

## Art of my Craft

In our spring issue, we asked three nurse leaders to retrace their career path and reflect on how they got to their current positions. In this issue, we follow another leader on the trail of success.

### **Dr. Patricia Petryshen**

Dr. Patricia Petryshen was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister, Performance Management and Improvement Division, Ministry of Health Services, Government of British Columbia, effective January 1, 2004. For over eight years prior to that appointment, Dr. Petryshen was the Executive Vice-President of Programs, Hospital Relations and Chief Nursing Officer at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto and has held several senior leadership positions in large teaching and community hospitals in Ontario. Dr. Petryshen holds a Doctorate in Epidemiology from the University of Western Ontario and a Master's in Nursing from University of British Columbia. She has published widely and has conducted funded research with a focus on evaluation of clinical outcomes. Dr. Petryshen has chaired provincial and national committees, boards, and professional associations and is a recognized leader and acknowledged expert in the field of healthcare and performance measurement.



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The occasion of this article gave me an unexpected opportunity to reflect on how I entered nursing. One summer I was looking for employment, saw a posting for a nursing assistant in a home for the aged, applied, and got the job.

I had a wonderful experience; I still remember the residents and how satisfying I found the work to give them the best of care. Before this experience, it never occurred to me to become a nurse. But following that experience, I went into nursing because I had discovered within myself a real commitment to helping those in need. Over the years, I have never wavered from this conviction.

Throughout my career, I have been very fortunate to be involved in all aspects of healthcare from clinical practice and administration to teaching and research. The pivotal decision, I believe, was my choice to pursue advanced education early in my career. I entered the nursing degree program and went directly on to complete a master's in nursing and then a few years later entered a PhD program in epidemiology.

The highlight of my career has been my current appointment as Assistant Deputy Minister, Performance Management and Improvement Division, Government of British Columbia. As ADM, I am responsible for clearly defining the responsibilities

of the Ministry of Health Services and Health Authorities in performance management, developing and negotiating performance expectations for health authorities and advancing system improvement. This position draws upon my combination of training, knowledge and experience to enhance the health and wellness of thousands of people of all ages and from all cultures who seek services from the BC health system.

For me, the choice to be a healthcare professional has been endlessly challenging and profoundly satisfying. I know that my professional success is a collaborative achievement, and that I owe thanks daily to my many mentors along the way. I have been privileged to benefit from working with many outstanding colleagues and teams of expert professionals. They have been wonderful. Often, however, my most profound lessons have been learned from individual patients and families who have allowed me to care for them and share a part of their lives.



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