



**Bermuda Hospitals Board**

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

# PULSE

**B E R M U D A H O S P I T A L S B O A R D**

Newsletter to the Community

## **DEDICATED TO DIALYSIS**

## **A Portrait of Doctors at the Dialysis Unit and Patients they Serve**

Dr. Wendy Outerbridge is a young, bright, enthusiastic Bermudian doctor who is passionate about her work. Director of the Dr. Beresford Swan Dialysis Unit at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital (KEMH), she specialized in internal medicine with a concentration in kidney disease before returning to Bermuda in 2003.

Working with a static population is one of the main reasons she chose this field of study. "Building relationships with patients and their families makes my job meaningful," Dr. Outerbridge said. "I see the same patients weekly. I get to meet their children and grandchildren. I know when their spirits are down and how to offer a word of encouragement to cheer them up." This opportunity to know and follow the same patients attracted Dr. Outerbridge to study dialysis.

"During my medical studies, I needed to undertake an eight-week rotation. I wanted to do this in Bermuda and Dr. Swan invited me to consider the dialysis unit," she said. "Because dialysis patients are seen at the unit at least three times each week, 52 weeks every year, it is essential that patients work with a physician who remains in Bermuda. Dr. Swan knew how important it was to encourage Bermudian physicians to work with dialysis patients," said Dr. Outerbridge. "I see how much our patients appreciate knowing I am not going anywhere."

There are approximately 80 patients who are treated at the unit each week. This number has increased over the years. In 2004, the unit provided 14,129 hemodialysis treatments, a life-sustaining therapy that removes impurities from the blood.

Served by a dedicated team of 15 nurses and five support staff in a caring and warm environment, patients spend three or four hours at the unit during each session.

"We are better at diagnosing patients earlier and offering them treatment before they reach end-stage renal failure," said Dr. Outerbridge. "In the past, many people went without care and simply passed away from kidney disease. Better medical care for all Bermudians has resulted in more patients receiving the benefits of dialysis," she said.

In an effort to make clients as comfortable as possible, individual television sets are located at all 16 patient stations in the dialysis unit. Hot drinks are also provided and birthdays are always celebrated. An education programme is in place for clients just entering treatment.

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*Drs. Wendy Outerbridge and Donna Mendes, along with Clinical Coordinator, Jill Caines, attend to a dialysis patient*

## **KEMH MATERNITY WARD Offers Quality Care and Flexible Options**

The maternity ward is a very busy place. Last year, 825 babies were delivered at the hospital by five obstetricians and a team of midwives. While physicians and nursing staff at the hospital place patient safety as a top priority, accommodating individual requests from expectant parents is also important.

Dr. Ian Fulton, Chief of Obstetrics, explains that mothers in Bermuda are fortunate to have access to excellent medical care, skilled and experienced obstetricians and choices on how they want their labour and delivery to be handled. "KEMH has a liberal policy with regards to a woman's wishes for labour and delivery," says Dr. Fulton. "The care provided on the maternity ward is of the highest standard. We are also truly fortunate that in the event of complications, we have access to world class centres such as Brigham and Women's Hospital, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children and Johns Hopkins Medical Centre."

In April 2005, a weekend on-call system was instituted for physicians, improving patient safety by ensuring an obstetrician is immediately

available on Saturdays and Sundays. It also eliminated pressure on doctors who would otherwise be on call 24/7.

The maternity ward staff is comprised of 20 full and part-time registered nurses who are all certified midwives. In addition, there are 13 registered nurses who have completed courses in neonatal intensive care nursing. Midwives work with women before, during and after labour and delivery. While physicians actually deliver babies, midwives provide care throughout the entire process. Roxanne Kipps-Jackson, Programme Manager for maternity, explains that the role of the midwife is to assist mothers from the moment they are admitted to the ward until they are discharged. This includes support in baby care, assistance with breastfeeding and providing emotional support for mothers who are sometimes feeling overwhelmed.

***Despite the fact that our midwives are very busy, often assisting five or six women in labour on any given day, they are able to provide individual care and attention to each mother," notes Ms. Kipps-Jackson. "While patient safety is our first priority, compassionate care is what makes our services so special. Our midwives are trained to take mothers through each step of labour, delivery and after care."***

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**The Bermuda Hospitals Board wishes you a happy and healthy New Year!**

**Bermuda has a high incidence of diabetes and hypertension, both of which may lead to kidney disease. While these conditions are often hereditary, they are also the result of a worldwide trend toward eating more processed foods high in fat and sugar. In most cases, once a patient goes on to dialysis, he or she remains on it. Transplantation is another option but only one or two Bermudians receive donated kidneys each year. For Bermudians with kidney disease, the dialysis unit is the only facility on the island providing life-saving treatment.**

Dr. Lynette Thomas is a Bermudian physician who also studied dialysis and kidney disease as part of her training in internal medicine. She works closely with Dr. Outerbridge to provide treatment for patients at the dialysis unit. She serves as Director for the Vascular Access Management Programme (VAMP), a vital component of dialysis. Most patients receiving treatment undergo a surgical procedure to create an access for hemodialysis. "We are very fortunate that a leading specialist from the USA now consults with us for dialysis access," notes Dr. Thomas.

Dr. Donna Mendes, the first African-American female vascular surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery, has been making monthly visits to the island since the spring of this year. She serves as chief of vascular surgery at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital and is an assistant clinical professor of surgery at Colombia University.

Dr. Mendes consults with Dr. Outerbridge and Dr. Thomas, ensuring patients have proper access for dialysis. "We believe that fistula formation (performing a link between the patient's own artery and vein) is the safest and most reliable option," explains Dr. Mendes. "We are limiting the use of all catheter and material grafts. It is essential for dialysis patients that safe access is created and maintained for treatment," she adds.

The dialysis unit also has close ties with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, where patients go for transplantation, urgently needed vascular surgery or renal biopsy. KEMH's affiliation with this world-class centre benefits patients who require this type of specialized care. For further information, call 239-2055, ext. 1146.

**A Patient's Perspective:**

**Deborah Brown worked as a part-time operator on the BHB switchboard and information desk for 17 years. In 1996, she became a dialysis patient as a result of hypertension and diabetes. After a failed kidney transplant in 1997, Ms. Brown resumed dialysis. "Staff at the unit go above and beyond the call of duty to support patients," remarks**



Deborah Brown, dialysis patient

**Ms. Brown. "Nurses spend time with us while we are receiving treatment. They are encouraging, sympathetic and helpful in ways beyond medical care. One of the nurses took time to teach me how to make soap and candles; another is in the process of showing me how to knit and crochet."**

**Ms. Brown is particularly impressed with Dr. Swan, who was very skilled at knowing just how his patients were feeling and what they needed. She points out that the dialysis unit provides a social network and emotional support for patients who find it comforting to share their challenges with each other.**

**Despite her circumstances, nothing slows her down. "Being on dialysis doesn't stop me from travelling or being active. I look forward to working everyday. I also enjoy sewing, baking, reading and listening to music. There are not enough hours in the day for me to do everything I enjoy!" she concludes.**

**A Patient's Perspective:**

**Mrs. Noeleen Gibbons Baker recently became a first-time mom. She was very impressed by the individual attention she received. "This was one of the most important moments in my life. Even though these midwives handle hundreds of births every year, they made me feel the birth of my baby was a unique and special experience." Mrs. Gibbons Baker went on to say that many of her friends who are in Bermuda as guest workers choose to remain here instead of returning home to give birth. "We all agree that delivering babies in Bermuda is the best option," she adds. "The hospital makes every effort to accommodate our requests and the level of care is superb." Many patients agree. The maternity ward is covered with cards and letters from very happy parents who sing the praises of care at KEMH.**

Dr. Fulton urges expectant parents to make their wishes known in advance to their physicians. "We make efforts to be as flexible as we can. Discussing your birthing plan prior to labour and delivery gives both the obstetrician and the maternity ward an opportunity to prepare for requests."

Expectant parents are welcome to take tours of the maternity ward. Parents enrolled in childbirth classes are taken on tours arranged by the instructor. Individual requests for tours may also be made. The maternity ward has plans to launch childbirth classes in the spring. For further information, please call 239-2055, ext. 1350.

# 'Tis the Season to be Generous!

Students from Port Royal Primary, Dellwood Middle School and Sandy's Secondary Middle School shared the holiday spirit by raising funds to purchase Christmas presents for residents at MWI. Special grub days were organized in November 2005 and more than \$600 was collected. "Pyjamas, slippers and toiletries were bought with the donated funds," said Linda Trott, Director of Volunteers at MWI. Grateful residents appreciated being remembered during the holiday season.



Students purchased gifts for residents (left to right: Mrs. Karen Raynor, teacher, Sandy's Secondary Middle School; Nicholas Septimous and Diana Martins, Dellwood Middle School; Raushan Darrell, Port Royal Primary; Mrs. Janet Musson, Principal, Dellwood Middle School)

# BHB Ethics Committee

## Invites Public to Consider Advance Planning

On November 23, 2005, the BHB Ethics Committee hosted a public forum on advance planning. Dr. Elaine Campbell, Chair of the Committee, arranged for Drs. Jeff Kirby and Christy Simpson, both Assistant Professors in the Bioethics Department at Dalhousie University, to be guest speakers at the forum.

Dr. Simpson explains that an advance directive helps make your wishes and values clear with respect to health care. "Considering the range of options we now have for sustaining or prolonging life, an advance directive narrows these options, ensuring you aren't subjected to unwanted treatments. It also ensures strongly held religious beliefs are included in decision-making with respect to withholding or withdrawing treatment," she said.

Written confirmation of health care decisions encourages communication between the patient, family, and health care providers. When difficult choices are being made, an advance directive provides reassurance to those who are making choices for you.

Dr. Kirby remarked that BHB's Ethics Committee compares very favourably to other jurisdictions. "Drs. Campbell and Bascombe-Adams, along with committee members, are highly motivated and dedicated to making a positive difference," he said. "The committee is dynamic and forward-thinking, especially for a small health district."

For a copy of Advance Directives- Preparing Your Living Will, Health Care Power of Attorney and Organ Donation Forms, contact the Quality and Risk Department at 239-2055, ext. 1553. Copies of completed forms should be filed with a family member, Clinical Records at BHB, your GP and your lawyer.



Dr. Jeff Kirby and Dr. Christy Simpson, Bioethicists from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia

## Pathology Department Pursues Accreditation



Lisa Symonds, Susan Jatto, Dr. Betsie Lombard, Dr. Clyde Wilson, Dr. Kered James, Shyvonne Robinson, Dr. Keith Cunningham, Wendy Varrence, Kathy Stephens and Tammy Hendrickson provide valuable diagnostic information about patients every day.

A representative from Joint Commission International (JCI) will be in Bermuda on January 12 and 13, 2006 for a site inspection of the pathology department, leading to accreditation. JCI is the international branch of The Joint Commission On Accreditation Of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), a voluntary, independent organization established in the United States, setting standards for health care quality in the USA and around the world.

Last September, the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) accredited both hospitals. However, CCHSA does not cover pathology. Dr. Kered James, Chief of Pathology, decided to seek individual accreditation through JCI. "We expect it will take several months to

achieve accreditation of the highest standard. If we achieve this standing, KEMH will be the only full service pathology facility in Bermuda to obtain independent accreditation for pathology," noted Dr. James.

Jonathan Brewin, Chairman of BHB, extended best wishes to the department for their upcoming accreditation process. "Joint Commission International is highly regarded worldwide and successful accreditation will bring credibility and recognition to the exemplary job you are all doing," he said. "We wish Dr. James and her staff the best of luck going through the accreditation process and thank them for the contribution they make every day to quality patient care," added Mr. Brewin.

### Spotlight on Lab

Laboratory professionals are often among the many unsung heroes of medical healthcare. They perform and interpret tests that save lives and keep people healthy. Using state-of-the-art technology and instrumentation, lab technologists at KEMH help prevent disease and aid in the diagnosis and treatment of existing conditions by giving accurate, timely test results.

The information lab professionals provide comprises an estimated 70% of patient medical records and is vital to the diagnosis and treatment of illness and disease. The results of laboratory tests often identify the presence of disease in its earliest stages, when the possibilities of a cure are greatest and when treatment is least costly. Our lab technologists and pathologists play a very significant role at the hospital.

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"Pathology Department" continued from page three



Dr. Betsie Lombard is pleased to join the BHB.



Jonathan Brewin and Joan Dillas-Wright congratulate Dr. Keith Cunningham on 35 years of service.

Dr. Betsie Lombard recently travelled from South Africa to Bermuda (along with two dogs and one cat) to take up a position as Consultant Haematologist at KEMH. Her chief responsibilities include overseeing the blood transfusion service and consulting on haematology problems. She will also perform and report on bone marrow investigations. Having worked at a large hospital in Cape Town, Dr. Lombard is impressed with what she has found here. "The pathology department is very well resourced and well equipped," she pointed out. "And their decision to seek accreditation speaks well of their commitment to quality patient care."

Dr. Lombard started work on December 1st 2005 and was very pleased by the warm welcome she received from the island's friendly people.

"Everyone has been gracious and kind," she notes. We welcome Dr. Lombard (and her dogs and cat) to Bermuda.

Dr. Keith Cunningham retired in December 2005 after 35 years of employment with the Bermuda Hospitals Board as a clinical pathologist. His broad range of experience included work in haematology, biochemistry, microbiology, histology and autopsy. He played an important role forging a partnership between the Red Cross Donor Bank and the lab transfusion service. Dr. Cunningham helped establish pathology as a discipline dealing with live cases. The Bermuda Hospitals Board wishes Dr. Cunningham the very best and expresses great appreciation for his exceptional contribution.

## BHB Telecommunications Staff: Answering the Call



Jacqueline Fubler, Beverly Marshall and Carol Wade respond to thousands of calls every day

Jacqueline Fubler is very proud of staff who work at the switchboard and information desk at both hospitals. As Supervisor of Telecommunications for the past 21 years, she has led a team of dedicated workers who respond to challenges and crises with grace and efficiency.

During peak periods of the day, 1,000 calls an hour come into the hospitals' switchboards!

Operators field calls as quickly as possible, forwarding them to extensions within the hospital, paging staff who are urgently needed, responding to disasters, activating emergency codes, instituting fire alarms and answering questions. In addition, the switchboard is responsible for paging all doctors in the community. Operators also process pages for every cancer patient, as a courtesy to PALS. Currently seven full-time and four part-time operators work 24/7, answering calls for both KEMH and MWI. They also work at the information desk at KEMH Mondays through Saturdays from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and all day on Sunday and holidays.

It's a job that requires many skills. "Great switchboard operators are courteous and friendly, they have an exceptional memory and are good at multitasking," said Mrs. Fubler. "But, most importantly, my staff are willing to go the extra mile."

Because of the critical nature of their position, operators must be reliable, responsible and flexible. Assistant Supervisor, Beverly Marshall, has been working the switchboard for 24 years. "We have to be here at all times- through disasters, hurricanes and power

failures. I once worked 24 hours straight during a storm. Guaranteeing the switchboard is staffed day and night requires a real team effort- we all cooperate to make certain these phones are always covered," she says.

Operators learn how to assess and handle calls that can range from the most mundane to the most life-threatening. "When we answer a call, it can be from someone having a heart attack or from a child who wants to know if he can have a sandwich for lunch. Over the summer months in particular, kids call us because their parents work at the hospital and they need something," says Mrs. Fubler.

Operators must have a great deal of patience and sympathy. During clinic days, we get more calls from patients and seniors looking for help. "Some callers are confused or not sure how to express what they want. Our job is to understand their needs and forward them to the correct resource," says Mrs. Fubler.

Remaining calm in a crisis is another essential quality. "There may be a cardiac arrest, a fire somewhere in the building and a paging system that fails, all at the same time. We can only be effective by remaining level headed," she points out.

**Mrs. Fubler, who will be retiring soon after over 40 years in telecommunications, has heard just about everything. "The other day, a caller phoned to tell me she had discovered a cure for cancer - pomegranate and soap!" she shares with a laugh. "We've had people call in because they were arguing with a relative and wanted the operator to settle a dispute!"**

"I love my job," concludes Ms. Marshall. "I enjoy my co-workers and love knowing I help patients every day. We truly have our finger on the pulse of the hospital. It is an exciting place to work."

# Eight Qualities of Happy People

With a new name and a focus on wellness, MWI is actively educating the public about healthy living. We asked Dr. Edirimuni Rodrigo, Psychiatric Consultant for Acute Community Mental Health Services, how people can attain a better sense of well being. Surprisingly simple, internal factors such as having healthy self-esteem, a sense of optimism and hope, gratifying relationships and meaning and purpose in your life, have the most influence on subjective happiness. Here are specific suggestions for creating your own sense of satisfaction.

- 1. Count your blessings:** People experience a heightened sense of wellbeing when they express gratitude. "There's a natural tendency to take things for granted, but if you think of ways you are blessed, the mind will use that as the new baseline for perceiving how happy you are," says Dr. Rodrigo.
- 2. Thank your mentors:** Acknowledging others who have served as guides, teachers and mentors helps people understand what brings value and satisfaction to their lives. When you thank someone who has been an inspiration or has set an example to follow, your sense of appreciation and gratitude increases.
- 3. Offer forgiveness:** Happy people have learned how to forgive and move on. Clinging to perceived injustice and keeping track of insults does not promote a sense of wellbeing. Forgiveness and acceptance go a long way toward peace of mind.
- 4. Undertake random acts of kindness:** Nothing says "I feel great" faster than taking time to do good deeds or spending money helping others. Whether you participate in charitable organizations or offer to assist a friend in need, giving of yourself will help you feel good.
- 5. Spend time and energy with family and friends:** Being with people you value gives you a sense of connection, as well as a support system. People who considered themselves happy have strong romantic and social relationships. "We're social creatures by nature," says Dr. Rodrigo. "When you're involved with others, it gives you a sense of belonging and lets you engage in mutually enjoyable activities, all of which can buffer you from stress."
- 6. Enjoy everyday events in life:** Focus on what's positive in your life. A positive state of mind gives you confidence and a sense of vitality, which helps make the expectation of happiness real. "Developing a positive outlook takes repeated practice, especially if you have got into the habit of being a critic," says Dr. Rodrigo. Finding a sense of purpose in your routine also helps to develop a positive attitude. Ask yourself, "What activities make me feel excited or enthusiastic? What do I want to be remembered for? What matters most to me?" Set specific goals to help you fulfill these desires.
- 7. Look after your body and include a balanced diet, adequate exercise and sufficient sleep:** "Happy people lead active, vigorous lives yet reserve time for restorative sleep and solitude," notes Dr. Rodrigo. Sleep quality can have a substantial influence over enjoying life, as does a good diet and regular exercise.
- 8. Learn to cope with stress:** "Happy people tend to think of solutions, not problems," says Dr. Rodrigo. When you are dealing with a stressful situation, focus on those things you are able to accomplish. Break down

tasks into smaller targets that will help you stay on track and increase your sense of control. And don't forget to add relaxing time to the balance. Happiness comes from both work and leisure activities that engage your skills and enable you to get caught up in what you're doing. Even if these attitudes don't come naturally for you, they can be cultivated. Studies reveal that happiness is like a person's cholesterol level—it's genetically influenced but also affected by factors under our control. While your genetic temperament has a fairly strong influence on your happiness quotient, you can increase it with attitudes and approaches you bring to your life.

## 2005 Auxiliary Award Winners



Helen Tyrell and Timothy Durham, 2005 award winners.

Kathy Ann Lewis, Director of Clinical Programmes, was pleased to announce on November 29, 2005 that Timothy Durham, a nursing orderly from Agape House, and Helen Tyrell, a nursing assistant from Curtis Ward were nominated Auxiliary Staff of the Year.

Winners of this annual award are chosen from nominations provided by staff and managers, who are invited to fill out an application. After nominations are received, a multidisciplinary selection committee, chaired by Roxanne Kipps-Jackson, Programme Manager for Maternal and Child, interviews each candidate. This year, in addition to Mr. Durham and Ms. Tyrell, three other candidates were nominated: Linda Philpott, a nursing aide who works on Gordon Ward; Sheila Durham, a nursing assistant from CCU; and Eugenie DeShields, a nursing aide, also from CCU.

"All those who were nominated have proven themselves to be team players, committed to the highest standard of patient care," said Ms. Lewis. "The selection process was difficult, as all the nominees have done an outstanding job. Both winners particularly impressed the committee. They are respectful of patients and colleagues, while demonstrating flexibility and a willingness to go the extra mile," she adds. Timothy Durham has worked at Agape House for the past 3 and a half years. He says receiving the award was a surprise and an honour. "I love my work. I have a passion for it. I don't see it as a job. I see it as a vocation. I feel called to serve and know my efforts bring comfort to patients."

Helen Tyrell has been with the BHB for the past 17 years. "I am proud and happy to be this year's winner," said Mrs. Tyrell. "I love my work and enjoy the hospital. Helping patients get better is very rewarding. My job is never boring and my colleagues work well together as a team."

Congratulations to all those who were nominated and many thanks for your commitment to quality patient care.



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**441-239-2134  
(KEMH)**

or **441-239-2055**, ext. 3258  
(MWI)

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**WE WELCOME  
YOUR QUESTIONS  
OR FEEDBACK.  
YOU CAN REACH US AT:**

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**Join a Trend, Help a Friend**

January is National Blood Donor Month and the Blood Donor Centre at KEMH invites more members of the community to consider becoming a donor. Established in 1965, the Centre is run by both the Bermuda Red Cross and KEMH. Operated by a team that includes one full-time registered nurse, three part-time IV nurses and about 50 dedicated volunteer nurses, technologists and refreshment hostesses, the Centre collects more than 2,000 units of blood each year!



Barbara Cooper and Fiona Barber assist a blood donor during a clinic day

Barbara Cooper, a retired nurse, has been involved with blood donor services since 1959 and serves as chairperson of the Centre. "Blood collection is being very well managed by our team of professionals," she said. "Currently, we collect up to 60 units of blood weekly for the hospital and thankfully, we have always maintained sufficient supplies."

The Centre is always seeking new donors to assure an adequate stock, as well as extra nurses (active or inactive) to volunteer at the clinics. With approximately 3,000 donors in its database, the Centre runs two clinics each week. Fiona Barber, nursing coordinator since 1986, explains, "We need all blood types, all the time! People are urged to call us to learn more about donating. We never know what the demand will be next week and we assess our supply daily."

Please contact the Blood Donor Centre at 239-2055, ext. 1398 to learn more or to make an appointment. Clinic hours are Tuesdays from 9:15 am to noon and Thursdays from 1:15 pm to 4:00 pm.

**ICU Marks One Year  
in New Location**



Registered Nurses Miriam Hook, Sophia Dixon and Vanessa Carless enjoy working in the ICU

Having officially opened its doors to patients at the beginning of 2005, the newly renovated ICU is living up to all expectations as a state-of-the-art facility. Providing the highest quality care to approximately 400 patients in 2005, one major advantage has been the reduced incidence of ventilator-associated pneumonia. This is a direct result of patients being cared for in isolated rooms. Another benefit has been the ability to provide dialysis to in-patients in the unit, without having to transport them out of the hospital. "Our new facility works well for patients and staff," says Dr. Andrew Spence, ICU Director. "We are very pleased to be celebrating one year in our new home."



**BHB Says Thanks  
a Million to HAB**

The Hospitals Auxiliary of Bermuda (HAB) donated approximately one million dollars to BHB in 2005. From left to right: Josephine Wright, HAB Vice-President; Roseanne Michelsen, HAB President; Mrs. Dillas-Wright, BHB CEO; Heidi Augustinovic, HAB Treasurer and Greta Carne, HAB Secretary.

**Did you  
know?**

In 2005, hospital staff cared for 32,000 visits to the Emergency Department. We performed 8,188 operations, and 825 babies were born at KEMH. We look forward to continuing to serve the community in 2006.



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