

Canadian College of Health Leaders Eastern Ontario Chapter SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

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You are about to take on a new position – what is the new role?

On February 19th, I will begin as CEO of the Rideau Community Health Services.

This means a move from acute care leadership to primary and community care. What new opportunities will you face?

I have worked in all sectors in health care with the last 15 years being in acute care. With the move back to primary care I will be returning to where my management experience began.

When I think about primary care what is most exciting is the opportunity to influence health and wellbeing – to be proactive rather than reactive. When we have positive

impact at the primary care level, the benefits are felt across the entire health care system.

Are there any upcoming projects you are particularly passionate about?

Yes – I am excited about a project called 'Expanding Team Based Care'. This project will strive to ensure that every patient in need is connected to the right health care practitioner at the right time. We are working to improve integration and we are working collaboratively with patients, physicians, hospitals and other stakeholders. We are focusing on preventative care using evidenced based practices to connect patients to the health care

Biography-in-Brief



Michele has over thirty years of clinical and health management experience. She managed Stoneridge Manor in Carleton Place and the primary care clinic at Centretown Community Health Centre. She was also Clinical Manager and Interim CNO at the Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital before becoming VP of Patient Care Services and CNE at the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital.

Michele is recognized in the South East LHIN and within the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville service systems as a dynamic leader and facilitator for service partnerships to improve access to health and social services for all.

professionals and services they require. We are using both health equity and quality improvement approaches in the design and the delivery of the project.

What do you think the next 5 years in healthcare will bring?

I expect there will be a lot of change. For example, there is a very large HIS renewal project in the South East LHIN that is very exciting – hopefully we will see a fully integrated health record for our patients within 5 years.

Linking quality to funding is also an important focus of acute care, and is up and coming in primary care. Getting the right data is one of the most difficult and most important components to get right.

What are some of the key challenges?

Human resource is one of the bigger challenges right now – in acute but also in primary care. In the smaller urban and more rural settings, we know we have great communities and a lot to offer, but recruitment can be challenging. Our approach is to have people come out and fall in love with our area and

our community. There is something to be said for living within 5 minutes of the lake. Understanding the wants and needs of our people is of utmost importance.

What milestones, events or people have brought you to where you are today?

For me, having a wonderful mentor made a big difference. Christine Ferguson (who is currently a VP in Renfrew) gave me my first acute care management position, and acted as a mentor to me. When we discussed my success in achieving the role Christine said, “She recognized a passion in me for what I do”. This has stayed with me throughout my career. After more than 35 years I still have a passion for what I do!

Any advice for those new to leadership in healthcare?

Mentorship is important. New leaders should find someone who they are comfortable with and who has the same basic philosophies as they do. They should find that right fit – the kind of person who inspires you to do better. Finding that person can be the impetus needed to

take a step into leadership, or personal career change.

Any last thoughts or comments?

I can't think of another field that has the same diversity or has seen as much change as health care. I am in the 36th year of my career, and am still excited to come to work each and every day.