Debbie Potashnyk, Recreation Therapist

Shannon Finn, Physio Rehab Assistant

Taylor Strande, Speech Language Pathologist

Petra Fraelic, Occupational Therapist

Teresa Tulumello, Physiotherapist

Kathryn Ingebrigtsen, Speech Language Pathologist

Carol Van Dietsen, Physiotherapist

Tawnya Otten, Physiotherapy Assistant

This group works together to ensure extraordinary caring is delivered to every person, every time. The physiotherapists ensure patients are as strong as possible when they are discharged home, while the social worker immediately provides assistance to ensure the patient has support systems available to them. The speech language therapists assist patients and caregivers with swallowing assessments to ensure there are eating safely, the outpatient physiotherapists provide supports to ensure patients are thriving in the community and the discharge planner meets with patients immediately after admission to make sure there is a safe discharge home. By working together as a team, this group helps to restore lives while living out our values.