

Cornwall branch:

Evolving to meet the needs of the community



Over the past 16 years, Bayshore Home Health's Cornwall branch has served thousands of clients in Ontario's eastern counties. And as the needs of the region have changed, the branch has evolved to meet them. Currently, it provides home care to 1,200 people at any given time through a contract with the Champlain Community Care Access Centre. The branch has 85 nurses, 30 home support workers and 18 administrative staff members.

"We have an excellent team that works very closely together. They foster positive outcomes, and everyone is very client-focused and supportive," says Diane Pedersen, Area Director of the branch. She adds that the nurses are always willing to go the extra mile – literally. "We're in a very rural area. For some of the smaller towns in the eastern counties, the nurses travel from town to town. Some nurses do in excess of 4,000 kilometres a month, even with the winter driving conditions!"

Pedersen has worked at the branch for 15 years. Over that time, she has noticed a "huge change" in the number of nurses required. "Because we provide a very high level of care, Bayshore is a primary provider for nursing in the area."

To help cope with Ontario's shortage of registered nurses (RNs), the branch is providing advanced training to its registered practical nurses (RPNs) to maximize their scope of practice. "We're training and certifying them to do intravenous therapy and central lines, all in accordance with best practice guidelines," says Pedersen. "In the past, RPNs were not providing that level of practice, and there's no reason why they can't be. The staff appreciate it – they want to practice at this level."

The branch also strives to meet the needs of the community by providing specialized services. For eight years, it has offered enterostomal therapy (wound care) consultations. "Our two ET consultants go into clients' home and provide a much higher level of nursing for enterostomal therapy," says Pedersen. "They work with our nurses and other providers, advising them on what type of care to apply – for example, for a wound that is not healing. They also work very closely with physicians to ensure wounds are appropriately cared for."

Through a contract with First Nations and Inuit Health, the branch has provided nursing and home care services to

Aboriginal communities in northern Ontario for the past six years. It has also provided supplemental staffing to hospitals. In November, the branch added two services: a nurse practitioner service and an aging-at-home facilitator.

Like many northern areas, the James Bay region has a shortage of doctors. The nurse practitioner, who provides a very high level of nursing, works at James Bay General Hospital (with locations in Moosonee, Fort Albany and Attawapiskat, Ont.) to help meet the region's needs. The aging-at-home facilitator helps patients in the region make the transition from the hospital to their homes by ensuring that they have a supportive care plan. "The goal of the program is to ensure that the seniors can stay in their homes as long as possible," says Pedersen. "We're quite excited about this. The needs are very high in northern Ontario – there's a large client population and a shortage of nurses, so it's really nice to see the hospital has received funding for the aging-at-home program."

The branch's staff also serve on clinical development committees, including working groups within the Champlain district that lead palliative care and wound care initiatives. "We have four managers of clinical practice and a director of clinical management, and they're asked to sit on these committees because of their skill level and experience," says Pedersen.

The branch is also keen to give back to the community by supporting local not-for-profit agencies. It has participated for the last three years in the national hike for Hospice Palliative Care to raise money for Cornwall's local hospice.

Despite their challenging workload, Pedersen says, the staff are always accommodating and willing to help. "The phones are ringing all the time! It's busy, but you can always hear laughter in the office as well. You need to have fun in the workplace. At our branch, you can feel the environment is very positive. It makes such a difference when you go into an office and you can feel it when you walk in."

For more information, please contact dpedersen@bayshore.ca

Back row, left to right: Chantal Matte, Megan Andrews, Kim White, Katie Oberg, Dawn Miller, Kim Tyrell. Front row, left to right: Shari Larkin, Ingrid Ball, Cecile McCue, Cecile Pickup, Elaine Marchand, Krista Seguin.



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