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First year medical student, Janessa Grosenick, shares a laugh with her preceptor, Dr. Werner Oberholzer, in their office at Radville Marian Health Centre in Radville, where Janessa completed her Community Experience Placement in May. Sun Country Health Region and the physicians who work within its boundaries hosted five medical students, two residents and a JURSI student to fulfill the community experience placement portion of their educational requirement. See the last page of this newsletter for the story.

A publication of Sun Country Health Region



# Thoughts:

**From the desk of Marga Cugnet,  
Interim CEO,  
Sun Country Regional Health Authority**

One of the key messages from the Saskatchewan government's Patient First Review of the whole provincial health care system last year is that our customers, the patients/clients/residents that we care for every day, want a more satisfying experience in our health care facilities.

They want to feel they are more than just an illness, that our health care workers are caring for them as whole human beings.

This sometimes is a challenge, not in philosophy but in practical terms. Health care is always changing because of the need to keep current with the care standards and processes. The use of technology has increased, best practices adopted, and new equipment is purchased, but the health system that is needed to work around these changes has not always adapted.

In practical terms, that means a nurse might spend more time moving patients, or searching for equipment and then (s)he might start handing out medications, and experience so many interruptions that an error is made.

We can improve patient care by reducing these interruptions and increasing the amount of time our nurses actually spend with patients at the bedside.

In Saskatchewan, the program that will help us do this is called Releasing Time to Care. It has been brought to Saskatchewan from the British National Health Service where they have seen quite dramatic improvements in patient care since implementing it.

Sun Country Health Region is beginning the program on the medical/surgical ward at Weyburn General Hospital this fall. All the staff will work together to develop solutions to reduce duplication and to reorganize their workplace.

Staff members are excited to start and we believe the patients and families will see good results.

## Sun Country Health Region Administration

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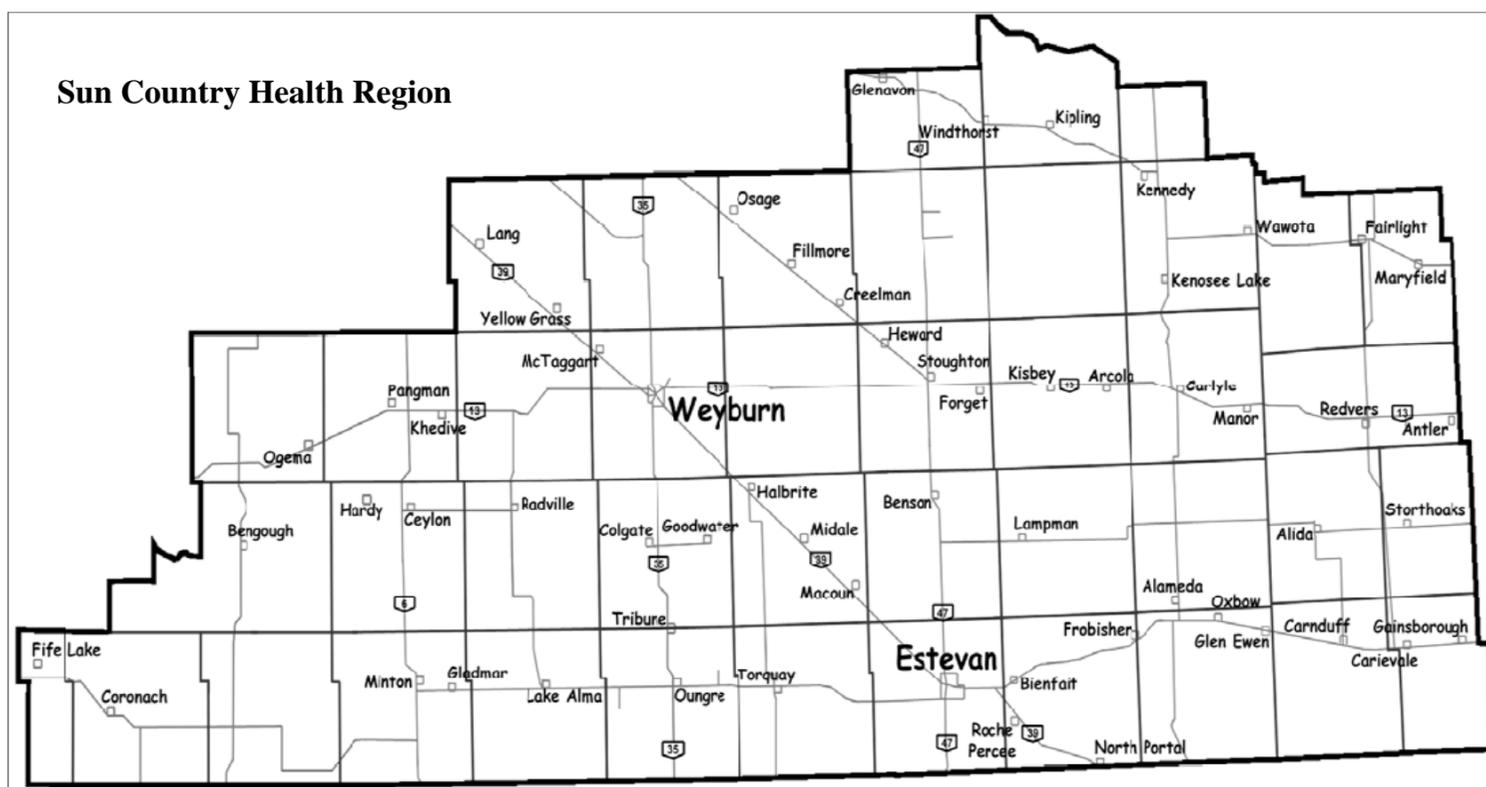
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Sun Country Health Region offers regular training and refresher workshops for ambulance staff and volunteers who work in the Region. At this session in July, Joy Snelling EMT-A and Jason Roy ICP practice how to properly strap in a person with head injuries. Troy Miller PCP is the person on the stretcher. The trainer was Jennifer Elias-White ACP (Advanced Care Paramedic). Find course times and registration information under Ambulance Education Programs at [www.suncountry.sk.ca](http://www.suncountry.sk.ca) or go to <http://www.suncountry.sk.ca/service/169/88/ambulance-education-programs.html>



## Brain Injury Support Groups in Sun Country Health Region

This is a social group for people who have survived an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). Our goal is to provide education about ABI, share experiences, and to provide understanding and assurance that those living with an acquired brain injury are not alone.

Examples of Acquired Brain Injuries include: strokes, brain tumors, traumatic injury such as a blow to the head, brain infections (eg. meningitis, encephalitis) or lack of oxygen.

**Join us:**

- In Weyburn at Tatagwa View, the first Monday of every month 1- 3 p.m.
- In Redvers Health Centre, the second Monday of every month 1- 3 p.m.
- In Estevan (St. Joseph's auditorium 2), the fourth Monday of every month 1- 3 p.m.

**For more information contact:**

Paula Ealey BSW RSW, Regional Acquired Brain Injury Coordinator  
at 842-8315.

**For fast, accurate health information,  
check out the revised Healthline site at:**

**<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/healthline-online>**

# ***Releasing Time to Care*** ***= better patient treatment***



Sun Country Health Region has adopted a new program called Releasing Time to Care (RTC) that will assist nursing staff in all acute care centres to spend more time with patients. The program will be established over the next 18 months on the medical/surgical ward at Weyburn General Hospital and will be extended to all centres providing acute care in the Region. Releasing Time to Care is about staff creating sustainable quality improvements, thus releasing time for more direct patient care. It is a culture change!

The Releasing Time To Care (RTC) program was developed in the United Kingdom with dramatic results.

It has been adopted by the Health Quality Council in Saskatchewan to assist Health Regions in enhancing the patient's care experience.

Over the summer, staff members learned about the program and how they can use it to improve

patient care.

The RTC team will make decisions about the Acute Care Unit together by asking "What can we do to make improvements?"

They will implement the changes and measure them to see what difference occurred.

The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce time spent on wasted activities like searching for medical equipment, complicated paper work full of duplication, managing poor communication between staff/patients, etc.

The time gained will be used to spend more time at the bedside with the patient.

The essence of the program is teamwork: front-line workers gathering and analyzing evidence, and working together to improve their environment and their activities.

Ward staff are given three to four months to do groundwork—mainly intense communications to learn what RTC is about.

Hospitals are systems and a ward cannot change how it works without changes throughout the system.

Time is needed to create and entrench support from all including administrators, physicians, executives, everyone on the ward and all the departments that support it, like laundry, maintenance, housekeeping, dietary and other support services.

It is imperative that staff understand RTC is not about cutting jobs, offloading work or increasing workload but about creating sustainable quality improvement by front-line workers.



## RTC works like this:

- RTC is led and implemented by front-line staff, supported by senior management and the Board
- RTC empowers staff to find solutions to reducing waste that is embedded in the system ~ freeing up time to deliver quality, patient-centred care
- Small changes can make a BIG difference
- Releasing Time to Care will result in better staff and patient satisfaction
- The essence of the program is teamwork ~ staff working together to improve their environment and their activities
- Releasing Time to Care will engage all staff in finding ways to improve patient care
- The program is about staff creating sustainable quality improvements releasing time for more direct patient care

## What Releasing Time to Care will mean for the patient's family:

- **More Direct Care Time with Patients**

Work completed during the Releasing Time To Care (RTC) © program will allow nurses and other care providers to spend more time with patients and their families. This will keep our patients safer and will positively impact their experience helping to ensure quality safe care.

- **A Positive Experience**

Staff, including nurses, housekeeping, care aides, maintenance, pharmacy, therapists and dietary, will be involved as a team working together to make the patient and family's experience in the Acute Care unit a positive one.

- **A Well Organized Ward**

Nursing units and the way units are organized will improve, supplies and equipment will be there when needed! This will help staff deliver faster, safer, and more reliable care for patients.

- **Working Together**

During the program patients and families may be asked about the way we work and will be offered surveys about their experience on the ward. Their participation will be vital for identifying areas for improvement and for celebration!

- **Transparency**

The Releasing Time To Care Program will provide transparency for patients, staff and families, allowing more open communication and visibility of patient progress.

- **Confidentiality**

At all times patient confidentiality will be maintained. If patients and their families do not wish to participate in surveys, photos, videos and other RTC initiatives, we will gladly respect their wishes.

# Progressive Agriculture Safety Days come to Sun Country Health Region

Progressive Agriculture Safety Days™ (PASD) is an internationally-acclaimed program whose mission is “to make farm and ranch life safer and healthier for all children through education and training.”

When approved to put on a PASD, the program trains and provides the resources that local communities need to conduct one-day safety programs that are age-appropriate, hands-on, fun, and safe for children.

In Kipling this summer, 53 volunteers and 146 students in Grades 3 to 7 from Kipling and Kennedy/Langbank schools participated in the day.

Twenty-five local individuals and businesses helped sponsor the day by providing money, services or equipment.

The students were divided into small groups of 12 to 15. These groups each had two adult leaders who help the groups rotate between stations where specific topics are taught.

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation provides program manuals containing safe, educational, age-appropriate, fun, hands-on activities, and demonstrations for a variety of topics.

Dynamic local volunteer instructors taught the topics from the lesson plans provided.

The presenters from Sun Country Health Region included Edith Guilloux and Betty Metzler, public health nursing; Ken Cross and Kristen Bahsler, health inspection; Donna Wolfe and Laurie Kleppe, Population Health.

The topics included:

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety, Animal Safety, Bicycle Safety, Farm Equipment Safety, Fire Safety, First Aid, Food Safety, Hand Tool Safety, Lawn Equipment Safety, Power Take-Off (PTO) Safety, Sun Safety, Water Safety.

The community and community organizers made this a fantastic event. The organizing committee was made up of staff from Kipling and Kennedy/Landbank schools, Moose Mountain Central Rural Development Co-operative and Sun Country Health Region.

The community made the day possible by recruiting and providing volunteers and extra sponsorship as required. This was truly a joint effort.

**The children were not the only ones who learned something at the Progressive Agriculture Safety Days. Comments from volunteers on the evaluations stated they learned something, too:**

**Question: Did you learn any new safety information before or during the safety day?**

**Answers:**

- .a little more informed on PTO training
- .ATV safety for me and my children
- .Camping
- .levels of injury
- . About our fire department
- .I learned along with the students.
- .ATV Safety (ages and size of ATV)
- .Smoke detectors.
- .Food Safety.
- .Hand washing.

**Question: After participating in the safety day, do you plan to make any safety changes at your farm or home?**

**Answers:**

- .Bicycle safety
- .Make sure fire detectors are working
- .Enforce helmets

## What about next year?

**Sun Country Health Region has applied to host two safety days in 2011. Most Progressive Agriculture Safety Days™ are planned for 100 to 200 participants.**

**Safety days can be conducted for specific school classes or they can be open to the entire community. If anyone is interested in more information on how their community can host an event, please call Laurie Kleppe, the Progressive Farmer facilitator, at 842-8618.**



**Introducing the directory — Saskatchewan Health Minister Don McMorris surrounded by representatives of the media as he introduced the Saskatchewan's Specialist Directory this summer.**

## Specialist directory available to the public

Saskatchewan patients can now easily find information about surgeons practising in the province, the procedures they perform and their wait times. Health Minister Don McMorris unveiled an online "Specialist Directory" this summer that helps patients work with their family doctors to choose the most appropriate surgeon.

The Specialist Directory is available at [www.health.gov.sk.ca/specialist-directory](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/specialist-directory).

For the first time, the directory allows the public to see surgical wait times for each surgeon currently practising in the province.

About 80 per cent of Saskatchewan surgeons also provided specific information about their practices, such as average wait times for a consultation and procedures they perform.

"This resource empowers people to actively participate with their family doctor in selecting their surgeon, and make more informed decisions about their care," McMorris said.

"The directory shows patients which surgeons have the shortest wait times in their own health region or another region in Saskatchewan. It can also help avoid situations where people wait to see a specialist, only to find out the surgeon does not provide their particular procedure."

Patients still require a referral from a family physician to see a specialist.

"The Specialist Directory is an important resource when discussing treatment options with patients, as the information available makes it much easier to find an appropriate surgeon to refer patients to," Saskatchewan Medical Association Vice President and a family practice physician in Yorkton Dr. Phillip Fourie said.

"Patients are leaving my office knowing how long they can expect to wait for their consult, which is very reassuring."

"This Specialist Directory is a great step forward," says a former surgical patient from Saskatoon who is involved with the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative. Doug Denk said "It's another tool for reducing wait times for surgery and another way to put the patient first. As a patient representative I am very proud to be part of an initiative that is working, and in a short time is showing positive results."

Non-surgical specialists will be added to the directory in the future. Wait time information displayed for all surgeons is drawn from the Saskatchewan Surgical Registry, which tracks all surgeries performed in hospital operating rooms in the province.

The initiative is supported by the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative (SkSI), the province's plan to transform the surgical patient experience and ensure that by 2014, no one has to wait more than three months for surgery. The SkSI is the first major project launched as a result of the Patient First Review.

**Sun Country Health Region has created an Inventory of Chronic Disease Management Programs/Services and Access Sites for your convenience.**

Go to <http://www.suncountry.sk.ca/service/170/88/chronic-disease-inventory.html> to learn where you might obtain services.

# Medical students benefit from working in rural communities

Sun Country Health Region hosted five medical students, two residents and a JURSI student to fulfill the community experience placement portion of their educational requirement this summer.

The experience is a most useful and welcome one for both the students and the physicians involved.

“This exposes the students to a work environment they might have been afraid to think about before coming here,” says Marga Cugnet, Vice President of Primary and Integrated Care for Sun Country Health Region.

“Medical students in a city get used to having specialized equipment and physical backup at their fingertips.

“This encounter in a rural setting gives them the opportunity to find out they can work without all the usual resources at the end of a telephone line and to learn how rural physicians manage,” she says.

There are also some distinct advantages for students coming specifically to Sun Country Health Region for their community placement work, says Mrs. Cugnet.

“Students are sometimes surprised to learn how quickly new experiences can be set up for them in small health care centres.”

“Because we’re smaller, we’re sometimes more flexible than the larger centres. So we can make quick arrangements for a student to observe a surgical procedure or work with a

First year medical students Ashton Craven, Saskatoon, and Andrea Perkins, Nipawin, left, came to Sun Country Health Region earlier this year to fulfill their community experience requirement.



psychiatrist. Their time here gives them a broader view of physician reaction in a smaller hospital and/or practice.” They also gain more knowledge of the practice of family medicine here than they would in a larger city hospital, where their contact would primarily be with internists and specialists, she says.

“That contact with the patient and the community makes our visiting students quickly realize they are very important to a rural community. In the urban centres, they’re one of dozens. Here, the red carpet is rolled out,” she says.

“You feel very special, and you are.”

First year medical student Janessa Grosenick, who worked with Dr. Werner Oberholzer in her home town of Radville during May, confirms that view.

“People are so appreciative of the medical care here,” says Janessa..

“From all around this area, they depend on this facility and these medical people. You can tell that people appreciate it. “Everyone treats me very well,” she says.

Janessa says the whole experience is valuable to her future. Working with Dr. Werner Oberholzer, who was named Physician of the Year by the Saskatchewan Medical Association in 2009, is only part of the attraction, she says.

“I am very fortunate to have him as a teacher,” she says.

But there are other advantages, as well.

“I get to see more of the family practice than I would in the city,” she says. “Here, because of the distances involved, we often do procedures we wouldn’t get to do in a city hospital. There are so many different things like that to benefit from,” she says.



Dr. Emily Gawley, Medical Resident, left, confers with her preceptor, Dr. Mary McCollam, during a student placement in Sun Country Health Region in May and June.