

# Pacific HeartBeat

JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

## The role of a Nurse Practitioner in cardiac patient care By Tajaira Thiessen

I am a Nurse Practitioner on the 2 South (2S) cardiac step down unit at the Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH).

You may be wondering what a nurse practitioner (NP) is. An NP is an advanced practice nurse who has undergone a master's program at an accredited university. We can practice autonomously and can assess, diagnose, prescribe and treat patients across their lifespan.

My journey to become an NP started during my first semester at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO). I discovered the NP role while chatting with my academic advisor. I was drawn to the advanced practice of a nurse practitioner, as well as the holistic care they provide. However, to apply for the NP program, it required the completion of a bachelor's degree of nursing, and working for a minimum of two years as a Registered Nurse.

After graduating from UBCO, I started my nursing career at Surrey Memorial Hospital in the emergency department, before discovering my passion for cardiology at the RCH cardiac catheterization lab.

In 2016, I applied to the UBC NP program, and was accepted. I completed the two-year full-time program and landed my dream job in cardiology at RCH. I jumped right into my current position on the 2S cardiac stepdown unit only a week after I completed my NP accredited examination.

The cardiac stepdown unit is for patients recovering from open-heart surgery including coronary artery bypass graft surgery, valve replacement and other cardiac specific surgeries. My role on the unit is to care for these patients during their recovery. I work closely with the cardiac surgeons and the rest of the multidisciplinary team on 2S.

The team includes high acuity trained RNs, physicians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and pharmacists—to name a few. As a team, we work towards a “pathway” trajectory to recovery, with an anticipated discharge timeframe of



*Tajaira Thiessen at the Royal Columbian Hospital*

five days after surgery for patients with an uncomplicated recovery.

I start each day on 2S by participating in a morning team huddle to review any concerns, issues or barriers to discharge, as well as anticipated plans of care for each patient on the unit. This is an opportunity for strategizing a holistic approach to patient care, as well as facilitating multidisciplinary collaboration.

Then, I begin visiting my patients, reviewing the latest bloodwork and diagnostic tests. Their nurses convey the latest information including patient status and any additional concerns. Nurses work the closest with the patients, seeing them many times a day. Therefore their information is extremely valuable! I then assess each patient, and convey the plan of care for the day, as well as any projections I may anticipate in their recovery. This often includes their expected discharge date. I also ensure that each patient has an opportunity to express any concerns, or ask questions.

If the day runs smoothly—it may be interrupted by unexpected events—rounds continue with each patient on my list. I also complete patient discharges, ensuring that each one is followed closely in the community by their family doctor, cardiologist and, often, the cardiac surgeon.

After rounds are completed, I anticipate the arrival of the post-operative patients from the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU). They usually arrive in the afternoon after being reviewed by an intensivist in CSICU and are in stable condition.

My role is to liaise with the new CSICU patients and our nursing team and provide any additional orders to keep them comfortable overnight. The following days are busy, as I continue to liaise with the 2S team, as well as with the patients and their families, as we work towards recovery and a safe discharge home.

In addition to my clinical work on 2S, I also mentor NP students and new NP graduates, as well as medical students. This provides an excellent opportunity for up-and-coming medical staff to be exposed to acute care cardiology, and experience the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team to support patients on the road to recovery. The 2S team is an excellent example of this, as they work closely alongside one another to put patients' needs first.

It is an honour and a privilege to be an NP on 2S, caring for such incredible patients, and working with such kind and compassionate staff. ♥

# President's Report



Richard Lemire

In my last report, I mentioned the restrictions that COVID had placed on our hospital visitation program. We are continuing to work with the hospitals to restart our visitations. We are up and visiting at Vancouver General Hospital, as patients all have private rooms. At St Paul's Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital and the feeder hospitals, patients are in wards and, as such, COVID is not as easy to contain. With the safety of patients and our volunteers in mind we have delayed the visitation start up at these facilities. At our

July Board meeting we will examine the protocols in place at these hospitals and determine when and how we should resume visiting.

I would like to thank Board member, Roger Kocheff, and his golf committee for organizing this year's Pacific Open Heart Golf Tournament. After a two-year hiatus this year's tournament, held at Poppy Estate, was well attended and a terrific success. This tournament is the only fundraiser organized by POHA.

Board members and patient visitors are all volunteers. As I have mentioned in the past, POHA does not receive any government funding. Paid up membership, bequests and donations allow POHA to

continue. With this newsletter we are reaching out to past and present members—inviting you to consider rejoining. All funds received are directed to the continuation of the visitation and pillow program. Your ten dollar yearly membership fee helps POHA continue with these programs.

Moving ahead with technology, POHA now can accept payment via e-Transfer.

Payment via e-Transfer can be sent to [etransfer@pacificopenheart.org](mailto:etransfer@pacificopenheart.org) in the message area please specify "membership."

Your continued support would be greatly appreciated.

**Richard Lemire**

*President, Pacific Open Heart Association*

## 36th Annual POHA "Moe Pitcher" Golf Tournament June 2nd, 2022



Rick Cozzuol accepted the trophy from Jo-Anne Pitcher on behalf of his team

We were happy and anxious to get together after a two-year COVID hiatus.

This year, our reconnection saw sixty-four golfers play golf at Poppy Estate Golf Course in Aldergrove. It was a time for renewing old friendships, remembering those who were not with us and for making new acquaintances.

Our golf committee endeavours to provide an affordable and enjoyable experience for golfers. We had great weather and everyone had a good time.

A successful tournament is only possible with the support of our generous sponsors. They allow us to donate excess funds to local hospitals for the benefit of cardiac patients.

Please take note of the following sponsors and try to use their businesses.

This year's Hole Sponsors were DMCL Chartered Accountants; National Bank; Home Restaurants; Hollis Wealth; Austin Metal Fabricators; RCH Hospital Foundation; Fraser Valley Healthcare Foundation; HUB Insurance; Pro-Mix Concrete; West Coast Golf Group. A special thanks to those donating extra prizes.

Thanks to Langley Memorial Health Care Foundation, Coast Capital Savings and Raicon Developments for entering four-somes in support of POHA.

The tournament cannot run smoothly without the help of our volunteers. Thanks

to Mike Martin, Pat Hagan, Alfred Buchi, Dennis Kraft, Ellen Cozzuol, Amelia Moloci, and the golf committee—Rick Cozzuol, Bob Axford, Amelia Moloci and Jay Chambers.

### Tournament Results:

This year's tournament winners were Bart Findlay, Harry Perler, Rick Howard and Rick Cozzuol. This is repeat for Rick H., Bart, and Harry. Well done. Jo-Anne Pitcher, Craig Desautels, Sue Biddle and David Steele were one shot behind.

Preben Anderson was the only one to sink a put in the Putting Contest for a \$140 win. Well done Preben.

On course competitions were won by Jo-Anne Pitcher, Bart Findlay, Giovanni Cutri, Craig Desautels, and Wilf Jacobson.

Bert Mapson won the early bird draw for a free entry to the 2023 tournament.

If you are interested in adding your name to our golfer list, please contact me at: [rkocheff@telus.net](mailto:rkocheff@telus.net) or 604-467-2904.

**Roger Kocheff**

### YES! I WISH TO JOIN POHA

I ENCLOSE  \$10 ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP  \$20 TWO-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

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In the message area please specify "membership."



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ASSOCIATION**

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