



Since assuming the role of Provincial Chief Nurse, I have had the privilege to engage in meaningful dialogue with many nursing colleagues across our province. For me, these exchanges have been very powerful and have contributed to my growth as both a person and a nurse. Nursing is a profession where we touch people's lives in many ways and as key members of the health care team, nurses bring knowledge and expertise that result in positive health outcomes for the people served by the system. Everyday nurses make a positive difference in the health of our population through their many roles in practice, research, education, administration, policy development and leadership.

I have seen first-hand your enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to the profession of nursing and to making a difference in people's lives. I am profoundly proud of the extent to which nurses of our province are committed to positive change that leads to improved health care services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

Through connecting with you, the nurses of our province, I have gained a better understanding of the issues specific to nursing in NL. In addition, linking with nurses of the province through the Provincial Nursing Network (PNN) has helped strengthen

initiatives aimed at improving the work lives of nurses. The Provincial Nursing Network has representation from all three health sector unions, the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL), the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CLPNL), regional health authorities (RHAs), and nursing education, as well as representation from Advance Practice Nurses. The PNN has put forward recommendations for addressing nursing scope of practice issues, nursing leadership and nursing human resources. These recommendations are being used to inform work at both the regional health authority and provincial level.

#### **Recruitment and Retention**

Over these past three years, government has made significant investments in nursing. These investments are designed to effectively recruit and retain nurses and to improve nurses' workplaces. Increased funding is available to RHAs to advance professional development activities and to address recruitment and retention needs of the workforce.

Government recognizes that an adequate supply of nurses is essential to maintaining the foundation of health services. Both the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program and the Practical Nursing (PN) program have undergone expansion in the past two years, including a Bridging Program to enable Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) to bridge to the BN program. In addition, a significant contribution has been made to recruit and retain NL nursing graduates through bursaries and grants. Bursaries are also available for nurses to complete re-entry programs. The Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association's website [www.nlhba.nl.ca](http://www.nlhba.nl.ca) contains information on the Recruitment and Retention Fund for Nurses.

Since 2007, additional funding has been provided to RHAs for new graduate nurse orientation programs. This funding has contributed to increased orientation activities for both new BN and PN graduates. There is substantial evidence that an investment in a comprehensive orientation program creates a win-win situation. New graduates experience less stress because they feel better prepared for clinical situations which enables safe and competent practice and experienced nurses benefit from having new graduates better prepared to meet the expectations of practice. A mentorship program is also available to further support the assimilation of new BN graduates in practice. Experienced nurses who mentor new graduates are supported through a workshop that prepares them for their roles as mentors and a small fund for professional development.

During my time as Chief Nurse I've witnessed policy initiatives that support the nursing workforce. Conversions of both RN and LPN positions from casual/temporary status to permanent full-time have helped formulate improvements to nurses' work lives, as well as the quality of care to patients. The creation of more full-time RN and LPN positions to meet the need for increased services for home care, public health and other areas, as well as the decision to place additional nurse practitioners in emergency rooms, enable us to more fully meet the care needs of the people of NL.

In March 2009, over 130 stakeholders attended a Nursing Human Resources Forum. The purpose of the Forum was to explore promising and innovative practices for optimizing nursing human resources in NL. Attendees made recommendations on interprofessional practice, quality of work life, scope of practice and model of nursing practice. Work is ongoing to implement these recommendations.

### **Quality Workplaces**

Research clearly indicates that a quality workplace has benefits for nurses, their patients/clients and the health care system. I'm involved in both Canadian and Provincial initiatives to address work life issues of nurses. There are currently three research-based healthy/quality workplace projects ongoing in our province. Two of these are in partnership with the respective RHA and the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union (NLNU). One is on an acute care unit and is designed to determine, implement and evaluate interventions to improve the workplace for nurses. A second project is on a long-term care unit and involves the implementation of an 80/20 RN staffing model where RNs spend 20% of their work-related activities in non-clinical care. This model provides nurses time for professional development and/or other activities.

### **Participants of the 80/20 Model**



*Left to Right: Brenda Mills (staff nurse), Michelle Hatt (nurse manager), Margaret Power (project coordinator), Anita Ludlow (Provincial Chief Nurse), and Edna MacDonald (staff nurse).*

The third project is designed to explore the challenges and opportunities that exist for the effective utilization of nurses in the community sector. All three of these research studies will provide information on nurses' job satisfaction and

help determine policy/interventions to make improvements. As Chief Nurse, I am working with ARNNL, CLPNNL and other stakeholders to address quality of work life issues for nurses. Government support, in 2006 and 2007, for the Quality Professional Practice Environment (QPPE) project, a joint project of ARNNL and CLPNNL, enabled delivery of the program to additional sites in our province.

In addition, the investment in better equipment including electric beds and safety equipment (such as patient lifts) provides for better working conditions for nurses. Also, the policy direction to implement safety-engineered devices will contribute to safer workplaces for nurses.

### **Nursing Leadership**

There is no doubt that nursing leadership deserves attention in this ever-changing world of health care delivery. There are many definitions of leadership. However, I view leadership as the ability to positively influence others. This definition recognizes that every nurse is a leader. Clinical nurses, making positive contributions, can inspire others and guide decisions related to patient/client care and health care delivery. To be engaged in clinical decision-making and leadership activities, nurses must make leadership development a priority.

To support nursing leadership development a leadership conference was hosted by the Department of Health and Community Services in April 2007. The conference was a huge success and filled to capacity. **A second nursing leadership conference is planned for April 19 & 20, 2010.** This conference promises to be exciting! It will include a full day session with Linda Edgecombe, an internationally renowned award-winning humorous speaker and author of "Shift or Get Off the Pot", who will

certainly provide us an opportunity to reflect on our leadership potential in a very dynamic and lighthearted way. I invite RNs and LPNs from across the province to join us for two days of activities and presentations designed to grow your leadership potential. Further information on the conference will be available at [www.nlhba.ca](http://www.nlhba.ca).

### **Celebrating Nursing**

Celebrating our profession and work is something that nurses often do not focus on in the day-to-day life of nursing. As nurses, we must celebrate our profession and reflect more on our role in the health system and the difference nursing truly makes. It is important for nurses to inform the public of how the nursing profession and nurses are responding to the diverse health care needs of the population.

Nursing Week is a time when we highlight our profession. One way that the Department celebrates Nursing Week is to host a coffee break with the Minister for members of the PNN, nurses who have achieved awards over the past year, and nursing executives in our province.

### **Nursing Week Coffee: 2009**



*Left to right: Cathy Gaudin (CLPNNL: Excellence in Practice Award), Former Minister of Health, Hon. Ross Wiseman, Ambrose Penton (No-Nonsense Nurse Award), and Anita Ludlow (Provincial Chief Nurse)*

*Nursing Week 2009: Carmelite House*

*Left to right: Anita Ludlow (Provincial Chief Nurse), Angela Foss (LPN), Margaret Keough (LPN), and Paul Furey (LPN).*

The commitment to nursing in our province is helping us develop a sustainable nursing workforce. There is an increase in our new graduate retention rate and evaluations of the new graduate orientation and mentorship programs are very favorable. Quality of work life initiatives are ongoing in all four RHAs. These are only a few indicators of our success. The real success is in our collective knowledge and commitment to our profession and health care. As we look to the future, we must encourage the next generation of nurses and continue the realization of our own potential.

I am proud to be a nurse. I find it very rewarding that our profession is so committed to best practices and quality health care. Nurses throughout NL are champions for the nursing profession and promoting quality health care.

Thank you for your commitment and I look forward to being a part of a successful future - with you!

*Anita Ludlow*

**Anita Ludlow**  
Provincial Chief Nurse