

# Talk it up Victoria



Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Your Community Healthcare Centre

Volume Three, Number Four

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## Accreditation brings quality care into focus

It's like volunteering to take a final exam.

Accreditation puts every policy, procedure and activity of an organization under scrutiny. The examiners, or "surveyors" as they're called in the accreditation process, are experienced leaders in the field, trained to take an objective look and critically review the operations they see. They actually offer more than a test of knowledge or skills.

"Accreditation is our opportunity to review what we're doing and focus so that we're continually getting better," says RVH Chair Kent Tubman.

Renfrew Victoria Hospital is currently in the midst of final preparations for its accreditation examination. Two surveyors from the Canadian Council of Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) will spend two and a half days at RVH. They will interview board members, physicians, staff, patients and members of the Renfrew community. Their visit is the culmination of months of preparatory work.

"The survey is a snapshot in time," says Lisa Nowlan, CCHSA's communications team leader.

"Accreditation involves a lot more than that snapshot," she adds. "It's really a commitment to quality improvement over the long haul."

CCHSA surveyors arrive armed with stacks of information on the hospital. Teams within RVH have spent months preparing reports on the hospital's programs and activities. They compare their own self-assessment findings with the

CCHSA standards, and then set group priorities to move the hospital forward.

As the CCHSA surveyors review the prepared material and gain their own

perspective on the hospital's operations, they rate the success of each endeavour, looking for areas of excellence as well as opportunities for improvement.

"It's an opportunity to pursue quality and quality processes," says Nowlan.

Accreditation of hospitals actually dates back as early as the First World War, when the American College of Surgeons established the first minimum standards for caregiving institutions. Those requirements filled just one page. Even then, only 89 of the 692 hospitals initially surveyed could meet the standard.

### It's an opportunity for a hospital to really get its community partners and staff involved in the process.

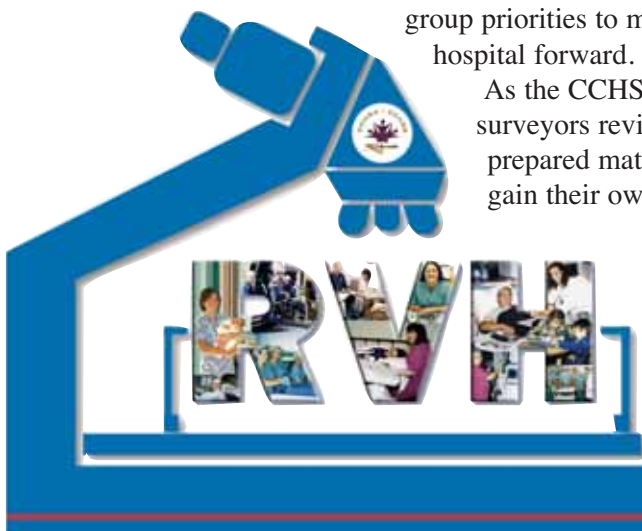
Today's efforts go well beyond meeting minimum health care standards. The emphasis is on client-centred care and continuous improvement.

At Renfrew Victoria Hospital, eight teams have been working for months to prepare for the accreditation survey. The teams involve people from various disciplines within the hospital, as well as volunteers and board members. The surveyors also meet with focus groups which include local residents not affiliated with the hospital, patients, and staff members who were not on the accreditation teams.

"It's very much a partnership," says Nowlan. "It's an opportunity for a hospital to really get its community partners and staff involved in the process."

The CCHSA is developing new initiatives to share resources among the various institutions it reviews. Last year, the council began publishing an annual accreditation report. This year's publication will provide samples of good practices from facilities across the country, with contact information to help others connect and learn.

"There are a lot of good practices that we're seeing out there, and we're really pleased to be able to share them," says Nowlan. "The goal is to facilitate quality improvement and to build on success."



# Why accreditation is important to you

The information age has given us a world of consumer reports, product reviews and informed buyers.

When it comes to something as important as health care, consumers should also be looking for quality control and independent review.

“You want to see that plaque on the wall,” RN Cindy McLennan says of health care accreditation.

“You want a hospital that meets that national standard, and when you’re looking at an accredited hospital you can rest assured that all the people there have contributed to that process. You can feel confident that the care you receive in that building meets the test.”

RVH Board Chair Kent Tubman says it’s important for the people served by the hospital to understand the role accreditation plays in bringing teams together to focus on continually improving their work at the hospital.

“I don’t think the public understands how complex hospital accreditation is, and how good a thing it really is,” Tubman says.

“A lot of people think of it as the hospitals’ version of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval or as a yardstick to measure what we do, and it is those things,” he says, “but it’s so much more.”

RVH’s accreditation teams have developed dozens of standards over the past year. Their work sets clear goals for a wide spectrum of programs and services - everything from how the overall strategic plan is developed and implemented to how medical research is managed and applied, and how specific treatments are delivered.

“It’s a very healthy process,” says CEO Randy Penney. “It takes an awful lot of energy and commitment, but it’s worth every bit that’s put into it.”

He notes that the team approach to accreditation assessments is especially valuable. Larger organizations might have administrative positions dedicated solely to staff education or program review, but in a hospital the size of RVH the responsibilities are shared throughout the staff.

“It’s a grassroots, multidisciplinary approach,” says Penney.

“It gives the people who are right there doing the job an opportunity to be totally involved, to see where the problems are and to find solutions,” adds RVH Trustee Gerry Richards.

“Ultimately, it’s the patients who benefit,” concludes Penney. “We have a huge number of people involved in our accreditation reviews and the surveys, and every single one of them has the opportunity to learn about best practices, to pick up new ideas, and to share their own thoughts about how RVH can build on our standards of excellence.”



**Active Care Team** - Left to right: Terry Mosco, Donna Keon, Sheila Havey, Karen Pritchard, Donna Reid, Janet Brookes, Maureen Magill, Sharon Welch, Paul Buchner, and Maureen Sly-Havey



**Dialysis Team** - Back row: Tania Scheuneman, Bonnie Nolan, Janice Verch-Whittington, Paul Buchner; front row: Geraldine Stroud, Cathy O'Donnell, Donna Reid, and Cheryl McDonald



**Emergency Team** - Back row: Dr. Max Buxton, Belinda Holmes, Kris Costello, Phil Crozier, Jim Legree, Shirley Pilgrim; front row: Joanne Gerrard, Gayle Anderson, Nancy Kelly, and Laura Culligan



**Environment Team** - Left to right: Maureen Sly-Havey, Chris Campbell, Sue Guyea, Cindy Walker, Doug Ewart, Barbara Scott, Julia Boudreau, Dianne Fortier, Pam Cranfield, Bob McParland, and Jim Legree

# Survey is a three-day immersion in RVH

When CCHSA surveyors Brenda Butters and Marianne Walker arrive at RVH, they will immediately be immersed in the culture and day-to-day workings of the hospital. From the minute they begin, their schedule involves back-to-back interviews, group discussions and tours. Here's how the visit is organized:

## Day One:

- 1:00 p.m. – Introductory meeting with senior management
- 1:30 p.m. – Tour of emergency department with interview of patients and review of health records
- 2:00 p.m. – Interview of emergency team
- 3:45 p.m. – Staff focus group led by one surveyor while second surveyor leads client focus group
- 4:45 p.m. – Daily review with RVH accreditation coordinator
- Evening – Surveyors meet to discuss findings

## Day Two:

- 8:00 a.m. – Interview of human resources team
- 9:15 a.m. – Interview of information management team
- 10:30 a.m. – Tour of lab, diagnostics and pharmacy
- 11:00 a.m. – Interview of environment team
- Noon – Surveyors' working lunch
- 1:00 p.m. – Tour of long-term care area with interview of patients and residents and review of health records
- 1:30 p.m. – Interview of long-term care team

- 3:15 p.m. – Community partners' focus group discussion
- 4:15 p.m. – Interview of leadership and partnership team
- Evening – Surveyors meet to discuss findings

## Day Three:

- 8:00 a.m. – Surveyors prepare for debriefing
- 10:30 a.m. – Debriefing of CEO Randy Penney
- 11:00 a.m. – General debriefing of accreditation participants.

Within 48 hours, the surveyors will have met with at least 100 people. The RVH accreditation teams will have provided them with dozens of standards that had been prepared and reviewed as a result of the self-assessment discussions. The surveyors will have been informed about the hospital's major accomplishments over the past three years, the current initiatives in both the clinical area and administration, and the challenges and goals RVH foresees in the next few years. They will have heard the reviews and insights of patients and people from the local community who are not directly connected to RVH.

"It's incredibly intense," says RVH Accreditation Coordinator Cindy McLennan. "The survey is our chance to put a personality to the documentation we've prepared, and bring out the best of RVH."

*The photos on these two pages show just some of the many people behind RVH's preparations for accreditation 2004.*



**Human Resources Team** - Left to right: Bernie Bailey, Mavis Johnston, Maureen Sly-Havey, Colette Layman, Roxanne Nolan, Heather Latendresse, Eileen Geddes, Julia Boudreau, Cindy McLennan, Janet Jones, Debbie Howes, and Suzette Fletcher



**Information Team** - Left to right: Paul Chatelain, Judi Gilmore, Sue McLaughlin, Maureen Sly-Havey, Marie Murray, Gladys Curry, Cindy McLennan, Jenny Gibbons, Peter Payton

## Quick facts...

- RVH has attained the highest possible accreditation rating in its last three surveys.
- RVH was one of only two small hospitals to receive a four-year accreditation award. Accreditation has since been limited to three-year review periods.
- RVH CEO Randy Penney has been a surveyor for the Canadian Council on Health Service Accreditation since 1991. He has visited hospitals throughout Canada as a surveyor and has travelled to other countries to share Canada's accreditation experience.



- The Canadian Council on Health Service Accreditation is recognized world-wide as the gold standard for health institution review. Many countries have turned to the CCHSA for guidance in developing their own independent accreditation councils.



**Long Term Care Team** - Back row: Sue Goldsmith, Maureen Sly-Havey, Connie Legg, Roxanne Nolan, Sheilah Gibbons; front row: Lynn Campbell, Sean Corrigan, Paul Buchner, and Paula Johnston

## A message from Renfrew Victoria's accreditation coordinator

When I graduated from nursing school 23 years ago, I was advised to ask about a hospital's accreditation status whenever I applied for a job. It's the best way to measure the quality and atmosphere of an institution.

Participating in accreditation tells the world that we've made a commitment to excellence, and that our roles within your hospital are more than just jobs. We're here because we're dedicated to providing Renfrew with the best possible health care we can give.

What I love most about accreditation is that the standards are the same throughout this huge country. It doesn't matter whether we're practising in a mega urban teaching institution or down at the end of Raglan Street in our very own Renfrew Victoria Hospital. You can expect the same standard of care, or better, than anyone else in Canada will receive.

The proof is in the dedication of the people with whom I work every single day. It's at the bedside, in the way our hospital is maintained, in the attitude of the people we meet in the halls... And I'm privileged to see it in the work of each of our accreditation review teams.

I can't count the lunch hours that have been sacrificed for these committees. Or the reports that have been taken home for

study and review. Or the animated discussions that have taken place. Or all the other "extras" that go into making accreditation work.

What I can tell you is that we've all worked together.

We've gained a wealth of experience. We've had many opportunities to reflect on the care we provide. We've engaged in rich dialogue about how we can get better. And we've developed new ideas to take us full-steam into the future.

Even the best centre of excellence can find ways to do things better, and that's what we're continually striving to do.

People from outside the hospital also play an important role in accreditation. Patients, staff members and others are asked to participate in focus groups that meet with the accreditation surveyors. Their opinions and their comments count, and that's a value-added part of the accreditation process.

As I write this message, we have not yet received the results of RVH's current accreditation review. But even without our surveyors' report, I can tell you that we've come out winners.

Accreditation lets us all shine.

**Cindy McLennan**  
RVH Accreditation Coordinator

## Remembering a key hospital supporter

Renfrew Victoria Hospital pays tribute to Earl Lindsay, a community leader and hospital supporter.

Lindsay, 80, died at Bonnechere Manor in September, after a life marked by countless contributions and achievements for Renfrew.

He served on the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Board of Trustees from 1956 to 1980, chairing the board in 1964 and 1965.

Former CEO Russ MacKenzie remembers Lindsay as a key player in turning around the fortunes of the hospital. RVH was experiencing severe financial problems when Mr. Lindsay, an MBA graduate from Harvard University, was appointed to the board.

Lindsay led the way in the ensuing restructuring efforts.

"It didn't take us long to recognize his intellect and his abilities after he was appointed to the board," recalls MacKenzie.

"Earl had many talents. He had the ability to gather people and hold them together. He was a very strong member of our board."

"He played a key role in our endeavour to maintain the school of nursing in Renfrew," MacKenzie adds.

The Victoria Hospital School of Nursing had opened in 1900 with a capacity of 30 students, graduating 10 students per year. As nursing education moved under the jurisdiction of community colleges, the school was subsequently closed in 1965. At the time of its closure, Renfrew Victoria was told it was the last small nursing school in existence in Ontario.

While he participated on most of the hospital board committees during his tenure as a trustee, Lindsay preferred finance, where he spent many, many years.

He was also actively involved in planning and overseeing the hospital's major building and renovation project from 1960 to 1963, which saw RVH grow to include 100 active treatment beds. The hospital's new status as a district institution, providing care for a catchment area of 30,000 people, was declared at the official opening in 1963.

Lindsay's influence also served the hospital well in the broader political spectrum. He was a lifelong Liberal who was active at both the federal and provincial levels.

Lindsay's dedication to health care included provincial involvement as a member of the Ontario Hospital Association, where he served for six years.

At home, Lindsay's community involvement had a profound effect on many aspects of life in Renfrew.

He was a founding member of the Industrial Commission and Board of Trade, for example.

"Earl was a very civic-minded person, and we were privileged that he had a great deal of empathy and support for our hospital," says Mackenzie.

"He's gone now, but the things he's done for this community will be around for a long time."



## Talk it up Victoria - the Renfrew Victoria Hospital newsletter

Renfrew Victoria Hospital, 499 Raglan St. North, Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6 • [www.renfrewhosp.com](http://www.renfrewhosp.com)

# CARING *for* TOMORROW

## News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the various ways you can contribute to Renfrew Victoria Hospital, please contact us: Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation, 499 Raglan Street North, Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6  
Phone: (613) 432-4851, ext. 263



## The many contributions of the RVH auxiliary

Bring 30 people together with a common cause, give their enthusiasm and energy free reign, and watch what develops.

In the case of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital auxiliary, the results are a longstanding and dedicated organization that serves as the single largest contributor to the hospital and its fund-raising foundation.

Over the past 15 years alone, the auxiliary has raised more than half a million dollars for capital expenditures at RVH.

"Isn't that incredible?," asks Barbara Symington, the foundation's director of development. "They are a very dedicated and committed group of volunteers who have a knack for raising thousands of dollars," she adds.

The auxiliary is made up of between 25 and 30 active members. Together, they raise at least \$40,000 each year for RVH. Fund-raising centres on break-open lottery sales at Aikenheads Drug Store in Renfrew, and management of the hospital gift shop. Other activities include marathon bridge throughout the winter months, sale of Christmas tourtières, and a rootbeer float booth at the annual summer festival. Special concerts, fashion shows, bake sales and

an annual raffle are also among the auxiliary's activities.

In addition to its fund-raising success, the group also volunteers where needed in the hospital, particularly in the ambulatory care clinics and the women's health centre. They also provide financial and volunteer assistance to the continuing care floor.

"It's a very busy group," says Symington. "We are extremely grateful for all of the contributions the auxiliary makes to the hospital."

"There's a pride in the hospital and that's why people continue to give of their time and efforts," says Auxiliary President Christine McNaughton.

The auxiliary has been active throughout RVH's history. The past-president traditionally serves on the

hospital's board of trustees, while the president is a member of the foundation board. Members of the group also network with other auxiliary representatives at two regional conferences and the provincial conference each year.

The auxiliary builds on its history of success with an eye to the future. Each year, two \$500 bursaries are provided to students, one from Renfrew Collegiate Institute and the other from St. Joseph's High School, who plan to pursue further education in the health care field.

*Anyone interested in becoming a member or learning more about the RVH auxiliary is invited to contact President Christine McNaughton at 433-9103.*

**Members of the RVH auxiliary executive include, from left, Betty Steele, Doris Handford, Joan Hilliard, Jean Sills, Beverly Welsh, Lorraine Finn, Lynda Plumb, Christine McNaughton, Eileen Richardson and Janet Osborne.**



*We at Renfrew Victoria Hospital would like to take this opportunity to extend Christmas greetings to all.*

*We wish you health and happiness in 2005, and we offer our sincere gratitude for all of the support and encouragement we receive throughout the year.*



**Season's  
greetings!**

## Please join in the Tree of Lights celebration

The Christmas season is here, and RVH will be at the heart of the town on Wednesday (December 15) for the annual Tree of Lights celebration.

Everyone is invited to join in the gathering, carolling, and spirit of the season. The event begins at 7:00 p.m. in Low Square in front of Renfrew Town Hall.

The Tree of Lights is illuminated each year through donations made in honour or memory of others. It is symbolic of the community spirit that enriches Renfrew and RVH throughout the year.

The Tree of Lights also serves as a focal point for the hospital foundation's largest annual fund-raising campaign.

"The great thing about Tree of Lights is that it gives us this opportunity each year to communicate with the people of the region, to share our greetings for the season as well as our gratitude for their support," says RVH Foundation Chair Jim Lemenchick.

More than \$500,000 has been raised since the celebration was first introduced to the Renfrew community in 1991.

"It's been extraordinarily successful," says Lemenchick. "We're continually amazed by the support of this community."

The funds have paid for a variety of new equipment at RVH over the years, including an electrocardiograph machine and cardiac monitoring equipment for the special care unit. This year, new equipment will be purchased for the obstetrics department.

Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the 2004 Tree of Lights campaign is invited to contact the RVH Foundation office at 432-4851, ext. 263.

**Rev. Walter von Boetticher created this Christmas image of RVH for the 2004 Tree of Lights campaign.**



## Eileen Richardson – A foundation profile

"I just love Renfrew Victoria Hospital."

Eileen Richardson's motivation is that simple.

Since 1989, she has actively shown her support for local health care, first as a member of the hospital auxiliary and later as a director of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation.

Eileen retired from teaching in 1995 and as she left the classrooms of Queen Elizabeth Public School behind, she knew she needed to spend time in a different venue.

She traded school halls for hospital halls, and has been keeping step with the Renfrew Victoria team ever since.

"It's very uplifting to be part of a community that's so involved," she says. "I'm very happy to see how successful our local hospital can be."

Eileen's involvement has taken a variety of forms. As a member of the foundation, she's helped to promote

fundraising efforts such as the annual local golf tournaments, and to recognize the community's contributions through the planning of the new donor recognition wall.

Her specialty, however, involves a gooey, sticky concoction that has become an annual favourite for visitors to Renfrew's annual Valley Fest. Eileen is the mastermind behind and organizer of the root beer float sales conducted by the auxiliary at the summer festival each year.

"It's a very sticky job," she says with a chuckle, "but it's a great community thing, too."

Each year, she and her team at the booth sell about \$500 worth of root beer, ice cream, whipped cream and cherries. With the supplies provided by Briscoe's Loeb, the money can go directly to hospital programs.

"It's all very rewarding," Eileen concludes. "I have many friends at the

hospital, and it's great to have an opportunity to work with them. The camaraderie is just remarkable."

