

LOOKING BACK AT 2005 ...WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN

This has been both a busy and an exciting year for all of us here within the Vancouver Island Health Authority. As the year draws to a close, it is timely to take a few moments to reflect on our journey in the delivery of the best possible quality and service to our patients and clients.

It is now just over a year since I joined VIHA, which was at that time still a relatively new organization. One year on, I continue to be impressed with the care and service we deliver each and every day, in all of our communities - up, down and across the Island. Despite the unique challenges we face, our achievements in 2005, both tangible and intangible, give me continued optimism as we head into a new year.

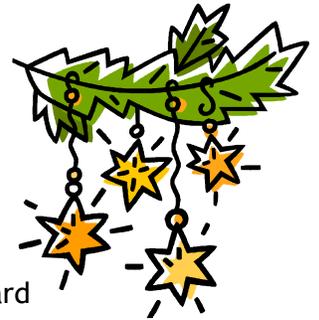
I also want to take this opportunity to say a huge thanks to all our staff and partners for their continued commitment and dedication. During the year, our organization receives many communications from our patients and communities. Some are suggestions or complaints. The vast majority, however, are compliments and letters or messages of thanks and appreciation for the work that you do. Each one of you should be proud of the quality of care and service we collectively provide to the residents of these Islands and neighbouring mainland communities.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the families and loved ones supporting us. They are the unseen - and sometimes unsung - heroes who help our employees devote long hours and incredible energy to the responsibility of caring for our patients, residents and clients.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the senior leadership team, let me extend the warmest season's greetings to you and your family. Your dedication and hard work is greatly appreciated.

Here's wishing you all a safe and memorable Christmas season and a very happy New Year.

Howard Waldner
President & Chief Executive Office ▲



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THREE VIHA PROFESSIONALS HONORED WITH PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

Cowichan radiologist **Dr. Giles Stevenson**, Victoria family physician **Dr. Art Macgregor** and Victoria-based Clinical Nurse Educator **Dorothy Morris** were all selected this fall for special honours from national and international organizations in recognition of their outstanding contributions in their respective fields of health care.

“To be singled out at this level by their peers attests to the excellence and dedications of these individuals,” said **Dr. Glen Lowther**, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for VIHA. “We should be very proud that many of the best and the brightest in health care work right here with us.”

Dr. Giles Stevenson has been awarded the Walter B. Cannon Medal by the Society of Gastrointestinal Radiologists. The international award is given to honor an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of medical imaging, particularly towards the understanding of the gastrointestinal tract and abdomen.

“Giles is known and respected around the world, both for the depth and breadth of his knowledge, and for decades of contribution to the science of medical imaging. Not only that, he is one of the genuinely nicest people I have ever met,” says **Dr. John Mathieson**, head, section of Radiology, South Island.

Dr. Stevenson, 66, was born and educated in England, graduating with his medical degree from Oxford in 1963. He settled permanently in Canada in 1975, spending the bulk of his career in Hamilton Ontario working out of McMaster University. He moved to Vancouver Island in 2000, settling in the Cowichan Valley. He now works three days a week as a general radiologist at the Cowichan Regional Hospital.

“He is a great critical thinker, extremely innovative, and has written some of the best papers in the field,” said Mathieson. “I am sure that most people in the Cowichan Valley have no idea that such a distinguished man lives in their neighborhood.”

The award will be presented to him at a combined meeting of the SGR and the ESGAR in Crete next June.



Dr. Art Macgregor has received the Charles H. Best Award from the Canadian Diabetes Association for his leadership and contributions to improving the care of people with diabetes.

Dr. Macgregor, a Victoria family doctor for almost 45 years, is the medical lead for the VIHA South Chronic Disease Management Program, a ground-breaking project that has some 65 family physicians working together to promote proactive, timely care for people with chronic disease like diabetes.

“His vision and determination has provided vital leadership for improving primary care for people with diabetes,” said **Genie Wright**, Regional Director, Vancouver Island, of the Canadian Diabetes Association who nominated him for the award.

More than 3,300 patients with diabetes are involved in the program that Dr. Macgregor leads. The program uses the principles of good chronic disease management - adherence to best practices, patient registries and recalls for tests and monitoring, patient flow sheets, evaluation of the group’s performance compared to standards and other techniques - to better manager the complex care for diabetes and reduce the incidence of complications from the disease.

Dr. Macgregor, who was previously selected 2003 Family Physician of the Year, received the award in November from the CDA. The project he leads was also the recipient of the Canadian College of Health Services Quality (3M) Award in 2004.

Dorothy Morris, a Clinical Nurse Educator for Cardiac and Vascular Surgery at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, has received the national award for Clinical Cardiovascular Nursing Excellence.

The award, which is given by the Canadian Association of Cardiovascular Nursing, recognizes Morris fro her outstanding clinical contributions in cardiovascular nursing.

Cont...

Prestigious Award Winners Cont...

"She is a phenomenal educator who goes above and beyond with her dedication, her creativity and her devotion to excellence," says **Patti Wesley**, a Clinical Nurse Educator who nominated Morris for the award, particularly for Morris's work spearheading the delirium watch program.

Morris was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Delirium Watch and Management Protocol for cardiac patients. This protocol improves outcomes for older adults who experience delirium. "She integrated all the facets of elder-friendly patient care into the cardiac program," said Wesley.

Morris, who along with her nursing diploma and BScN degree also has a Masters in Educational Psychology, received the award at the recent Canadian Cardiovascular Congress held in Montreal. Morris, who also teaches nursing at Camosun College, has been an educator in cardiac and vascular surgery since 1986. This year she also won the RNABC Award for Excellence in Nursing Education. ▲



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

December 5th has been declared International Volunteer Day and is recognized by the United Nations as a day on which volunteers around the world are recognized and celebrated for their contributions and dedication.

Recognizing the vital role volunteers play in supporting high quality health care delivery throughout the health authority and in enriching our communities, on an annual basis VIHA participates in the celebration of Canadian Volunteer Week in April.

In recognition of the significant contribution of our volunteers, the Board of Directors took the opportunity to unanimously endorse the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement's "Values for Volunteer Involvement" and "Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement" at their public board meeting in Parksville on November 30, 2005.

For more information about the code visit www.volunteer.ca. ▲

WHAT'S THE NEXT BEST THING TO ACTUALLY WINNING THE STANLEY CUP?...

Mason, a Victoria General Hospital pediatric patient, and avid hockey fan, got closer to the Stanley Cup than most people ever dream of.

The Cup, hosted by the Victoria Salmon Kings hockey club, visited pediatric patients during a whirlwind visit to Victoria on December 2, 2005.

VGH Pediatrics is busy this time of year, with visits from Alice in Wonderland (Ballet Victoria), Santa (Victoria Police) and the Salmon Kings hockey players.

The bowl that currently sits atop the Stanley Cup is a carefully constructed replica of the original, purchased by Lord Stanley in 1893. The original trophy was retired in 1969 because it became brittle, but can still be viewed at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. ▲

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NURSES OFFER HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

In Canada, there are approximately 2 million unintentional injuries reported per year. Here are some tips and reminders from the Emergency Nurses Association's Injury Prevention Institute/EN CARE, and the National Safety Council to keep you and your family out of the hospital this holiday season.

At Home:

Don't leave burning candles unattended. Keep them away from trees, greenery, curtains, and other flammable items.

Shoveling snow increases your heart rate and blood pressure, so warm up first with some stretches, pace yourself, and make sure you lift with your legs and not your back.

On the Road:

Prepare your car for winter. Check all systems as well as tires, battery and fluid levels. Be prepared for road emergencies with a properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and jack.

When going on a long trip, try to share the drive to avoid fatigue, and make frequent stops to stretch your legs and maintain healthy blood flow.

Have a winter survival kit in your trunk, when in areas where you could potentially be stranded.

Buckle up - every trip, every time. Be sure all children age 12 and under are appropriately restrained.

Distracted driving is a factor in 20-30% of all crashes. Eating, cell phones or something as simple as tuning your radio can cause a crash.

In Your Community:

At holiday parties, put the emphasis on food, fun and conversation, rather than alcohol. Supply plenty of non-alcoholic beverages.

Be sure to have a designated driver in your group, or if alone, take a taxi or arrange for a ride beforehand.

If you're the parent of a party-going teen, contact the host's parents to make sure a parent will be present, and no alcohol or drugs will be permitted.

Discuss with your teen how to get home safely. Form a contract stating you or a trusted friend can be called at any time for a ride home, no questions asked.

Talk with your teen about developing strategies for saying "No", in preparation for an unexpected situation, such as unwanted sexual attention, pressure to use drugs or alcohol, or to get in a vehicle with an impaired driver.

More safety tips can be found at www.ena.org ▲

MULTIMEDIA SERVICES INFORMATION

Multimedia Services is pleased to announce the appointment of Emmanuel (Manu) Ronse as Team Leader, the appointment of Amanda Insley as Video Conferencing Consultant, as well as the opening of a new office at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital. This office is staffed by Ken Smith.

You can reach Multimedia Services in the following ways:

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Ph: 370-8204
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VGH

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Room Bookings

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Video Conferencing

Ph: 370-8934
E: VideoConferencing.VIHA@viha.ca

With these changes, MultiMedia Services is putting the focus on using digital tools to serve all of our clients at all VIHA sites. Happy Holidays! ▲



A CARDIAC PIONEER - LOOKING BACK ON A 32 YEAR CAREER

In 1973, when Dr. Richard Brownlee set up Vancouver Island's first open heart surgery program, the Watergate scandal was in full swing, "The Sting" was playing in movie theatres and cardiac surgery was the new, risky frontier of medicine.

The last 32 years have seen tremendous changes both in the world and in the discipline of cardiac surgery and cardiac health, but thanks to the foresight of Dr. Brownlee in designing the program, say his colleagues, VIHA's cardiac program is still on the cutting edge.

"He has been both a pioneer and a tremendous visionary and that visionary component has stood the test of time," notes Dr. James Dutton, medical director of the VIHA Heart Health Program.

Dr. Brownlee, now 66, is still going strong, too. He has performed more than 3,200 open-heart surgery cases, including the first and the 15,000th in the program.

"It has been a fascinating and rewarding career," notes Brownlee who doesn't do open heart surgery anymore yet still remains active in surgery.

Dr. Brownlee was born and educated in Edmonton and entered university at age 16, graduating with a medical degree from the University of Alberta in 1963 at the age of 22. "I owe a huge debt to the University of Alberta that allowed a kid from the north end with no money and no family connections to rise through the system as I was allowed to do," he said. Although he wasn't sure at first that he wanted to be a surgeon, his instructors noted his skill and directed him that way.

"Cardiac surgery became attractive to me because it was a very new and a very risky field that was rapidly advancing in the 1960s," recalls Brownlee.

In 1969 Dr. Brownlee traveled to Sweden, Switzerland and England to learn from surgeons in those countries. He did a year of research on heart and lung transplants when the procedures were in their very early stages and watched the very first heart transplants done at the Texas Heart Institute.

Brownlee returned to Edmonton in 1970 where he taught and performed surgery until a fateful call came one day in 1972 from Victoria. At that time all patients needing cardiac surgery in Victoria and on Vancouver Island had to travel to Vancouver. The BC government had responded to public demand and approved a new cardiac surgery program in Victoria. Dr. Brownlee was asked to set up and run the program.

"I realized that I would never get another opportunity to set up an open heart surgery program so I jumped at the chance. "The one big problem I saw was the lack of a University or academic affiliation. At that time all cardiac surgery departments had big infrastructure support and major research components." said Brownlee who came out at the end of 1972 to work on the program.

Cardiac surgery was so avant garde at the time that the Times Colonist ran a little box on the front page every day tracking the progress of the patients who had undergone the surgery. "There was huge public interest and very high expectations," said Brownlee.

Perhaps Dr. Brownlee's greatest contribution, however, was ensuring that a cardiac research lab was closely associated with the program, making it a condition of acceptance for the job. The Ministry of Health agreed, paying the capital costs of the new lab while the operating cost was the responsibility of the lab itself. The Cardiac Development Laboratory, located at Queen Alexandra Hospital, is still conducting groundbreaking research and has paid for itself almost since its creation. It is particularly noted for its innovative work in prosthetic heart valves, for which Dr. Brownlee and three colleagues hold two patents. The lab has sold services and equipment to institutions such as Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins, the Mayo Clinic, UCLA and all the major valve manufacturing companies.

Along with cardiac surgery Brownlee has another consuming passion: photography. Although he has never had a lesson, his eye is so good that his photographic essays grace the wall of the RJH Diagnosis and Treatment Centre.

His friends and colleagues at VIHA thank Dr. Brownlee for his tremendous contributions and wish him good luck in his future endeavors. ▲

VIHA TO PARTICIPATE IN PROVINCIAL ER PROTOCOL FOR ACUTE ASTHMA

Asthma is a chronic condition resulting in the narrowing of the air passages in the lungs. Swelling (inflammation) is the main problem that determines how severe the asthma is. Spasm of the airway muscles and more mucus result from increasing sensitivity of the airway as the swelling worsens. The most common symptoms are cough, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness. Symptoms may come and go or be with a person all the time. Asthma is a controllable disorder and for many people, it should not interfere with daily activities.

VIHA is one of 92 emergency departments/urgent care centres across BC that are taking part in a provincial initiative to implement guidelines for the treatment of acute asthma. This initiative is aimed at improving patient care by providing an easy-to-use process that will allow EDs to incorporate the latest clinical protocols into day-to-day practice. The acute asthma protocol was chosen after consultation with emergency physicians about which protocols will provide the greatest opportunity for improvements in patient care.

WHAT IS PORPHYRIA?

Porphyria is not a single disease, but is at least eight different varieties. It is the result of an accumulation of porphyrins in the body caused by an enzyme deficiency that occurs due to a genetic defect. Porphyrins are normal body chemicals necessary in the production of heme, which goes on to make hemoglobin.

Porphyria is a hereditary disease, but also can be acquired after exposure to toxic chemicals. Symptoms of porphyria may include extreme sun-sensitivity, abdominal pain, nausea/vomiting, muscle pain and weakness, psychosis, hallucinations, seizures, limb and respiratory paralysis.

Generally, the porphyrias are divided into two categories: acute and sun-sensitive. However, you can have an acute porphyria and be sun-sensitive.

In the case of sun-sensitive porphyria the ultraviolet rays of the sun initiates the onset of the symptoms. In mild cases sun can be tolerated for short periods of time with a stinging or a burning skin sensation. In more extreme cases the sun cannot be tolerated at all without painful blistering and scarring. This not only refers to sunlight, but florescent lights and lights from operating rooms.

For more info, call the Canadian Porphyria Foundation at 1-866-476-2801 or visit us at www.cpf-inc.ca. ▲

“Protocols are based on standards and accepted practice guidelines for handling various conditions. While protocols are being published for ED clinical conditions at an increasing rate, there is no standardized effective process in BC to screen, review and adopt these into practice,” says **Brenda Uhryuk**, Director of Emergency Services & Trauma Care and the



VIHA lead for this project. The ED Protocol Initiative addresses the gap in asthma care by providing a protocol-specific toolkit containing educational and clinical resources for emergency department practitioners.

After an initial pilot of the protocol at six sites across the province in the Spring of 2005 (NRGH participated as the VIHA site), the provincial working group evaluated the results and made revisions made to improve patient care processes. The protocol is now being implemented throughout BC, with March 31, 2006 the target date for completion of the roll out.

Dr. William Cunningham, an Emergency Physician at Cowichan District Hospital and **Diane Maitland**, Manager of Emergency and ICU at NRGH and CDH are VIHA’s representatives on the provincial working group.

Sandy Wheeler, an Emergency RN at the Royal Jubilee and Victoria General Hospitals will be leading the protocol implementation at the RJH, VGH, SPH and Lady Minto Hospital sites and **Garfield Harvey**, a Respiratory Therapist at NRGH will be the lead for all other VIHA sites. ▲

OUTPOST HOSPITALS WELCOMED TO VIHA FAMILY

At Midnight on December 15, the two Outpost Hospitals on Vancouver Island in Bamfield and Kuyquot became part of the VIHA extended family.

Outpost hospitals, which are one- or two-person nurse stations supported by regular visits from physicians, provide primary health care and limited emergency services to residents in rural and remote communities. The Bamfield and Kuyquot hospitals were two of six facilities in BC transferred from the Provincial Health Services Authority to the regional health authorities.

“Welcome to VIHA,” said **Alison Cutler**, VIHA’s Executive Director responsible for rural medicine. “These hospitals provide important health care services in Bamfield and Kuyquot, and VIHA looks forward to working with local staff and the two communities as we continue to deliver and improve health care services.”

The Bamfield and Kuyquot facilities have a long and proud history serving their communities. Outpost hospitals have been administered by the Canadian Red Cross Society since the 1920’s, but as that organization’s mandate changed, its involvement in outpost hospitals gradually devolved. The six outpost hospitals in BC were the last in Canada administered by the Red Cross, and by early 2005, the decision was made to turn these facilities over to provincial and local health care jurisdiction.

“VIHA is confident the transfer will benefit local residents and patients by allowing health care services in Bamfield and Kuyquot to be *more closely* aligned with our broader health care services and community programs,” said **Bob Burns**, Executive Medical Director responsible for rural medicine. “VIHA is committed to ensuring residents in Bamfield and Kuyquot continue to access care through their local outpost hospital.”

The transfer date was selected with the outpost hospital staff in mind to make the transition as seamless as possible. ▲

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN DRAW WINNERS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2005 United Way Campaign. Over \$200,000 was donated by VIHA employees. Because of your generosity, one in three people in every community will benefit.

Everyone who contributed was eligible to win one of three Digital Cameras. The winners are:

- **Elaine Webb**, RN, CAR/ICU - 4 East, RJH
- **Shelley Butler**, Technologist, Nuclear Medicine - VGH
- **Nicki Skadding**, Food Service Worker - Patient Food, NRGH



CONNECTIONS^{VI} RIP...

This will be the final issue of Connections^{VI}. Watch for the new staff newsletter, titled **CURRENTS**, coming to you in January 2006. Fresh, fun and informative will be the mandate of **CURRENTS**, and in response to many staff requests, we will also be providing printed copies to facilities once again.

We look forward to your feedback on the new newsletter in 2006. Cheers!