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Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Cultural audit positive step toward “healthy” hemodialysis unit

Dr. Graham Lowe finds hemodialysis work environment “not toxic” and confirms opportunity for improvement with a “fresh start”

Two reports issued in late December provide recommendations to improve the work environment in PRHC’s Dialysis unit.

[A cultural audit report from Dr. Graham Lowe](#), as well as a report from an [Independent Assessment Committee](#) meeting held in November, were released in late December and shared with Dialysis staff.

Both reports note that an ideal opportunity exists for a “fresh start” on the Dialysis unit in 2012. Hospital management and the Dialysis team have committed to embracing this opportunity by working collaboratively to implement positive change on the unit.

While the work environment in Dialysis has historically been challenging, Dr. Lowe’s cultural audit revealed that it is “not toxic.”

“At no time has patient care or safety been negatively impacted by any difficulty that has existed in the working environment of the Dialysis unit,” said Jayne White, Chief Practice Officer and Chief Nursing Executive. “Our quality data for patient care in Dialysis has not changed significantly over the past three years.”

“The Dialysis team will continue to provide safe patient care throughout the ongoing improvement process in the unit, and patient care could even be enhanced as opportunities for improvement are identified and implemented,” added White.

Recommendations from both reports will be taken into consideration as management and the Dialysis team begin meeting this week to develop and implement an action plan.

“The team on the unit will have ‘ownership’ of the transformation process as we go forward,” said Jane Parr, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer. “We are here to support and work with them to develop and implement the process, and we believe their commitment and input will be invaluable in achieving and sustaining the healthy work environment they envision.”

The action plan for improvements may include “short-term wins” that can be implemented almost immediately, as well as long-range goals, to be attained over an extended period of time.

Conducted by Dr. Graham Lowe at the hospital’s request, the goal of the cultural audit was to identify recurring themes that would point to root causes affecting the culture within the Dialysis work environment.

Dr. Lowe is a leading and widely-respected expert in healthy workplaces. He recently authored the book *Creating Healthy Organizations: How Vibrant Workplaces Inspire Employees to Achieve Sustainable Success*, and has worked with many organizations to develop frameworks and metrics for healthy workplaces, including the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), the Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO), NRC Picker and Accreditation Canada.

Dr. Lowe conducted the cultural audit at PRHC in December, meeting confidentially with anyone in the Dialysis unit who wanted to participate. More than 50 interviews were held.

The hospital has acknowledged to the Dialysis team that the Hospital Improvement Plan and related changes that took place in the unit have contributed to difficulties in the working environment in the past. The hospital is committed to moving forward with a fresh start and to working collaboratively with the Dialysis team to make the unit a “great place for care and career.”

“We are looking forward to embracing this opportunity by working together to implement positive change,” said Dr. Garth Hanson, lead physician for PRHC’s Regional Renal program.

PRHC is striving continuously to strengthen our regional identity, further develop our clinical “Centres of Excellence” and to champion a healthy, productive and collaborative hospital environment for patients, staff, volunteers and physicians.

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