

## This woman's work is never done

Brenda Uhrynuk's idea of a break from her job as Vancouver Island Health Authority's executive director for emergency, medicine, rehabilitation and staffing – and her newest role as executive sponsor for VIHA's renal program – sounds an awful lot like work, although admittedly in a more tropical setting.



Originally trained as a critical care nurse, Brenda makes a habit of using holiday time to work as a volunteer nurse with a group of physicians from Kamloops who regularly go to Guatemala to provide surgical and primary care health services for impoverished Guatemalans. She has been to Guatemala with the *Medicos en Action* group four times already, and is planning her next two-week stint for early in 2010.

“We have three teams that go down there; one does primary care and the other two do surgeries,” says Brenda, who works with one of the surgical teams in a small and relatively remote Guatemalan town. “Our group was the first to ever perform surgery in that area,” she adds.

Born in St. Catherine's, Ontario and trained as a nurse in Toronto. Brenda moved to BC in 1977 and worked in critical care at Vancouver General Hospital for 17 years. In 1993 she moved to Vancouver Island where she started her career as a health care administrator, eventually completing a Masters degree in leadership at Royal Roads University.

Although she has never been directly associated with renal care, since her recent appointment as VIHA executive sponsor for renal, Brenda has come to appreciate the effectiveness of the BC renal network model.

“I really like the network aspect, with people around the province contacting each other regularly in addition to the face-to-face meetings, and the focus on goals and quality and measuring performance,” says Brenda.

While her work with VIHA keeps her in Victoria two days a week, Brenda's home is in the Nanaimo area where she lives with her husband – curator of the Nanaimo Museum – and their two dogs. When she's not working, she enjoys travelling (not just to Guatemala!), gardening and kayaking.

“I don't think I'm a very interesting person,” she confides. “I spend too much time working!”