



As your community teaching hospital, it is important that our health care professionals learn about each other and train together. We also teach students who are coming into the hospital setting the same way. By learning together as teams it helps us shape the way we care for and with our patients. At St. Joseph's Health Centre, we call this "learning with, from and about each other."

This week we are celebrating Interprofessional Education and Collaboration because teamwork is crucial to the success of a community hospital. It increases communication between our

caregivers and our patients, and reduces duplication and errors - this gives you safer care. Working together as teams also leads to improved quality of care, better outcomes and ultimately an improved patient experience for you.

So why do we feel it is important to share these stories in this special insert with our community? Because all of this learning and teamwork is what makes us successful at Putting our Patients First ... putting you first by providing you and your family with safe, quality, patient-centred care.

## Interpreting patient-centred care at your community hospital

Colleen Friel is one of two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at St. Joe's who helps our staff and patients Deaf or hard of hearing communicate with each other. ASL interpreters are a key part of our health team. By a wide range of health care professionals working together as teams to care for our patients, we are able to provide safe, quality, patient-centred care.

"I am interpreting both what the doctor and clinicians would like to convey but also the concerns of the patients," said Friel. "It (the interaction) can be anything from a new diagnosis to an update on the condition."

When our ASL interpreters are not available, we use the services of the Canadian Hearing Society's interpreters. Sometimes our ASL interpreters will work with Deaf interpreters, who themselves are deaf, in order to provide a better quality interpretation of patient's wishes, explains Friel. For example, if a Deaf patient has mental health issues, English is not their first language, or they have a medical condition that may make it harder to understand what they are communicating, Friel will request a Deaf interpreter to work along side her.

"A lot of the grammar, language and feeling is in the body and face - it's not in the signs. As a second language (sign) user, I may not be able to catch that as clearly as a Deaf person who is native to the (sign) language would," she said. Friel will also request a pre and post debrief with doctors and clinicians to make sure she has interpreted all of the vital information.

The ASL interpretation service helps the Health Centre build genuine partnerships with Deaf patients and their families so they can be involved in planning, delivering and developing a health care plan tailored to their specific needs.

Friel's interest in ASL interpreting started at age three. As a teenager, she took evening courses and completed a co-op placement in ASL interpreting. Then she completed four years of interpreter training in college plus has taken workshops in medical interpreting.

She has been an ASL interpreter for 14 years and has been working at St. Joseph's since this spring. "Every communication in the world is important. But when it comes to health and making sure the patient is capable of being able to care for themselves and has the right education to do that, (understanding this information) could be vital to their life."



From top right: Colleen Friel is signing: You, Me, Collaborating, Together which translates into Us Collaborating Together.

## The Best students can make for the Best health care providers

St. Joseph's strives to create the best student experience, so it is a great reward when a student chooses our hospital for employment following a positive placement.

Amber Lynch did her internship in our Mental Health and Addictions program specifically with the short-stay, adult inpatient psychiatric treatment unit. Shortly after she finished her placement, Lynch was offered a position as a crisis worker. "I jumped at the chance. I was extremely lucky," she said. Lynch works in a unit next to our Emergency Department where she screens patients with a range of mental health issues to see if they need to be referred to a psychiatrist and admitted as an inpatient.

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## Communicating in real time: learning and sharing as teams

Carole Freeman had pain for a decade before having her right shoulder replaced at St. Joseph's. She credits the teamwork of her surgeon Dr. Amr ElMaraghy and physiotherapist Kinny Quan Velanoski for her excellent recovery. Our clinicians work together as teams so they can share their expertise from their diverse backgrounds and make decisions together with the patient and their family involved every step of the way.

Both Quan Velanoski and Dr. ElMaraghy collaborated with Freeman on what the best care plan would be so she could achieve the best results after her shoulder replacement.

When Freeman was in the hospital, a physiotherapist visited her the day after surgery to tell her what she could do once discharged from St. Joseph's to get started on recovery at home. For several months Freeman continued to come back to us for follow-up physiotherapy appointments.

Dr. ElMaraghy gave her a multi-paged handout of exercises, stretches and a descrip-



*From right:  
Kinny Quan Velanoski,  
Carole Freeman and  
Dr. Amr ElMaraghy*

tion of how she should progress with her physiotherapy post-surgery. While she was great with the stretching routines, she had trouble at first mastering the physiotherapy strengthening exercises. So physiotherapist Quan Velanoski came with her to two appointments with Dr. ElMaraghy, who explained he put Freeman's prosthetic shoulder in at an angle and suggested that she hold off on strengthening for a few weeks.

The interprofessional team worked with Freeman to modify her care plan, which resulted in a successful recovery. "I don't think that would have happened if they weren't in the same hospital," said Freeman. "It makes

a difference if the physiotherapist is in the hospital working (and talking) with the surgeon. In my case it proved (collaboration) worked."

This is a great example of how teamwork and communication are key in providing patient-centred care. "I am learning from him and Dr. ElMaraghy is learning from me. You feel you are part of a team," said Quan Velanoski.

Dr. ElMaraghy agrees. "I can give Quan Velanoski the heads up on what to expect (for the patient). That's crucial to optimize every individual result," he said. "Communication at St. Joe's is in real time."

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"We can also refer them as an outpatient to other units at St. Joe's and (to services) in the community," she said.

"(My placement) was amazing preparation for the position I am in now." Lynch's student experience included reading reports written by crisis workers who assessed the patients that she helped. Reading those reports taught her what vital information to include now that she's a crisis worker assessing patients and writing reports.

Treating mental health patients often involves an interprofessional team that she's now a part of including social workers, psychiatrists, child and youth workers, emergency room doctors and nurses.

Michael Gowland, a social worker, was Lynch's mentor and preceptor during her internship. "Ninety per cent of this job is about attitude and helping the team do their best," said Gowland, who has been a preceptor for four years. "Having a student like Lynch who can do (patient) referral forms or co-ordinate family meetings or observe hand hygiene audits is invaluable." Having a preceptor to guide students is one step to-

wards achieving our Vision to be Canada's Best Community Teaching Hospital. "It helps the next generation to have the opportunity to work in a busy hospital," he said. Having students as part of an interprofessional team also benefits patients.

"Patients always respond well to students," he said. "Lynch was very down to earth and able to relate (well) to patients. A big reason why Lynch was so well thought of by patients was her willingness to listen to them and not only learn more about them but also to give them a chance to talk as well. A lot of our patients may not have anybody in their lives that they can talk with and having someone listen without judging means a lot to them."

Lynch said her schooling trained her on social work theories, but her placement at St. Joseph's allowed her to implement best practices for helping patients with complex needs.

"I had a background in social work but no experience in hospital systems," she said. "The (patient) interview skills I use now – there is no classroom training for that."



*Michael Gowland and Amber Lynch*

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