

Department Head Blog October 19th, 2020

This week's blog starts with some great news from one of our community partners in the Department. The NSH announced the first Making Waves award winners. The Valley Regional Hospital Emergency Department received an Outstanding Contribution Award. The team implemented changes led by a leadership team with a champion for each designation. They brought on a patient family advisor to the leadership team, promoted designations to work to full scope of practice, developed staff care day to bring front line employees together to promote teamwork and shared visions for combating care give burnout and improved orientation with transient to practice process.

I am pleased to welcome Dr. Caitlin Wolfe back to the Dalhousie Department of Emergency Medicine. Caitlin finished her CCFP(EM) residency with us in 2016. She went on to complete a 2-year medical toxicology fellowship in London, England at Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Hospital Trust. She is the second (ever) fellowship-trained Medical Toxicologist in east of Montreal. In addition to being Department faculty member, she will join Dr. Nancy Murphy, MD CM, CCFP(EM), FACMT, as one of the Medical Toxicologists at the IWK Regional Poison Centre. As well, Caitlin is currently working on a Master's of Science in Public Health through the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

As sung by the Semisonic, "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end". Next week, Kathleen White, my administrative assistant, will retire after 33 years with the Department. She started as a data processor in the old VGH ED in 1987 (the year I graduated from high school!) before becoming a paramedic, working in both triage and communications. From her work helping to refine the departmental database, improving provincial onboarding procedures to developing an innovative academic promotions process and matrix, she has provided much valued support and assistance to five Department Heads over the course of her impressive career. Her in depth knowledge of and passion for the Department will be impossible to replace. I want to thank Kathleen for her many contributions to the Department and wish her all the best as she enters the next phase of her life.

As you know, our annual retreat that was planned to be held in Moncton this year has had to be rescheduled. We hope to head to Moncton for an in-person event next Fall, but in the meantime, please mark your calendars for the morning of December 4th for a much condensed version of the retreat. I am excited that we will launch our new departmental strategic plan, logo and introduce our Maritime wide governing councils (Executive, Research and Education). More details to follow shortly.

Our own Dr. Shannon MacPhee kicked off the third night of the ongoing virtual East Coast Fall Research Series with the keynote address "QI Versus Research". Dr Bethany Woodrow, a resident in Internal Medicine, won best presentation for the night for her study "Exploration of Interprofessional Interactions Between the ED and the MTU-ED Teams and Their Impact on Workplace Climate". Congratulations to all presenters for making this even another great success.

Greatness is frequently overshadowed by familiarity. In a Department home to so many nationally and internationally recognized experts in Emergency Medicine, this is often the case. Dr. Pat Croskerry continues to blaze the trail in the field of cognitive bias and medical error with the publication of his most recent book [The Cognitive Autopsy – A Root Cause Analysis of Medical Decision Making](#). Well done, Pat!

Dr. Alix Carter, Jason Emsley and I were part of a team led by Dr. Philip Tibbo from the Department of Psychiatry that received a 'Closing the Gaps in Cannabis Research' grant for \$98,940 from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) for our submission "*Understanding cannabis related physical and mental health presentations to the Emergency Department following legalization of non-medical cannabis use*". Congratulations team.

As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or news you would like me to share, I can be reached at emergency.medicine@dal.ca.

Cheers, Kirk