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Patient Safety Indicators

The Ontario government is introducing full public reporting on eight patient safety indicators – including *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) – as part of a comprehensive plan to create an unprecedented level of transparency in Ontario's hospitals.

On September 30, 2008, all Ontario hospitals will be required to publicly report on *C. difficile* rates in their facilities through a public website.

As part of this comprehensive initiative, Dr. Michael Baker, physician-in-chief at the University Health Network, is being appointed Executive Lead – Patient Safety to oversee the government's patient safety agenda. He will build upon initiatives already taken such as the hospital hand hygiene program.

Hospitals will also be required to immediately report *C. difficile* outbreaks to their local public health units so that Medical Officers of Health have the information they need to monitor and respond to emergent outbreaks.

Go to:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/news_releases/archives/nr_08/may/nr_20080528.html

for more information.

The Regional Infection Control (RICN)'s New Look

By Liz Van Horne

Welcome to the new look for the Regional Infection Control Network (RICN) newsletter 'FOCUS on Infection Prevention and Control'.

With this edition of FOCUS on Infection Prevention and Control you will begin to see changes in this publication and other ways the RICNs communicate.

We understand how important it is that the infection prevention and control community has effective and reliable ways of sharing information and exchanging ideas. The RICNs play a major role in this sharing both within our individual communities and throughout the province.

As part of our ongoing focus on understanding your needs the RICNs commissioned focus groups earlier this year to determine how we could improve our communications activities to better serve our colleagues throughout the health care community and the public. Thank you to all who participated in these focus groups. Your feedback was very helpful in developing our communication strategies.

The RICN newsletter will appear four times a year. However, as always, we will communicate with you in a variety of ways, including e-mails, updates, special announcements and bulletins.

One of the things we heard in our research is that you want us to present material to you in ways that make it simple to pass that information along within your work places. For that reason, we will try to present material in a way that makes 'cut and paste' or 'clip and send' easy for you to do. As well, wherever possible we will include ways for you to get more information on a particular subject. We will provide electronic links or other sources of information for you to use.

You will notice that with this publication we are starting to use a tagline that describes what we believe is the benefit derived from our (both RICNs and Infection Prevention and Control professionals) work: *Giving Health a Helping Hand*.

Giving Health a Helping Hand is a summary of the work that is done by infection prevention and control professionals and the outcome of this work. Our aim is to have Ontarians associate the RICNs with the positive benefits of all of our collective work, and to associate infection prevention and control as an integral part of effective health care delivery. When people see our name we would like them to associate it with these benefits, thus making the RICN work more tangible.

A Tribute to Dr. Sheela Basrur

By Colette Ouellet

Dr. Sheela Basrur was an icon of strength, kindness, honesty, humour and idealism. She became known to many around the world for her calm and forthright approach to a health system under siege during the SARS crisis in Toronto in 2003. Dr. Basrur clearly emerged as a lifeline to common sense when turmoil reigned. She was considered by many to be a hero.



She was also a visionary, and recognition of her strength of character, grace and clear-minded intelligence led to her nomination as Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) for Ontario on February 16, 2004. In addition to her many accomplishments during her short tenure, she was a driving force behind the development of Regional Infection Control Networks (RICN) in Ontario.

On December 6, 2006, Dr. Basrur stepped down from her role as CMOH to take on a personal battle with a rare form of cancer. During her last 18 months of life, she was honoured by many, both publicly and privately. The RICN group sent a gift basket to her during her recovery from chemotherapy, and Dr. Basrur took the time and energy to reply to that gesture with a personal letter.

"I am indeed proud of the work of the RICN's, and in you, Phil and team for bringing this concept to life through your purposeful dedication to a common vision. It's rare in any environment to have such a "build-as-you-go" project being used for real-time implementation as issues arise. I am just delighted with your work and feel you've set the highest possible standard of achievement in this important field!

While I confess that there might be one or two things about working for government that I don't miss, what I will always miss is supporting the kind of work that you and your team have carried out, day by day and over the years. I am very proud of you all.

Please convey my kind personal regards to all of my RICN colleagues, with many thanks once again for their kindness and generosity.

Love Sheela"

Dr. Basrur was an individual with a rare sense of optimism and humanity. In an interview with Shelagh Rogers on CBC, just after her cancer was diagnosed, she said *"You know a good friend and colleague of mine at the provincial government had a wonderful saying and that was, the only difference between an ordeal and an adventure is your attitude. So my cancer would be here whether I was thinking positively or not, but being positive actually does something good for me, being negative drags me down and if it changes the situation it'll only change it for the worse. So I just put everything I can into steering in the direction I want to go."*

Dr. Sheela Basrur lost her life to cancer on June 2, 2008. We wish her colleagues, close friends and family our sincere condolences.



Dr. Sheela Basrur is appointed Chief Medical Officer of Health by George Smitherman in 2004.



Dr. Sheela Basrur participated in the development of the Infection Control Core Competency Education modules.