

Debra A. Bournes, RN, PhD Winner 2008 OHA Nursing Leadership Award



Innovation is her passion. Her commitment to nursing is unparalleled. She is compassionate, inspirational, genuine, charismatic; a leader, mentor, role model, creative thinker, advocate... and more. She is known for seeing possibilities and making them realities. A fun-loving, wild and crazy aunt, she has been known to travel the world, enter triathlons, ride giant bicycles through the streets of Toronto, “run for the cure” and help everyone around her believe they can do all this and more.

Debra is director of nursing, new knowledge and innovation at University Health Network and an international leader in healthcare research and administration. Her research advances recruitment and retention of nurses. Her accomplishments include:

- *Development of a research culture recognized as a Promising Practice by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation:* More than 131 nursing studies have been implemented; nurse researchers have received more than \$21 million in research funding and published more than 157 highly cited articles in high-impact journals; and more than 46 teams of novice nurse

researchers have developed or conducted research studies – many published or presented nationally and internationally.

- *Creation of the 80/20 Research Project:* This study is testing a model of employment for nurses, based on decades of evidence, that provides paid time for professional development. This quality improvement innovation has been recognized by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions across Canada as a Best Practice for developing quality of work life for nurses and advancing patient-centred practice. Implementation is underway in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and consultation is being provided to the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Switzerland.
- *Development of nursesfortomorrow.ca:* This web-based tool supports projection and analysis of health human resource needs and the development of proactive nursing HHR strategy. It enables leaders to make strategic recruitment and retention decisions and capitalize on government investments. Successful testing in both urban and remote settings has garnered international interest. It is being further developed for provincewide implementation, incorporating multiple healthcare sites and disciplines.

Staff nurses and leaders have this to say:

“Debra is an incredible leader. She has the ability to be part of the team while simultaneously leading the team and she makes me feel valued.”

“She is compassionate and genuine and cares about being a nurse and about other nurses. Debra is charismatic and her worldview and demeanor immediately draw you in. She has helped to open so many doors for people by providing them with the opportunity to see their potential.”

“Debra is a strong advocate for patient-centred care and staff satisfaction. She has demonstrated strong leadership [and is] a role model for nursing and ... an innovative and empowering speaker.”

Debra is a leader and innovator whose influence is advancing nursing practice and education, developing nursing leadership, and advancing nursing knowledge through research and the development of research capacity in nursing. She has also inspired quality improvement initiatives that benefit patients, increase staff satisfaction and improve organizational effectiveness. She is recognized as a scholar and leader by practising nurses, colleagues and academic peers. Her work is contributing to a new understanding of models of employment and practice in an integrated healthcare system, and is influencing decision-makers around the globe.

And she's just getting started.