



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2009

Emergency Department Nurses “Ask Because they Care” *PRHC’s training work in ER supports YWCA’s Week Without Violence*

Peterborough, ON: In preparation for Week Without Violence, October 11-17, Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) Emergency Department nurses will be further trained to better identify patients who are experiencing Domestic Violence.

The training initiative is being prepared in partnership with the YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton.

“Domestic violence champions for all areas of the Emergency Department and Occupational Health have been selected and are participating in a Train the Trainer education model,” said Bobbi Martin-Haw, Coordinator of PRHC’s Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Program.

“These nurses will educate their colleagues on the signs and symptoms of domestic violence and how to ask patients about domestic violence,” says Martin-Haw.

The nurses receive a training package that contains resource materials and a button that states: “We Ask Because We Care.”

“Wearing this button indicates that a PRHC staff member has received training,” says Martin-Haw. “It says at-a-glance that they are someone a woman experiencing abuse can talk with.”

Domestic Violence: A Local Response

“During the Week Without Violence, YWCAs across Canada and around the world focus on community education and action to prevent violence,” says Lynn Zimmer, YWCA Executive Director.

“This PRHC project is a great example of helping women, at a time when they have suffered serious harm and may be ready to tell someone about the violence. The Train the Trainer approach keeps the skills current and provides peer support to the nurses,” said Zimmer.

“Emergency Department nurses are often the first line of contact for many women suffering the effects of abuse. We want every woman to know and trust that if they go to the Emergency Department for medical help, someone will put the pieces together and privately ask whether the injuries or condition were caused by another person’s violence or abuse. Even if she doesn’t disclose the violence on one visit, she may gather the courage to do so the next time. It is very important that the question be consistently asked,” added Zimmer.

Domestic Violence: A Local and National Crisis

“From April 2008 to April 2009, 220 women and 91 children received help at the YWCA’s Crossroads Shelters. Six hundred women received our free counselling services before or after they left the violent or abusive partner.” says Zimmer. “In addition Crossroads staff answered 10,466 crisis and support calls.”

“At PRHC, over the last 2 years, 90 women have come to the hospital seeking medical attention as a result of domestic violence.” said Martin-Haw. “Each one of these women was cared for by one of the on-call Domestic Violence Response Nurses.”

“These nurses are on-call 24/7 and are specially trained to provide medical care, documentation, safety planning and support to these victims of violence. If the victim wishes, injuries can be documented through photography if police are involved or the women is considering a police involvement in the future,” says Martin-Haw.

As Peterborough faces dealing with domestic violence, so does the nation—out of all the female homicides in Canada, 50% were killed by a partner or someone they knew. Furthermore, 41% of these women talked to a health care provider within a year of their death.

PRHC Supporting Week Without Violence

“PRHC is a strong supporter of Week Without Violence,” says Sheila Hamilton, PRHC’s Vice President of Clinical Services, and a volunteer YWCA Board Member. “It’s through well-developed partnerships that the hospital and community agencies can deliver timely care and support women and children in an ongoing way during times of crisis.”

“There is more we can and must do to keep women safe,” says Hamilton. “PRHC is committed to its patients; and our Emergency Department nurses will now be better prepared than ever to deliver the right care and the right time to victims of domestic violence.”

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

- **Call Jonathan Bennett to arrange.**
- **Photos: ER Nurses wearing buttons**
- **Print/ TV/ Radio Interviews:**
 - **Bobbie Martin-Haw, Coordinator of PRHC’s Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Program**
Availability: Thursday, 0900-1100 and 13:30-14:30 or
Friday, 0900-1100 and after 13:00
 - **Lynn Zimmer: 743-3526 or lzimmer@ywcapeterborough.org**

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