Celebration of National Nursing Week

In celebration of National Nursing Week, HealthPRO has created a professional profile series featuring several of its member clinicians from across the country, to recognize the dedication and achievements of the nursing profession. The first professional to be profiled is Linda McCann.

Linda McCann serves as Clinical Project Manager, Materials Management at Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region in Saskatchewan and is a member of HealthPRO’s Clinical Advisory Committee. Linda began her nursing career in 1970 at a small hospital in Flin Flon, Manitoba. Much of her career has been spent in either the operating room or emergency departments, and for the past three years, she has worked out of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina.

An inveterate traveller, Linda takes two or three big trips a year, most recently to Tanzania, Africa. She is also a diehard Roughriders fan.

What inspired you to become a nurse?
Years ago, when I had to decide about my schooling, women had fewer career choices. I knew I wasn’t cut out for teaching. Secretarial work wouldn’t have been challenging enough for me. So, nursing was what I chose. I know now that it was the best choice because nursing is my passion. There is nothing else I would want to do.

How has your role changed over the years?
When I first started in the operating room (OR), everything was “open view.” You did an appendectomy or bowel surgery that were open operations. Now, with technology like laparoscopy you make two holes instead of five. Unfortunately, as you change the technology, the cost for procedures also goes up because your equipment is far more expensive. This is one huge change I’ve experienced.

Along with that, as health care providers, we must become more fiscally responsible. Even at the bedside level, you don’t want to waste. You become far more responsible for the supplies you use. Consequently, you must think through the care for your patient in a more strategic way.
What is the biggest challenge you face as a hospital clinician?
In my current role, the biggest challenge is being fiscally responsible while helping the end user get the products they need; another item might be less expensive, but anything we use must be safe for the patient and meet acceptability standards for our Region, so quality remains paramount. It’s a delicate balance.

Have you had a career-defining moment—one patient or one case—which reaffirmed you are truly making a difference?
During my OR days, when I was a manager, we unfortunately experienced an unexpected death of a young child.

It was an incredibly sad situation. I shared hugs with them. I offered my shoulders to cry on. I answered as many questions as I could. I allowed them to stay on in the room for as long as they needed. And, I stayed with them.

As the parents left the room, they thanked me very much for staying with them and being there for them. I was meant to be there for them, to hopefully make their grief a little bit less. That was part of a larger plan for me.

Nursing roles are ever-evolving and this year’s National Nursing Week theme is “#YESThisIsNursing”. What is one thing readers might be surprised to learn is part of your role as a nurse?
As a Materials Management Specialist, I work with representatives from developing countries to pass along extra product samples that we can’t use within the Region. These representatives then raise the funds to send the supplies to places like Zambia. It is very much on a small scale—a box here, and a box there. But, having travelled to Africa I know how desperately those hospitals and clinics need supplies.

How does being part of a national Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) support your role as a hospital clinician?
Whether it’s a delivery problem or a product quality issue, I know HealthPRO will help me. Sometimes, it makes more of an impact when the issue is raised via the GPO.

The product alerts from HealthPRO bring awareness of product issues, and when we think an alert should be posted, we can send it along to them.

As a HealthPRO committee member, I also have an opportunity to meet with the national group where we share strategies and solutions for procurement in healthcare.

I am a nurse because…
I love it. There is nothing else I would rather do. Even in this day and age, I would not change my career path. I am a caring, compassionate caregiver and I know I am making a difference.