



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **CPDMH Nurses Undergo Training in a New Model of Care**

#### ***New Nursing Model to be Introduced Next Month***

**May 17, 2004**—Seven Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH) RPNs (registered practical nurses) recently graduated with high marks from Algonquin College’s Unit Dose Medication Program and their new skills are key to the introduction of a new approach to nursing at the hospital.

The 8-week course was administered through classes, exams, and labs, and a clinical placement in cooperation with Stoneridge Manor in Carleton Place. It was an exciting experience for RPNs Mary Ellen Adams, Debbie Guillemette, Ruth McDiarmid, Fran Rodger, Dorothy Smith, Debbie Wark and Pat Watchorn, although some admitted to being a little intimidated with “hitting the books” after so long in the working world. They credit very supportive co-workers and family members with helping to make going back to school a little easier.

These dedicated RPNs agree that the course provided them with a wonderful learning opportunity. “It was very interesting to learn about the whole process of an illness. When you know what medications a patient is taking you have a better perspective of their condition as a whole,” explains RPN Fran Rodger.

“We really appreciate the support we received from the hospital. Health care is changing and we are progressing—that means a lot to us,” notes RPN Dorothy Smith. “It makes me feel good that our hospital is up to speed with the bigger hospitals in the province.”

Unit dose medication skills allow RPNs to administer prescribed medication to patients, something previously performed by RNs (registered nurses) only. The RPNs new designation will result in a change to the nursing model of care currently used by the CPDMH. Instead of team nursing—a model of care in which some nurses are responsible for such duties as dressing changes or blood pressure checks, some other nurses deliver medications for all 22 patients and still other nurses oversee the nursing desk—each nurse will soon oversee the **complete** care of a handful of patients. He or she will be responsible for administering medication, checking blood pressure and seeing to the patient’s care and comfort throughout his or her nursing shift. This method of complete nursing—which will be introduced in June—will allow the nurse to have a

broader understanding of the patient's condition. It will also mean that the patients will have the same three or four nurses caring for them during their entire stay.

Norine Primeau, AED of Patient Care at the CPDMH, notes that while the new model of care will be appreciated by patients, it will be the nursing staff that will feel the biggest impact from the change. "Five years ago, 25 percent of our beds were being used by long-term care patients. Today, our long-term care patients account for less than six percent of our patient load. The CPDMH is now caring for more surgical and acute care patients and that requires a different approach to nursing. With the new model of care there will be more opportunity for our nurses to get to know their caseload, making it easier for them to manage it. Our patient satisfaction rates are high—and with this new nursing method we may see them climb even higher—but it will be our nurses that see the biggest change with the new model of care."

Ms. Primeau goes on to note: "We are very proud to be introducing such a progressive approach to nursing and we are even more proud of our RPNs. They worked hard and achieved exceptional results!"

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***For more information, please contact:***

Norine Primeau, AED, Patient Services  
Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital  
253-3827