

Spring/Summer 2019 issue

# niagarahealth NOW



## TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE IN NIAGARA

Find out how simulation training and research  
are enhancing care for patients at Niagara Health  
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## Message from Dr. Suzanne Johnston President

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Niagara Health Now.

This issue focuses on the accomplishments in research and growing academics at Niagara Health (NH).

Research and academics are transforming healthcare in Niagara, bringing with it the promise of improvements to patient care and the patient experience. We're also enhancing our focus of research with our partners Brock University and Niagara College.

Inside this edition, you will read stories about our first Research Day, where more than 100 researchers, students, academics and healthcare workers came together to learn about research being done in our region and how it is improving patient care.

You will also read about how we use simulation as a training tool for our team and medical learners.

At Niagara Health we believe in the importance of strengthening our research activities to inform care, inspire innovation and create environments of collaborative learning.

Enjoy!

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Extended Care Unit resident Mary Lou McIvor listens to music with her daughter, Cathy.

# The power of music

## Program helping people with dementia: 'It's such a spirit lifter'

Inside the activity room at the Extended Care Unit at Niagara Health's Welland Site, Mary Lou McIvor is singing The Beatles' song *She Loves You*. The 81-year-old is wearing headphones and listening to music on an iPod as part of the long-term care home's Music and Memory Program. Her playlist features songs from some of her favourites performers: Ella Fitzgerald, The Beatles and Aretha Franklin, to name a few.

The singing is intermittent and beautiful. In between singing, Mary Lou is smiling, content, with her eyes closed. The Music and Memory Program has made a big difference for Mary Lou and other residents at the Extended Care Unit (ECU).

Mary Lou, who has Alzheimer's disease, sometimes has difficulty communicating. But when the music plays, her singing voice is easy to understand. Growing up, her daughter Cathy Thompson remembers her mom singing often around their home in Aylmer, Quebec.

Mary Lou worked for the federal government in Ottawa during the week and often had singing gigs on the weekend. "I think the fact the program is available

is wonderful," says Cathy. "Music has always managed to put Mom in a great mood and she has spent a lot of her life around music. It's such a spirit lifter."

Residents with cognitive impairments like dementia can sometimes experience agitation and depression. The team works with residents and families to create personalized music playlists.

The program has helped to improve the mood and behaviour of residents and has been effective in reducing incidence of falls by creating more relaxing environments.

"It's amazing when you see someone who really responds to the music and you see their face brighten and their eyes twinkle or a smile comes across their face," says Lezlie Leduc, the ECU Program and Services Manager.

"We are using these techniques more to try and manage the behaviour. For example, when a staff member sees a resident is agitated, they get the music and it is calming for the individual."



# Making wishes come true



The family of Stuart Cline (pictured below) reunited with members of the Intensive Care Unit team.



It was a reunion that meant the world to the family of Stuart Cline. During a recent visit to Niagara Health's St. Catharines Site, his family was reunited with some members of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) team who had cared for Stuart in his final days. Stuart's wife,

Maria, his daughter, Lissa, and Maria's sister-in-law, Jennifer, met with ICU Manager Elayn Young, Dr. Jennifer Tsang and Registered Nurse Debbie Wiecha. "The staff treated him with such dignity and they were so kind," says Lissa. "They were so good to him and to our family."

Last winter, Stuart, 70, suffered a serious brain injury after he fell while on vacation in Mexico. He was brought back to Canada, where his family and friends were able to say goodbye at the St. Catharines hospital. The family returned to the hospital to reflect on their experience with the Three Wishes Program. The ICU team introduced the program to Niagara last year as a way to personalize end-of-life care.

Patients and their loved ones are encouraged to let staff know what would help provide comfort through their journey. The team makes their wishes come true, recognizing how important small moments are within the big picture of care.

Family meant everything to Stuart, so the ICU team designated a special family room for the Clines. Family and friends could gather in the room, and the team provided coffee, tea, snacks and pillows and blankets. "It was welcoming and comforting to have that. In the midst of everything else, someone was thinking about us," says Maria. "Family meant the most to him."

"We came and went as we pleased and our name was on the door," adds Lissa. "It was a home when you couldn't be home. It was our home for three days."

The family told the staff how much Stuart loved music, so the team brought in a CD player and music for his room. Lissa says the care her father received felt like a warm hug. "It's giving dignity to people who are going to die," she says of the Three Wishes Program.

An ICU nurse also put a blanket that she had hand-knit on Stuart's bed.

"We still have that blanket. That's how much it means to us," says Lissa. "It is beyond special to us. The commitment and devotion of the staff is noticed. They went so far above and beyond. There was so much love. We were delighted to have the opportunity to come back and reunite with the staff that made that hard time bearable," she adds.

The reunion also meant a lot to Dr. Jennifer Tsang, who cared for Stuart. "To me it means a lot to hear that a family or patient was moved by our care," she says. "It helps us to recognize our work is not forgotten. It's very encouraging. Part of the Three Wishes Program is not to focus on the tragedy of someone dying, but to celebrate life," she says.

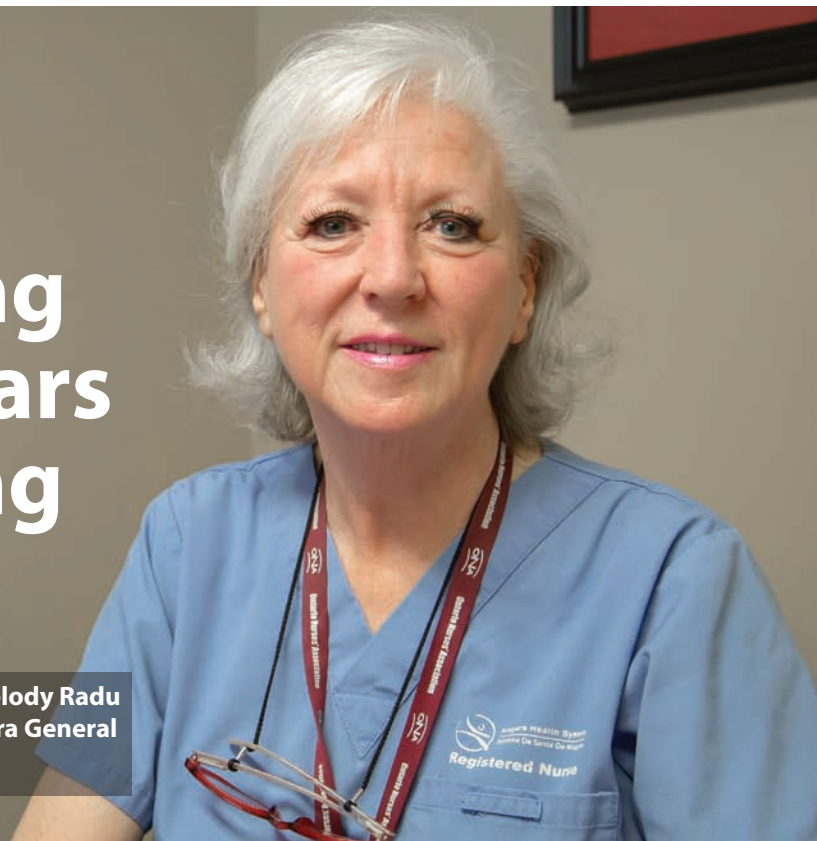
Dr. Benjamin Tam, an ICU physician, was instrumental in bringing the Three Wishes Program to Niagara Health. He learned of the program while working with the St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton ICU research team.

The program, he says, is about better connecting healthcare providers with patients and family members. "It refocuses attention to the human aspect of healthcare," he says. "It's very motivating."



# Reflecting on 45 years of nursing

**Registered Nurse Melody Radu at the Greater Niagara General Site in Niagara Falls.**



It seems only natural that Melody Radu pursued a career in nursing.

Growing up on a poultry farm in Fonthill, Melody was a caregiver to her two younger sisters who had healthcare challenges.

“We were all caregivers, our whole family,” says Melody. “That’s how I grew up.”

Those experiences inspired Melody to become a Registered Nurse. The Charge Nurse in Day Surgery at the Greater Niagara General Site in Niagara Falls is celebrating a remarkable 45 years with Niagara Health.

Melody was one of more than 350 team members Niagara Health honoured last fall at its Loyalty Recognition and Retirement Event. The event honoured Niagara Health employees and physicians with 20-plus years of service, and also celebrated retirees from 2017.

Melody started working as a nurse in 1973, landing her first full-time role in Labour and Delivery at the Welland hospital. After 10 years in Labour and Delivery, Melody moved on to work in other areas of the Welland and Niagara Falls hospitals, including the Emergency Department, Operating Room Recovery, Infection Control and Risk Management.

“I’ve enjoyed every area that I’ve worked in. I feel like I’ve had a really good balance,” Melody says of her

professional experiences. “How lucky am I?”

Looking back, Melody says one of the most influential people in her career, besides her mother Anna Beddall, was her first nursing supervisor – Anne Kneale.

“She expected the same from every person on her unit,” says Melody. “She always wanted you to see the diversity in nursing and that you could always move onto other things and programs. She wanted to show you what the opportunities were. For that I am forever grateful. She has always been my shining light in nursing.”

A lot has changed in 45 years – from the uniforms, technology and advancement in patient care – but one thing that remains the same is Melody’s desire to always make sure she is “kind, compassionate and treating people with dignity.”

Mentoring co-op students is also important to Melody. “It means a lot to support them,” she says. “They get a real view of what nursing is like.”

After 45 years, what keeps Melody so devoted to her profession and Niagara Health? “Because I love it here. You can do many, many things. I enjoy coming to work. I don’t even want to think about the day I won’t be able to come to work.”

# Spotlight on research

## Research and academics raising the standard of care in Niagara

Medical research stimulates new thinking and innovation and this can result in new medicines, techniques, procedures and technology – all with the goal of improving our health and well-being.

The old adage “think globally, act locally” was embodied in November at Niagara Health’s St. Catharines Site, when the inaugural Niagara Health Research Day was held. “Research and academics are priorities at Niagara Health – part of our commitment to building a healthier Niagara,” says President Dr. Suzanne Johnston. “Through research and academics, we are raising the standard of care in our region.”

One special guest in particular underlined the importance of cancer research at Niagara Health. Former patient Lynne Dunham spoke to the value of having her treatment available in Niagara. “It’s a stressful time. At that point in your treatment journey, you have no idea if it’s going to work,” she says of the clinical trial she was a part of to potentially improve her care. “You’re hoping. Everyone is being as positive as they can, but it is a stressful time. Research has improved conditions. There is hope now where there wasn’t hope previously.”

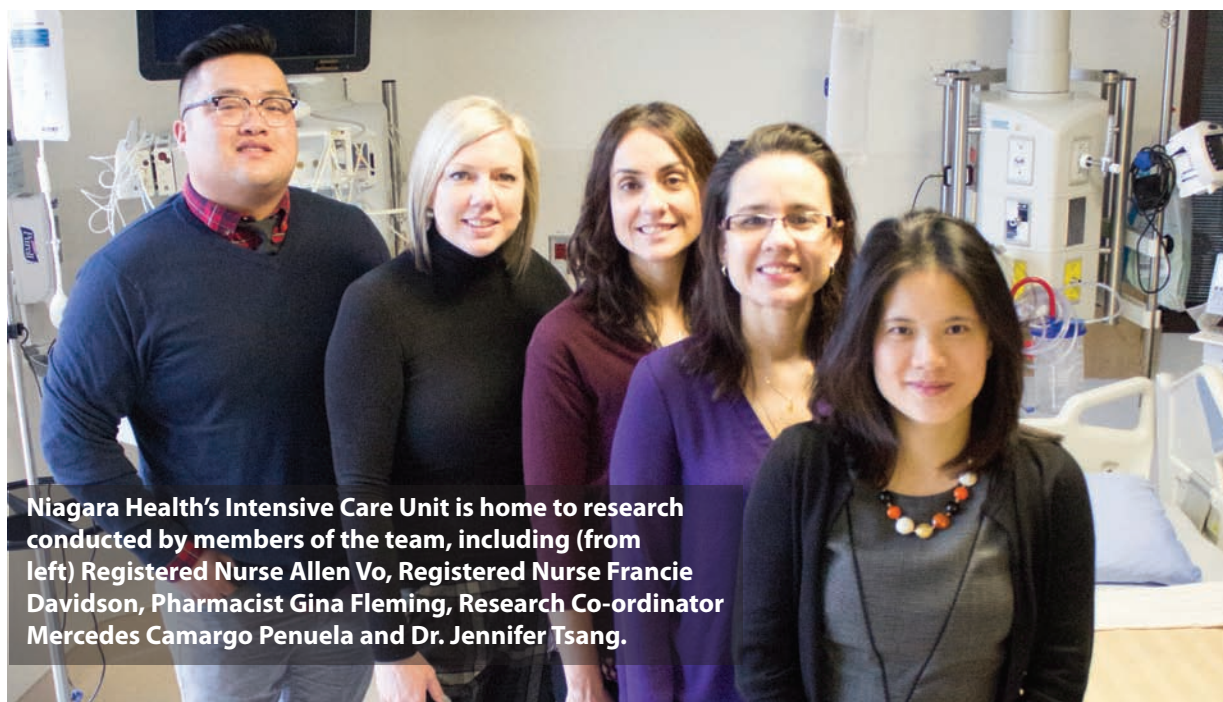
More than 100 researchers, students, academics and healthcare workers gathered together to learn about research underway in Niagara and to hear the keynote address, delivered by Dr. Deborah Cook of St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton and McMaster University.

### Research in the community

Dr. Cook discussed the importance of conducting research in a community hospital, outlining successful studies from community hospitals and her experiences working with colleagues locally who are leading the way.

“Research leads to improved care for our patients,” says Dr. Cook. “I was excited to hear more about the many initiatives underway here at Niagara Health that are focused on improving the outcomes of patients in this region, through research. Research helps to support the culture of inquiry in an institution. Seeking answers to everyday problems that our patients and their families face is a rewarding road to travel.”

As a community-based academic centre, NH has produced research in a wide array of areas.



Niagara Health’s Intensive Care Unit is home to research conducted by members of the team, including (from left) Registered Nurse Allen Vo, Registered Nurse Francie Davidson, Pharmacist Gina Fleming, Research Co-ordinator Mercedes Camargo Penuela and Dr. Jennifer Tsang.



## Five pillars of research at Niagara Health

NH's Research Office is a hub for research being done in the region. The day covered the five pillars of research at Niagara Health. The following are summaries of each pillar:

### Research Office

Since 2015, the Research Office has established a research coaching program for budding researchers, conducted seminars and established the Niagara Region Qualitative Research Interest Group. It has also established a process for all NH research activities, and partnerships to facilitate researchers.

### Critical Care

Critical care research led by Niagara Health includes a series on a legionella pneumonia case in Niagara, a study on sepsis and a series examining a necrotizing soft tissue case, resulting in several published journal articles. In addition, Niagara Health is a leader in the Canadian Community Intensive Care Unit Network and the Canadian Critical Care Trials Group.

### Emergency Medicine

After the program's creation in 2017, the Emergency Medicine Researchers of Niagara have already seen treatment outcome successes with their research. For instance, a procedure for treating emergency airway patients recently received international attention and will be published in Healthcare Management Forum.

### Cardiology

Niagara Health is participating in multiple international research projects, each with the goal of improving patient outcomes related to heart disease.

### Oncology

As the only Canadian centre to be awarded American Society of Clinical Oncology Clinical Trials Participation Award, Niagara Health has about 170 oncology patients participating in clinical trials. These clinical trials of novel treatments may improve patient outcomes and change current treatments for cancer.



Researchers presented their posters as part of Niagara Health's first Research Day.

## THE NEXT WAVE OF RESEARCH

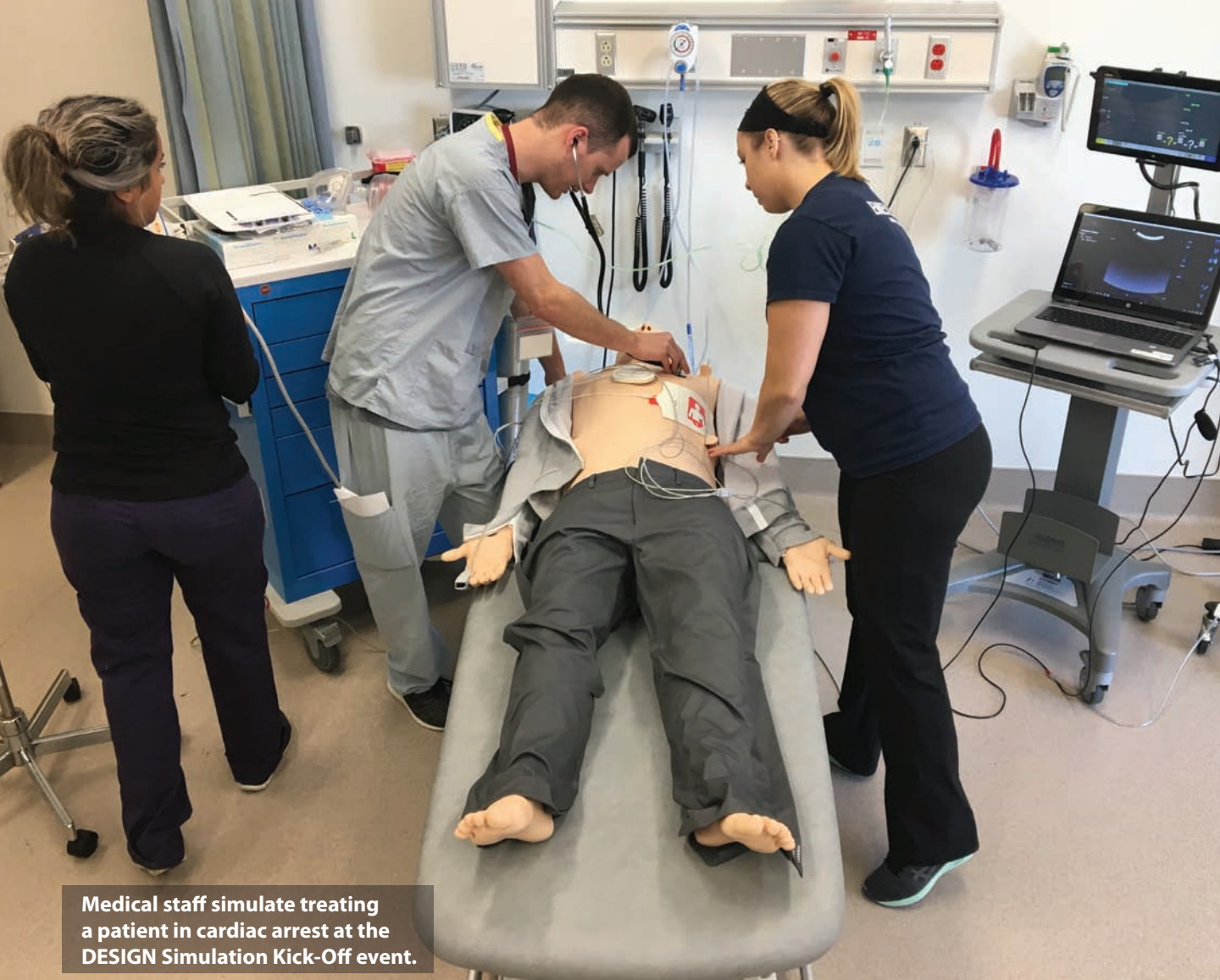
Students and researchers were also given the opportunity to present their research in a poster competition, with an awards ceremony to cap off the day. The winners were:

**Dr. Brian Findlay and Linda Illes, Research Achievement Award**, for their contributions to the 30-year record of accomplishment of strong participation in clinical trials for Niagara Health's Oncology Clinical Trials Program.

**Dr. John Song, Lauren Habel, Michelle Lowry, Ann Van Vliet, Patty Welychka, Ruth Peters and Dr. Hala Hamed, Best Poster Award**, for their poster "Improving Quality of Care for Total Hip Replacement Patients."

**Julie Blain, Richard Singh, Dr. Abhirami Hallock, Dr. Adrian Ishkanian, Brenda Luscombe, Dr. Janice Giesbrecht and Robert McClory, People's Choice Poster Award** for their poster "Enhancing Access to Care: An Early Experience Report of the Orthopedic Radiation Oncology Clinic at Niagara Health."





Medical staff simulate treating a patient in cardiac arrest at the DESIGN Simulation Kick-Off event.

# Learning by DESIGN

Niagara Health uses simulation as a training tool

In one simulation, a lethargic, fevered little girl is treated for septic shock with her treatment team consulting with specialists over videoconference.

No one was at risk, as all the patients that day were mannequins, specifically designed for medical simulation training.

At another station, learners were able to practice fundamental skills like laparoscopic surgery technique and placing a central line with the help of ultrasound.

Other stations allowed participants to observe and practice a wide range of skills, which will benefit all kinds of healthcare providers across Niagara Health. These are just some of the scenarios presented at the Simulation Kick-Off event held at Niagara Health

in September. This unique learning opportunity was presented by the Development & Education in Simulation Inter-professional Group of Niagara (DESIGN). DESIGN represents a collaboration between Niagara Health and McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, and is focused on immersive medical education through simulation.

"Our academic partnerships are a terrific example of how we can provide opportunities for our healthcare professionals to enhance their skills, in this case using advanced educational technology," says Niagara Health President Dr. Suzanne Johnston. "The scenarios take place in real time and are very realistic. Simulation education gives our learners a unique opportunity to train in the moment and in a safe environment and





receive direct and immediate feedback.”

“This is a showcase of what options exist in simulation. There are a lot of people interested in education, patient safety and quality improvement and there is a use for simulation in that venue,” says Dr. James Beecroft, a Niagara Health Emergency Department physician and Regional Education Lead – Emergency Simulation Lead at McMaster’s School of Medicine.

“As a training and learning technique, simulation is always well received by our students. It is an immersive and safe environment where patients are not put in risk.”

“This is a great educational opportunity for me,” adds Stacie Thomas, a Registered Nurse on medical telemetry at Niagara Health. “I’m interested in learning more, especially for emergency situations. It’s good for me to be able to observe hands-on situations.”

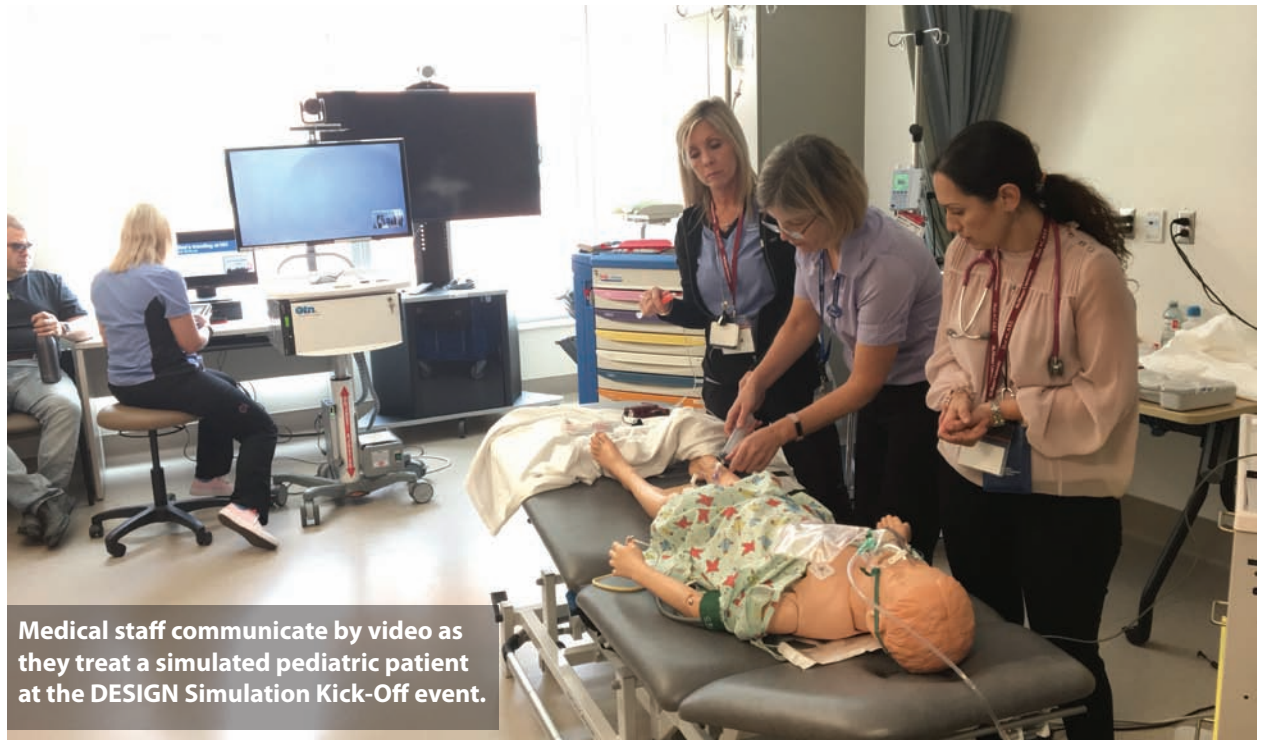
The day also featured a keynote address from Dr. Matthew Sibbald, Director of McMaster University’s Centre for Simulation-Based Learning, entitled Safe Mistakes: What is Simulation and Why Do It?

“Simulation is a wonderful safe zone for us as healthcare practitioners to practice before we poke,” says Dr. Sibbald. “It’s important for our teams and organizations to learn well in advance of putting a patient in our hospital.”

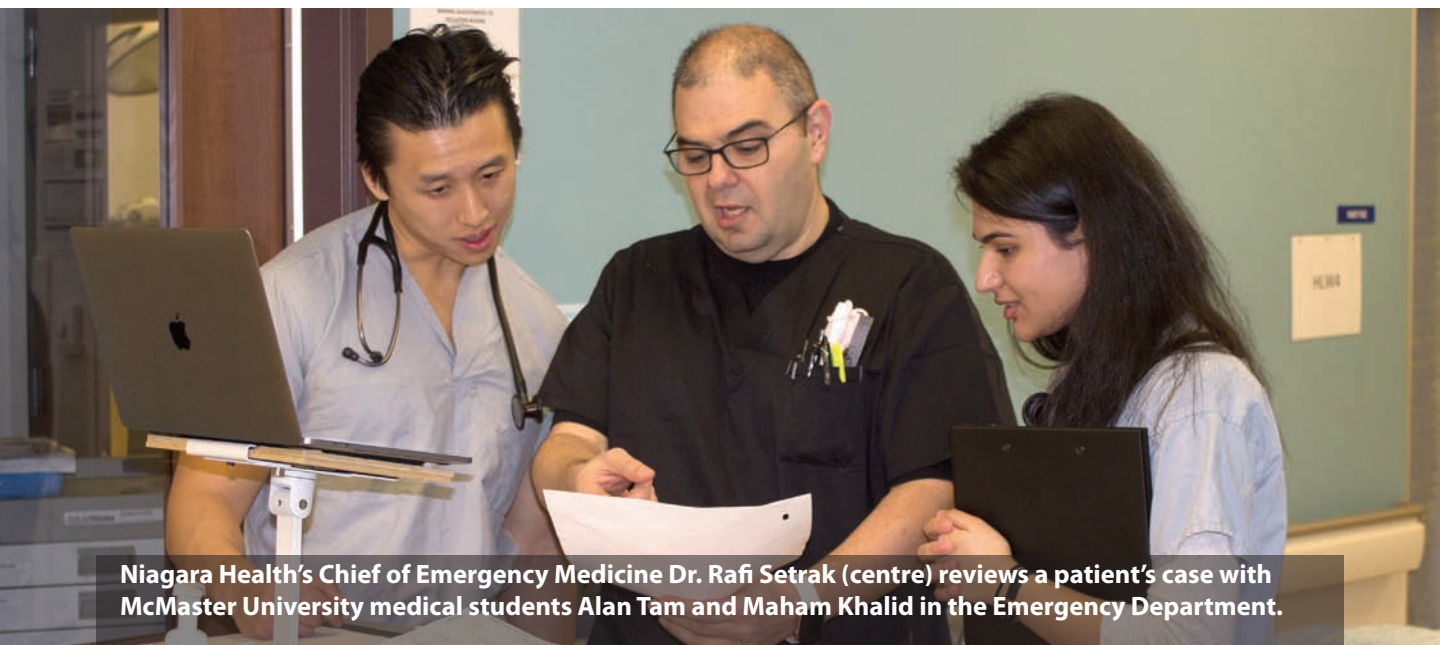
Training continues, with Family Medicine residents from McMaster’s School of Medicine honing their skills treating advanced cardiac life support scenarios, as well as difficult airways, casting and splinting at the St. Catharines Site as recently as December. This kind of training is invaluable in Niagara Health’s ongoing commitment to learning, continuous improvement, and providing extraordinary care.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Niagara Health works with more than 90 academic partners, including Brock University, McMaster University and Niagara College, to provide learning and education opportunities in a number of healthcare-related fields. Last year alone, there were more than 1,900 student placements in clinical and clinical-support positions at Niagara Health.



**Medical staff communicate by video as they treat a simulated pediatric patient at the DESIGN Simulation Kick-Off event.**



Niagara Health's Chief of Emergency Medicine Dr. Rafi Setrak (centre) reviews a patient's case with McMaster University medical students Alan Tam and Maham Khalid in the Emergency Department.

# Your guide to how we care for you in the Emergency Department

Over his 12 years in emergency medicine, Dr. Rafi Setrak has witnessed a steady increase in the number of patients seeking care at Niagara Health's Emergency Departments.

The downtimes are fewer, he says, and the number of complex patient cases has increased, due in part to an aging population. "There is no idle time in the Emergency Department," says Dr. Setrak, Niagara Health's Chief of Emergency Medicine. "I haven't seen idle time in an ED in a decade or more."

One thing that has stayed the same over his career is the healthcare team's commitment to providing patients quality care in a timely manner. "It never ceases to amaze me how dedicated our people are. At the most difficult times when patients need them the most, they are always there for you."

Dr. Setrak says he understands that waiting can be difficult and frustrating for patients and their families. "Please know that our healthcare teams are working hard to serve everyone as quickly as they can."

Knowing what to expect during an Emergency Department or Urgent Care visit can help improve a patient's experience.

Emergency Department care focuses first on diagnosing the patient and second on determining whether they can be safely treated within the Emergency Department and discharged home, or whether they need to be admitted to hospital for further treatment. Urgent care is medical attention and treatment for people needing immediate care for illness or injury that is not serious enough for a visit to the Emergency Department.

No appointments are necessary, and wait times are typically shorter in Urgent Care Centres than in Emergency Departments.

Emergency Departments are significantly busier than Urgent Care Centres, and there are often questions about how Emergency Departments are organized to care for patients.





## THE PATIENT'S JOURNEY

A specially trained Triage Nurse, who is located at the front of the Emergency Department, conducts the initial assessment of the patient. Patients are seen on a priority basis. Canadian hospitals use the same triage scale when assessing patients to ensure the most urgent cases are seen first. And things can change quickly in an Emergency Department.

For instance, if someone is brought in suffering from a heart attack or has been in a serious car accident, they will be seen before other patients who have less urgent conditions and can safely wait. When the patient is brought inside the Emergency Department, a nurse may do another assessment before the patient is seen by a physician or nurse practitioner (a specially trained advanced practice nurse).

To diagnose the patient, the physician or nurse practitioner may order bloodwork, X-rays, ultrasound, and other tests, a process that could take several hours to complete. Throughout this period, the patient could expect to see a number of different members of the healthcare team, including lab assistants, medical imaging technologists and respiratory therapists. The Emergency Department physician may also request a consultation with a specialist in cardiology, for example, if the patient is having heart issues, or an orthopedic surgeon for a serious bone break.

The Emergency Department physician or nurse practitioner will review the test results with the patient and discuss suggested next steps in care. It is at this point that the patient will either be discharged, with instructions for follow-up care if required, or admitted to an inpatient unit.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEALTHCARE OPTIONS IN NIAGARA

In non-emergency situations, **your first option** should be your family doctor or nurse practitioner. Other options include:



Walk-in clinics



Visit Healthcare Options at [www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions) to search for a healthcare provider near you



Call Telehealth 1-866-797-0000 for health advice and information from a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Call 211 for information and services about healthcare in Niagara

### When to go to a Niagara Health **Emergency Department**

Our Emergency Department teams treat patients who call 9-1-1 and arrive by ambulance. They also treat walk-in patients for such emergencies as:

- Broken bones
- Dizziness
- Complications of pregnancy
- Serious illness
- Serious injury
- Mental health issues

### When to go to a Niagara Health **Urgent Care Centre**

Our Urgent Care Centre teams treat patients with minor injuries or illnesses such as:

- Minor abdominal pain (nausea, vomiting)
- Ear, nose, throat and eye problems
- Minor mental health issues
- Cuts that may need stitches
- Sprains, strains, sports injuries
- Minor asthma attacks or allergic reactions

## OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING WAIT TIMES

Activity in other areas of the hospital can also influence wait times in the Emergency Department. This includes the length of time patients admitted to an inpatient unit may have to wait before they are transferred to a bed.

Like many other hospitals, Niagara Health cares for a number of patients who may no longer require the resources of the hospital. Many of these patients cannot be safely discharged to another setting without home care or additional services. Some may need different levels of care and wait in hospital beds for space at other healthcare facilities, such as a long-term care home.

Improving access to care is a provincial priority, and Niagara Health works closely with the Local Health Integration Network, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and other important community partners to find solutions. Our commitment to all of our patients and families is to continue to introduce new initiatives that enhance the experience for everyone.

- Niagara Health sees more than 200,000 visits in a year at its three Emergency Departments and two Urgent Care Centres, making them one of the busiest areas of the hospital, and one of the busiest emergency programs in Ontario.
- Taking an ambulance to hospital may not impact the time it takes to see an Emergency Department physician. You will be seen by the physician based on the severity of your health condition. Depending on your condition, you may be placed in a chair in the waiting room to wait.
- NH runs a year-long educational campaign to help the community understand medical options and receive the right level of care as quickly as possible. Learn more at [www.niagarahealth.on.ca/options](http://www.niagarahealth.on.ca/options)



**The Niagara Health team is committed to providing patients and their families with safe, quality care in a timely manner.**





# What to expect when coming to Emergency Departments

Niagara Health's team is committed to providing **safe, quality care in a timely manner.**

Patients are seen on a priority basis, not on a first-come first-served basis. This ensures the sickest patients get the care they need first – even though they may arrive after other patients.

## What influences the wait time?

Wait times can vary and change quickly due to a number of factors, including:

- The severity of each patient's condition or illness
- The number of patients seeking medical attention
- An incident such as a serious car accident, which can unexpectedly and significantly impact the wait time for others
- The high number of patients in other areas of the hospital, which impacts movement through the Emergency Department

## X-rays and other tests

The physician or nurse practitioner may order tests such as bloodwork, X-rays and ultrasound. Average wait times for results of these tests are:

- X-rays: 1 hour
- Bloodwork: 1.5 hours
- Ultrasound or CT scans: 2 hours

Once complete, the Emergency Department physician or nurse practitioner will review the test results with the patient and discuss suggested next steps.

## If your condition changes

Please let a member of our team know immediately if your condition changes or you begin to feel worse. This will help us meet your needs in a timely manner.

**Always call 911 for Emergencies or if you are uncertain about the seriousness of your condition.**



**Arrive at Emergency Department**  
via walk-in or ambulance



**Assessed by Triage Nurse**

If a patient has a life- or limb-threatening condition, they are seen immediately. Others may follow this process



**Registration**

**Waiting Room**



**Seen**  
by Nurse in Emergency Department



**Seen**  
by Physician  
or Nurse  
Practitioner



**Test/Orders**



**Treatment**



**Reassessment**  
by Physician or Nurse Practitioner



**Discharge**



**Referral to  
Outpatient Clinic**



**Consult/Admission  
to Hospital**



**Derek McNally, Niagara Health's Executive Vice President Clinical Services & Chief Nursing Executive, and President Dr. Suzanne Johnston congratulate members of our Oncology team who received the Excellence in Interprofessional Practice Collaboration award.**

## Honouring teamwork

Niagara Health honoured healthcare professionals who embody the spirit of collaboration at the 12th annual Interprofessional Practice Awards in November. The recipients demonstrate leadership and excellence in line with NH's strategic purpose, vision and values, providing extraordinary caring, teamwork, forward thinking and innovation. Awards were handed out to professionals across a variety of disciplines and Niagara Health sites.

### Extraordinary Care: Excellence in Clinical Expertise (Individual Practice Award)

#### **Vonda Comeau, Social Worker, St. Catharines Site**

Vonda identified a patient who had been struggling with attendance to group and was aware that this individual had complex life challenges. Vonda called the patient to clarify what the challenges were and, after her phone call, the individual attended every session of the group. She was able to recognize the patient's struggle, offer her support and allowed the patient to become successful with her treatment goals.

#### **Patti Legere, Medical Laboratory Technologist, St. Catharines Site**

Patti is a Charge Technologist who exemplifies teamwork and leadership. She is quick to assist her staff whenever needed by putting aside her daily work and working the bench when the area is short-staffed or there is increased workload. Patti approaches all aspects of her job with a positive attitude and collaborative spirit.



**Carrie Gosselin, Medical Laboratory Assistant, Greater Niagara General Site**

Recently a nurse was having problems obtaining a blood sample from a young patient and called for help. Carrie quickly responded and put both the child and mother at ease with her kind words and actions. She gained the young girl's trust and was able to draw her blood with no problem. The mother thanked Carrie for being so calm and kind with her daughter. Carrie also gave the young patient a gift: an inflated surgical glove decorated to look like a hedgehog.

**Christa Hrvatin, Clinical Nutrition Assistant, St. Catharines Site**

Christa was able to develop a rapport with a patient with an eating disorder, when no other health professional was able to do so. Christa was able to engage and motivate the patient to slowly improve their eating and acceptance of various foods. The patient was able to gain weight and improve their overall health as a result of Christa's exceptional care.

**Extraordinary Care: Excellence in Professional Competence & Development (Education Award)****Brendon Wiebe, Pharmacist, St. Catharines Site**

Brendon proposed a new pharmacist practice model that mirrors the physician team-based approach. With this new model, patients are seen and cared for by the same pharmacist from admission to discharge, creating continuity of care for our patients. Our pharmacists have also reported increased efficiency and continuity for patient care.

**Extraordinary Teams: Excellence in Interprofessional Practice Collaboration (Team Award)****The Oncology Home Total Parenteral Nutrition Program:**

Pam Szabo-Kode, Registered Dietitian, St. Catharines Site  
 Jennifer Mulligan, Registered Dietitian, St. Catharines Site  
 Lisa Coles, Registered Nurse, St. Catharines Site  
 Anna Limoges, Nurse Practitioner, St. Catharines Site  
 Dr. Mamoon Bokhari, Oncologist, St. Catharines Site  
 Dr. Radhika Yelamanchili, Oncologist, St. Catharines Site

To improve wait times for our total parenteral nutrition (TPN) patients, this group brainstormed and researched potential solutions. They collaborated with the Home TPN Team at Hamilton Health Sciences and the LHIN Home and Community Care to create a new model for Niagara Health. This innovative program will help to improve flow and utilization as it will free up hospital beds as well as improve quality of life for these patients as they will receive specialized nutrition treatment in the comfort of their own home.

**Extraordinary Teams: Excellence in Patient and Family as Partners****Jenny Law, Speech Language Pathologist, Welland Site**

When a previous patient of Jenny's wanted more cognitive language stimulation at home, Jenny searched for and compiled a personalized homework package and mailed it directly to the patient. In addition to the engaging and goal-specified worksheets, she also included a list of activities and games that could be purchased for fine-tuning communication, as well as the locations and pricing of the products that she was recommending.

**Joanne Wintemute, Social Worker, St. Catharines Site**

Joanne's extraordinary caring was demonstrated when she helped to fulfill a patient's last wish. The patient had decided to stop dialysis and wanted to go to the beach one last time. Joanne not only arranged all the rides for the patient's wish to come true, but she also accompanied the patient and her daughter. The joy on the patient's face was immeasurable.

**Lori Marino, Child Life Specialist, St. Catharines Site**

Lori is an amazingly helpful and soothing presence for young patients and their families on the Children's Health Unit. Lori gets to know patients and brings them toys, art supplies and other items to help support children during difficult times. Lori also helps to organize an annual diaper drive that collects diapers for needy families in the community at Christmastime.

**Continued on Page 16**

## Extraordinary Future: Excellence in Leadership by providing Student Preceptorship

**Lanny Tran, Pharmacist, Greater Niagara General Site**

Lanny arranged biweekly therapeutic discussions that were tailored to his student's learning. Lanny allocated time every day to review patients and strategically selected patients for his student to work with so they would have experience with commonly seen conditions. Lanny is very approachable and was always happy to answer questions, explain concepts, and share clinical pearls throughout the rotation.

**Craig Sutton, Senior Occupational Therapist, Greater Niagara General Site**

Craig is a huge advocate for student learners, taking on many students each year from both Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapist Assistant/Physiotherapist Assistant programs. Craig recently helped to initiate and plan a transfer skills workshop that, will give rehab assistant students a chance to learn about transfers before their formal placements begin.

**Tawnya Crawford, Registered Dietitian, St. Catharines Site**

Tawnya regularly supports students in placements and through job shadow experiences. She is an enthusiastic supporter of students learning more about the interprofessional team and the role of clinical nutrition. Tawnya provides multiple role presentations and tours for students from the Interprofessional Practice Education units every term.

## Extraordinary Future: Excellence in providing safe, quality patient care by a Rising Star

**Sarah Reilly, Occupational Therapist Assistant/Physiotherapist Assistant, Greater Niagara General Site**

Sarah demonstrates the highest level of patient care by communicating effectively and motivating patients to achieve their rehab goals. She can be seen daily listening, helping and encouraging patients in the department treatment room. She plays an integral part in providing therapists, students and fellow colleagues with the highest level of assistance.

**Ashley Vos, Medical Laboratory Assistant, St. Catharines Site**

Ashley is a dedicated staff member who comes to work with a cheerful demeanor every day. Ashley approaches any task or issue with collaboration in mind, speaking with the people involved and looking for a mutually agreeable solution – whether it is dividing up the work during a shift or planning around her school schedule.

## Extraordinary Innovation: Excellence in Ethics and Research

**Robert Tees, Coordinator of Spiritual Care and Education, St. Catharines Site**

Bob brought Niagara Health's Clinical Pastoral Education program into Wilfred Laurier University's Martin Luther College. Bob's work to achieve this has also made contribution to standardized curriculum development for the profession as a whole. Bob has a growing body of reflective writing on medical assistance in dying. He continues to make formative contribution to the Ontario faculty of teaching supervisors within the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care.

## Extraordinary Innovation: Excellence in Innovation Award

**Claire Chartrand, Registered Dietitian, St. Catharines Site**

Claire has recently taken on a new role as an outpatient dietitian in the Kidney Care Program. During this short time, she has updated many of the education pamphlets to reflect current evidence-based practice to use when educating patients, produced seasonal newsletters with education tips and recipes for the renal population, and has started a grocery store shopping guide for patients who are struggling with making diet choices when following a renal diet. She has also developed a class for the pre-dialysis population to reduce wait times for individual appointments for this group. Her enthusiasm for making improvements is admirable and contagious.





# A meaningful way to say thank you

Grateful patient Arthur Burley being cared for by Registered Nurse Linda Miller in the Brock Unit at the Greater Niagara General Site in Niagara Falls.



Often going above and beyond, Niagara Health staff and volunteers make a difference in the lives of patients each and every day through expert care, compassion and kindness.

Sometimes that care is so appreciated that patients and their families seek out a way to extend a warm thank you to the people who have helped along their healthcare journey.

Niagara Health Foundation's Gifts of Gratitude program has become a popular way for patients to show their sincere thanks to hospital staff. The program, which launched in spring 2018, gives patients and their families a thoughtful way to recognize members of Niagara Health's care teams and to say thank you for providing extraordinary caring during their hospital experience.

## Sincere sentiments from patients and their loved ones:

*"All of the radiation staff were friendly, caring and patient, and made the daily treatments easy to come to." - Susan*

*"Thank you for the excellent care and attention you have given to my mother. We will never forget what you have done for her and for us." - David*

*"Thank you for your expert care and quick thinking. I truly believe that you saved my life and I will be forever grateful." - Brad*

Whether patients choose to honour a doctor, nurse, porter, volunteer, or an entire program or care team, all donations help support the purchase of patient care equipment at Niagara Health.

When you say 'thanks' through the Gifts of Gratitude program, you are making a meaningful difference and helping ensure that others also receive the same outstanding care that you are grateful for.

To honour your Extraordinary Caregiver through the Gifts of Gratitude program, please visit  
**[www.SupportNiagaraHealth.com](http://www.SupportNiagaraHealth.com)**  
or call Niagara Health Foundation at  
**905-323-FUND (3863).**



# Niagara Health Highlights



**Niagara Health was recognized by Trillium Gift of Life Network for promoting organ and tissue donation.**

## Team recognized for life-saving work

Niagara Health was recognized by Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) for meeting important organ and tissue donation benchmarks over the past year. TGLN recognized Niagara Health with the Provincial Conversion Rate award. Between April 2017 and March 2018, NH was among 24 Ontario hospitals to meet TGLN's target of a 58 per cent conversion rate. A conversion rate is the number of potential organ donors who became actual organ donors and is an important indicator of organ donation success for TGLN. As well, Don Versluis, a Niagara Health Nurse Practitioner, was acknowledged by NH and TGLN as a "Hidden Hero" for his dedication to promoting organ and tissue donation.

*Be kind* 

### Acts of Kindness

Our Acts of Kindness Workplace Challenge continues to spread across our organization, and it's even resulted in a blossoming Kindness Rocks Garden at our St. Catharines Site.

The grassroots movement, which was started by our Information and Communications Technology team two years ago, sees departments complete 1,000 acts of kindness in a month.

More than 20 departments have participated in the challenge, logging 20,000 acts of kindness.



## Nurses' association recognizes NH

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) has again certified Niagara Health as a Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) for the next two years. Niagara Health has been a BPSO since 2003. The designation is awarded to organizations that make a positive impact on patient care through implementation of evidence-based practice and guidelines. This designation is renewed every two years, based on strict criteria.

## Top Employer

Niagara Health has been selected as one of Hamilton-Niagara's Top Employers for 2019. Hamilton-Niagara Top Employers is an annual competition organized by the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers. This special designation recognizes employers in the Hamilton-Niagara area that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work. This recognition is a testament to our team's dedication, loyalty and hard work, which has shaped Niagara Health into the organization we are today.



Niagara Health team members showed their support for Pink Shirt Day, an international movement to take a stand against bullying, by wearing Be Kind shirts in this photo from 2018. The team also participated in Pink Shirt Day in 2019.



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