

Sault Ste. Marie branch: Close-knit staff works together for excellent client care



If you walk by Bayshore Home Health's branch in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., you're likely to hear gales of laughter bouncing off the walls. It's just another cheerful day at work for the small, collegial staff, whose team spirit and dedication to customer service are downright infectious.

The branch serves residents of Sault Ste. Marie and clients east of the city as far as Elliot Lake and Spanish, which are also part of Ontario's Algoma District. It has 50 field staff and seven administrative staff and offers nursing services, including palliative, pediatric, respite, post-surgical and wound care. The branch's small team of personal support workers provide personal care and housekeeping services.

"We have an excellent staff. We're very, very close. Whether someone is administrative or field staff, we don't differentiate," says Bev Harding, who joined the branch in 1999 as a visiting nurse. After several years as Manager of Clinical Practice, she was appointed Area Director in June 2009. "We work together as a team for our clients and within the branch. I always know I can count on any of our staff."

Most clients are referred by the North East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). Its branch office in Sault Ste. Marie is located in the same downtown building as Bayshore's branch, which Harding says has helped foster an excellent working relationship, even including joint in-service training.

The branch works with the Algoma Residential Community Hospice (ARCH) in Sault Ste. Marie. It's also a partner in the Cardiovascular Health Awareness Program (CHAP), an Ontario community-based initiative in which local family physicians, pharmacists and other health professionals help older adults understand their risk factors for heart disease and stroke. (For more information, visit www.chaprogram.ca)

Twice a week, the branch offers CHAP clinics at its Elliot Lake satellite office (located in the Renaissance Seniors' Centre) and a Pharmachoice pharmacy. Registered nurse Cindy Vanbuskirk co-ordinates the program. "We do blood-pressure monitoring and screening, mainly for seniors, and especially those who don't have a physician," explains Harding. "We don't just take someone's blood pressure and then they leave – we

follow up with the local pharmacist, who does a medication review, and we'll refer people to the emergency department if there's a problem."

Harding credits Bayshore's status as a national care provider for helping the branch stand out in the community. "We have an excellent national team that's always available by phone or email. If we have a clinical question, we get a response right away. We also have tools such as the staff website our field staff to access information about clinical procedures or skill requirements," she says.

The branch places a high priority on continuing education. It holds three or four in-service training sessions every month. Lea Nadon, Manager of Clinical Practice, leads sessions on topics such as wound care, intravenous therapy, client confidentiality and palliative care.

"About half of our cases are palliative," says Harding, adding that nearly all of the branch's nurses have completed advanced palliative care training. The training modules cover topics such as nutrition, wound care, communication and pain control. "During the training, our care providers have a chance to discuss different situations and solutions with their colleagues."

The branch held its first employee appreciation barbecue this year, on June 26 at Bellevue Park. Other annual events include a Christmas party and luncheons to celebrate Nursing Week and Caregiver Week.

The branch also participated in the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay For Life, a 12-hour overnight fundraiser to support cancer research. "We walked to honour the memory of our past Area Director, Sharon Husk," says Harding. Last year, the branch raised close to \$7,000.

Harding describes her staff as a big family. "We seem to share the good times and the bad – if someone has a personal or professional issue, we all share that and help them through it. We're a team and we help each other out."

For more information, please contact bharding@bayshore.ca

From left to right: Kim Nardo, Sue Clingen, Jennifer Coudert, Bev Harding, Leah Nadon. Absent from photo, Prescille Pielow, Crystal Moor, Steve Rhodes.



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