



“I enjoy being an RPN. It is not just my job it is my career. I love being in nursing and helping the community of Niagara. I like using my skills that I have acquired and applying critical thinking to provide the best client/patient focused care! RPNs have lots of opportunity for growth, this year I completed a RPNAO fellowship, and had the opportunity to increase awareness in the working environment and now am recognized as leader within the Niagara Health System.”

Hospital acquired infection continues to be a challenge today. 1 in 9 patients leave hospital with a hospital acquired infection (OHA, 2008). Being the point of entry for most patients, the Emergency Department is the ideal point to break the chain of transmission for hospital acquired infections. Lindsay Dracz RPN, graduated from the Fanshawe College diploma program six years ago and now works at the Greater Niagara General Hospital Emergency Department and Douglas Memorial Hospital Urgent Care Centre. She received a RPNAO leadership/clinical practice fellowship to focus on infection control practices in the Emergency Department. With the support of a mentoring team consisting of the Chief Nursing Officer and clinical manager of the Emergency Department and Urgent Care Centre her fellowship was a success.

Lindsay’s goal was 1) to raise awareness of the importance of best practice related to infection control, 2) to increase staff adherence to best practice guidelines in infection control and 3) to complete fellowship research and create an annotated bibliography. During this process Lindsay developed a close working relationship with the hospitals infection control department. She added to her knowledge base by researching the Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee's best practice documents and completing two site visits to Northumberland Hills in Cobourg and Brantford General Hospital where she was able to identify barriers and challenges in the Emergency Departments with respect to infection control.

Lindsay’s research resulted in the development of a survey that focused on the Emergency Department staffs basic knowledge, perceptions and behaviours related to infection control practices. After careful examination of the survey results, educational opportunities were identified and Lindsay presented findings through various methods; staff meetings using power point presentation and storey board, a point of care meeting held at the Douglas Memorial Hospital Urgent Care Centre, a "Lunch and Learn" session to disseminate information to the staff and presenting findings at 7 Grand Rounds that were held throughout the Niagara Health System.

After completion of her research and education Lindsay followed up with a post survey to evaluate the level of infection control best practice awareness and staffs acceptance of infection control best

practice, to determine if staffs perceptions, practices and knowledge had improved. Through continued education, raised expectations and increased awareness infection control best practice be improved. Lindsay is committed to continuing as an infection control champion and she plans to seek leadership opportunities at every opportunity and is also a member of the Nursing Professional Practice Advisory Council, a non violent crisis trainer and a SEIU Steward. She enjoys mentoring new hires and students and in her spare time volunteers for international medical missions and rowing regattas. On a personal level, Lindsay enjoys travel and sports, such as a recent visit to China and making time to attend Buffalo Sabres games.

As a result of this fellowship Lindsay has been given the opportunity to speak at a RPN convention in Orillia. *“This was an experience that has made me grow as a leader and professional. I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to partake in this fellowship”*