



# FEARLESS, INNOVATIVE. THAT'S NURSING.

THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING  
2020 IMPACT REPORT

SickKids



Limits

# MAKING SICKKIDS SAFER

## How one Nurse is Tackling Preventable Harm

**WE ALL MAKE** mistakes on the job.

But when nurses and doctors do, the stakes are much higher. Even something as simple as the wrong medication can have disastrous, even fatal consequences. So, in 2015, SickKids launched Caring Safely—a robust, hospital-wide program with the goal of improving patient safety.

The result? [Fewer hospital-acquired infections and serious safety events, plus a 26% reduction in staff time lost due to injuries.](#) More simply, it made SickKids safer.

But SickKids nurses Mollie Lavigne, Shagan Aujla, and Andrea Boysen noticed a gap in the data. Caring Safely focused almost entirely on serious safety events, the ones with the most potential for harm. So-called “precursor” and “near-miss” safety events—incidents that caused some harm, or could’ve gone badly had a mitigation strategy not been in place—weren’t being given the same attention or analysis.

**Andrea Boysen,**  
paediatric  
emergency nurse  
and quality  
management  
specialist



For Andrea, who worked as a frontline nurse for 25 years before transitioning to quality management, this was an opportunity to make SickKids even safer. So, with the help of the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing Endowment Fund, she launched the Apparent Cause Analysis program to study—and prevent—less severe safety events.

The first step was standardizing the way safety event data was coded and reviewed.

“Where did that error occur?” says Andrea. “Was it a communication error? Was it a practice error? Was there an issue with technology?”

With enough properly coded data, Andrea and her colleagues can begin to identify trends and themes. That way they can see what went wrong, so they can prevent it from happening again through targeted education or changes in practice and policy.

Andrea has already made major headway on the project, but because of the pandemic, she’s still a few months away from drawing any definitive conclusions.

Although COVID-19 has slowed the project’s progress, it’s also been an important reminder of exactly why this kind of work matters. As cases surge and hospitals struggle to keep up, SickKids nurses need every strategy they can to keep their patients—and themselves—safe.

Thanks to you, and the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing Endowment Fund, they will.

## REMEMBERING THE PAST

### How the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing Endowment is Helping Keep History Alive

#### THIS PAST YEAR

Using endowment funding, our archivist, David Wencer, was able to purchase a laptop to help maintain our extensive collection. That way he can continue to keep history alive.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

A new SickKids will bring new possibilities for our Archives—new displays, compact shelving, even an advanced HVAC system to preserve precious documents and photographs. To prepare for the move—and the potential expenses—David has been steadily saving endowment funds.



**Kelly McNaughton,  
Manager of the Peer  
Support Program at  
SickKids**

# FIGHTING NURSE BURNOUT

## A Wellness Strategy to Keep Nurses Working—and Happy

**TO DESCRIBE** nursing stress and burnout as problems would be a gross understatement. Even before the pandemic hit, nurses were burning out at a shocking rate. [Looking at the results of a survey of more than 700 Canadian nurses](#), you can see why.

More than 20% suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder or generalized anxiety disorder. One in three reported having suicidal thoughts.

For Kelly McNaughton, Manager of the Peer Support Program at SickKids and a PhD student studying the issue, none of this comes as a surprise. Her mission is to understand why it's so bad—and what we can do about it.

The answers aren't always so simple, or straightforward. "It is about compassion fatigue," Kelly says. "It's about contributing factors like scheduling and bullying. It's about shift work, organizational factors, and team morale."

Nursing can be especially hard for casual employees and floaters, many of whom are thrown into a situation with little context. The problem is also worse among women and new nurses. (More seasoned nurses, Kelly explains, are more resilient.)

After hearing the stories of nurses who came to her for counselling, Kelly began to question if they were being properly prepared. "We focus so much on refinement of skills and knowledge, but what are we doing around mental health?"

So she approached Bonnie Fleming-Carroll, the Associate Chief of Nursing, with an idea: wellness workshops for new nurses preparing them for the work ahead. After some discussion and funding from the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing Endowment Fund, the Innovation Wellness Strategy was born.

During wellness workshop sessions, nurses learn everything from the challenges of frontline care to compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma. Kelly stresses that the most valuable part of these sessions isn't her—it's other nurses. "At the end of the day, I'm still the social worker, the program manager," Kelly says. By sharing their stories, seasoned nurses normalize feelings of stress and fatigue, so new nurses don't feel so alone.

To help spouses and families of nurses understand the psychological toll of the job, Kelly also created a family workshop. There, she goes through a day in the life of a nurse, as well as things like trauma and the signs and symptoms of burnout. "Then," Kelly says, "we do an interactive activity with the families and nurses to teach them some ways of communicating a bit better."

Although the pilot project is still ongoing, there has been plenty of feedback. The program is helping—a lot. And for that, we have donors like you to thank.

## THIS YEAR'S WINNER

### Emergency Department - Safety Officer (Caitlin Ross and Amanda Cooney)

The dangers of COVID-19 are never far from nurses' minds, especially in the Emergency Department (ED). There, the threat of infection is ever-present—in every intubation and resuscitation, in every trauma event and procedural sedation.

To help protect nurses, Caitlin Ross and Amanda Cooney are creating a new Safety Officer role. Using the most up-to-date guidelines, this Safety Officer will advise ED staff on everything from PPE to best practices for infection control. That way our nurses will stay safe—and our patients will, too.

# THANK YOU

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Every day SickKids works towards improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment to nursing at SickKids ensures that we can continue to offer the best possible health outcomes for children.

Thank you for your remarkable generosity.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
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