

Four Nurses Are Recognized with OLTCOA Leadership Awards

The OLTCOA recognized four nurses for their vision and leadership in long term care with an inaugural awards presentation on October 22, sponsored by 3M Health Care.

The four winners of the Nursing Leadership Award—Wynfield Long Term Care Residence registered nurse (RN) Sandra Kuchmak, Shalom Village RN Jeanette O’Leary, Bella Senior Care registered practical nurse (RPN) Diane Muma and Avalon Retirement Centre RPN Diane Stroop—accepted the honours during a gala lunch held in conjunction with the OLTCOA fall symposium.

by Camille Jensen

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Each winner received \$2,500 to support her continued professional development.

One of the winners, Ms. Muma, has been an RPN for nearly 40 years and said the recognition is an honour. “It was very emotional and I am very privileged,” she said after accepting the award.

Ms. Muma described the special role of nursing in long term as compared to other health care settings. “I like the one-on-one with the residents and learning about their pasts,” she said, adding that she builds relationships with the people she cares for. “It’s a very important role to take care of the elderly.”

A new initiative

Grace Sweatman, OLTCOA president, said the organization is proud to be presenting the new initiative, which recognizes and supports the tremendous nursing leadership that is the backbone of the care and services that long term care homes provide.

OLTCOA CEO Christina Bisanz echoed Ms. Sweatman’s comments, adding that the role of nurses in long term care is unique and critical. “They are the care plan and delivery leaders in long term care homes. They are also at the frontlines of managing the day-to-day relationships with care support partners, physicians, pharmacists, therapists and, of course, families,” she said. “I’ve witnessed the value of this leadership as I have toured our member homes over the last couple of months.”

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Judging leadership

Member homes of the OLTCOA were encouraged to nominate nurses, with all submissions anonymously reviewed by an external panel consisting of nursing leaders, professional associations and academia, as well as two nurses from the event sponsor, 3M Health Care.

The nurses were judged on three main criteria for leadership:

- cognitive leadership practices, such as challenging a process or experimenting and taking risks;
- behavioural leadership practices, including setting examples and fostering collaboration; and
- supportive leadership practices, such as recognizing the contributions of others and celebrating accomplishments.

Dianne Martin, executive director of the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, was one of the judges for the competition. She described reading examples of nurses going above and beyond as “breathtaking.” She said, “The effort that people are putting out to create a quality of life for the elderly is just amazing and certainly it was very difficult to decide.”

The presentation of the Nursing Leadership Award will become an annual event for the OLTCOA. **LTC**



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