

**Brenda Achtecmichuk, RN**  
**Employee Health Nurse**  
**St. Michael's Health Centre & St. Therese Villa,**  
**Lethbridge**

As Covenant Health's Employee Health Nurse in Lethbridge, Brenda Achtecmichuk certainly puts words into action, bringing tremendous results while she cares for the people who care for patients and residents.

"Brenda is an exceptional Registered Nurse and Employee Health Nurse," said Chuck Couillard, Executive Director. "She is one of the most dedicated and committed employees and her work ethic is reknowned."

More importantly she is skilled at making resource allocation choices, especially as they relate to ensuring that all sick and disability claims are handled responsibly and compassionately. She understands the human costs, as well as the significant costs that WCB and disability claims have on the system. That is why she so diligently processes the claims in a timely manner.

"She's not afraid to question WCB case managers, and she's the first to advocate for employees that she believes are not treated fairly by the disability carriers," added Chuck.

Brenda loves the diversity her job offers, and after serving in a similar capacity in another local hospital, she loves Covenant Health's approach. Here, she is expected to get into the facilities, onto the units and go see the employees.

"If we don't take care of our staff, we won't have anyone to take care of our residents," said Brenda

Since arriving at St. Michael's in 2006, the organization has struggled with high employee injury rates, high claim rates, and significant WCB premium surcharges. Since then, Brenda has led a dramatic turnaround. She's modernized the Occupational Health and Safety program and facilitated the organization receiving a Certificate of Recognition as a Partner in Injury with the Continuing Care Safety Association.

"I have my hands in so many things, there's nothing boring about my job," said Brenda. "I'm the 'nag' for immunizations and I manage the internal OH&S audits, but what I value most is the relationship I've built with the staff, physicians, volunteers, and administration throughout the organization."

## Heart and Stroke Clinic St. Mary's Hospital, Camrose

Patients suffering strokes or heart failure at St. Mary Hospital are witnessing some winning outcomes for their conditions due to the relatively new Heart and Stroke Clinic.

What began as one relatively small yet successful change in practice has grown to serve patients throughout central Alberta, with leading-edge best care practices for treatment following a stroke or heart attack.

The Heart and Stroke Clinic is an interdisciplinary clinic that cares for and assesses patients from central Alberta after they've had a stroke or cardiac related event. Patients are identified in emergency departments or referred to the clinic for prevention information and care. Sustainable care and support is also provided to patients and their families. The spin-off effects are amazing.

First, patients are receiving care and treatment right away so that their prognosis is better for a longer period of time. It is projected to save \$27,000 over the first year from the time of treatment and \$152,000 over a 30 year timeframe because it reduces the possibility of deteriorated health and disability.

These results are not just good indicators for patients and their families, as patients are recovering better; but this team shows how a bit of investment goes a long way - by using our limited resources wisely to assure the program remains viable over time.

Likewise, direct acute care cost savings from reducing the patient's length of stay are equally notable. There was a clear decrease in the length of stay after St. Mary's became a primary stroke center in 2007. In 2006/07, the mean length of stay was 26.4 days. Through prevention, leading drug treatment and best clinical care practices, the length of time patients stayed in the hospital was reduced to 9.7 days. Clearly, St. Mary's was able to manage more patients in those years, resulting in a cost savings of over \$71,000.

But the stewardship work that this team does goes beyond the facts and statistics; it's how this team developed this clinic that truly makes is a sustainable.

First the team started from scratch, touring other clinics and using all the information to implement those practices that had only the best outcomes for patients and their families.

“With the core of the team being seasoned emergency department nurses, we knew we wanted to implement something that wasn't an additional burden on staff and physicians,” says Cheryl King, Assistant Head Nurse, Heart and Stroke Clinic. “The other key to our good stewardship is that we roll up our sleeves to get the work done as well,” added Cheryl.

## Hospitality Services Nutrition and Food Services and Housekeeping Teams Grey Nuns and Misericordia Community Hospitals

Over the past 12 months, over 400 Covenant Health housekeeping and food services staff at Edmonton's acute care hospitals have made an incredible movement by demonstrating good stewardship through environmental sustainability. This team has changed, sustained and supported more sustainable practices and the results are impressive.

They have reduced Covenant Health's water use by approximately 95 percent, or 647,000 litres of water, just by converting to a microfiber mop. These new mops use 10-20 times less liquid.

"This works out to about 19 gallons of water per employee per shift," said Linda Chow-Turner Corporate Director, Hospital and Clinical Nutrition. "The added benefit is that it also reduces the health and safety risks for staff as they no longer have to lift heavy amounts of water."

Because of the efficiency of the microfiber, there's also less cleaning solution poured down the drain at these facilities. They are able to maintain infection control standards and use 65 percent less chemicals than last year just by implementing the new microfiber cleaning system. Of the chemicals used, they have converted to cleaner disinfectants that support improved indoor air quality and are environmentally certified.

The changes this team has made are not only benefitting the air and water, they are making significant reductions to waste management as well. Since last June, both the Grey Nuns and the Misericordia Food Services team have been composting waste and diverting approximately 25,000 kg or 56,000 lbs of food waste from the landfill.

"Retail Food Services committed to purchasing and using dishwares and cutlery which are either from renewable resources, biodegradable, compostable or re-usable," said Linda. In addition to the tremendous exchange or return of beverage containers, the Misericordia and Grey Nuns have started exchanging cutlery, napkins, soup containers, water cups, and the like, so that over 5 million environmental friendly disposable items were used, which is also better stewardship.

"I'm so proud of everything this team is doing to make our facilities greener," concluded Linda. "Each team member advocates and supports each other in reducing their environmental footprint by providing services and the necessary tools to make it easier for others to adopt greener practices."