

## Clinical Externs learning on the job - and supporting patient care

Christy Canning is a fourth-year student in the collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the University of Ottawa and Algonquin College. When she got the call to consider becoming a Clinical Extern at Almonte General Hospital, she says she jumped at the chance. "I'm learning so much and it is so different from being in the classroom," says Christy. "I'm grateful for this opportunity."

Funded by the Ministry of Health, the Clinical Extern program gives qualifying students hands-on experience at the hospital. Students enrolled in a health sciences program work under the supervision of a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Departments, Operating Rooms, and Medical/Surgical or Obstetrical Units. They provide an extra set of hands supporting patient care in a variety of ways. This experience can lead to full-time jobs once they graduate.

Clinical Externs have been welcomed at both AGH and CPDMH. Eighteen have been hired in the past year. "The Clinical Extern program has many benefits," explains Lianne Learmonth, Integrated Vice President, Patient/Resident Care and Chief Nursing Executive. "These students help support our staffing challenges and they also get a glimpse of what it would be like to work at a rural hospital. We hope to welcome them as staff members in the future."

Christy has been working in the Emergency Department and loves it. "The staff are really helpful, and the patients are very appreciative. It's a good feeling and I love taking care of people. I would love to work in Almonte when I graduate and I'm excited about what comes next."



*Christy Channing outside the Almonte General Hospital Emergency Department.*

### SUMMER 2022 Inside this issue

ED Update - 2  
We Have a Winner - 3  
Saluting Our Staff - 4  
Caring Paramedics - 4



## New VP says it feels like home

On the first day of her new job as Integrated Vice President, Patient & Resident Services and Chief Nursing Executive at MRHA, Lianne Learmonth said it felt like home. In a way she was right. Lianne lives just three blocks away from CPDMH.

“When I came to meet the team, I felt a pull to them, the two hospitals and Fairview Manor,” says Lianne. “This is health care in my own community. If my family or I get sick, this is where we will go. I knew I wanted to be involved in ensuring the very best care, serving my community.”

Lianne brings extensive experience to the role. Most recently, she was a Clinical Director at Queensway Carleton Hospital, overseeing several programs including Medicine and Childbirth. She was also Chief Nursing Officer at Deep River & District Hospital and Director of Care at Caressant Care in Cobden, a 64-bed long-term care home. Lianne’s background also includes three years of teaching and administrative work in the Nursing education program at Northern College.

Welcome Lianne!

## Construction Update

Construction of the building steel structure for the new Emergency Department in Carleton Place is well underway.

The slab on grade concrete floor has been poured and underground electrical and mechanical work is ongoing.



## Emergency Room Closures

Like many rural hospitals in Ontario and across the country, AGH and CPDMH have had to close the Emergency Departments (ED) for short periods due to staffing challenges. These decisions are not made lightly and not without every alternative being exhausted.

Patient and staff safety is the key priority. The EDs have very small staffs with one physician and two nurses working on each shift. If one of them is sick, there is a big impact as there is not a large pool of people with Emergency Department training to draw from. The hospitals applaud all the staff who have worked countless hours of overtime in their efforts to ensure the best care for our community. They have provided outstanding care throughout the pandemic and continue to work extremely hard.

The good news is that the Mississippi River Health Alliance has provided many collaborative benefits including a joint recruitment plan, the use of Clinical Externs, nursing grants, and strengthened partnerships with the Lanark County Paramedic Service.

Masking is now optional in areas where direct patient and resident care is not being provided, including public hallways, nursing stations, offices, and meeting rooms. All staff, visitors and patients continue to be required to wear a mask in the Emergency Department and Emergency Department waiting room. Individuals who prefer to wear a mask at all times are encouraged to do so. Masks will be available at hospital entrances.



# What's NEW?

## Funding Care Close to Home

Thank you to the Lanark County Council for providing \$105,000 to each hospital for capital and equipment needs. This brings the total investment in the Mississippi River Health Alliance to just over \$1 million dollars in the past five years.



Each hospital has its own Foundation that raises money to help ensure modern, up-to-date equipment and healthcare facilities are available close to home. Currently, the Foundations are also raising funds for a CT Scanner in Almonte and the new Emergency Department in Carleton Place. This year's County Council support will again be directed to these two very important improvements in care close to home.

John Jordan, Member of Provincial Parliament for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Long-Term Care, recently visited Fairview Manor to make a welcome announcement. As part of its Local Priorities Fund, the government has provided Fairview Manor with \$89,550 for specialized bariatric equipment and supplies, as well as IV infusion pumps.

This equipment will help us provide safe, high-quality care and remove barriers that my prevent us from welcoming other residents with unique needs into our home.



## The Winning Ticket!

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for the WIN2023 lottery. It was a sell-out with 23,204 tickets sold. Congratulations to the grand prize winner - Frank Durack of Almonte - and the 50/50 winner - Laurie Seangio of Kanata.

Our patients are the ultimate winners with each hospital receiving about \$200,000. The funds will support the construction of the new Emergency Department in Carleton Place and the acquisition of vital clinical equipment for both hospitals and Fairview Manor.



# Celebrating Our Teams

More than 80 staff and physicians were recently honoured at Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital, Almonte General Hospital, Fairview Manor and Lanark County Paramedic Service at the annual Long Service Awards.



During Paramedic Services Week 2023, the Lanark County Paramedic Service (LCPS) hosted its inaugural Long Service Medal awards ceremony. This Medal was created to give recognition for career long service and good conduct as a paramedic, including with employers other than LCPS. Medals are awarded to Paramedics after 12 years of dedicated service, with a decorative bar added at 22 and 30 years. Twenty Paramedics were recognized.

“We are very grateful for the dedicated service that those honoured in all three ceremonies provide to our patients and residents every day,” noted Mary Wilson Trider, President and CEO.

If you have questions about the **Mississippi River Health Alliance**, please contact Mary Wilson Trider, President & CEO

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