

## Profiles in Kidney Care – October 2007

### Providence Health's short stay program

Kidney patients and health care staff alike are reaping the benefits of a unique Providence Health Care initiative. The "short stay bed" program was developed by the Providence renal team to meet the needs of patients undergoing certain procedures that do not necessarily require an overnight stay in hospital.

"It's a very simple and sensible concept, but it took some time to get organized," says Michele Trask, operations leader for the renal program's inpatient unit. Before the program had its own short stay beds, says Michele, kidney patients who needed these often-routine procedures had to wait for a renal inpatient bed or a regular medical or surgical short stay bed.

Neither of those options was optimal, says Michele, who completed her Masters degree in public health in Sydney, Australia, and has been with the renal program for ten months. "The wait for a regular short stay bed is very long due to high demand from other patients, and as far as inpatient beds, the people who need those are very sick so will always take priority over someone who needs a routine procedure." Another disadvantage for patients was



**Providence Health Care, Short Stay Team:** From left, Suzanne Vallieres, Short Stay RN, Madelene Fraser, CNL 6B, Dr. Gary Nussbaumer, and Michele Trask, Operations Leader.

the possibility of ending up in a hospital bed in a department with no specific renal expertise. "Of course the patient would still get good care, but being treated by a professional with renal expertise is the ideal scenario," says Michele.

The six renal short stay beds are open from Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm, and are reserved for patients undergoing procedures such as renal biopsies, peritoneal dialysis tube insertion, and intravenous iron administration. "Patients are booked in advance, or they may be admitted from one of our outpatient clinics for observation," says Michele. Since the short stay program was established, the number of beds has increased and the program has evolved to keep pace with patient needs, for instance now accommodating some overnight patients who require specialized renal care.

The advantages of the short stay beds are many. One of the biggest is the prevention of emergency department visits and potential inpatient admissions. "If for example a



patient was feeling unwell after a dialysis run we could keep them in our short stay bed for a few hours instead of sending them to emergency, where they would have to wait for an assessment and treatment."

Other benefits include streamlining patient care within the renal program - through access to kidney specialists rather than general medicine staff who work at the regular short stay bedside - and promoting patient independence.

The downsides? Only one, says Michele - the beds are always full. "On the other hand, I guess you could see that as a measure of their success," she laughs.