



Association of General Hospital Psychiatric Services

The Association of General Hospital Psychiatric Services (AGHPS)

Jane Chamberlin Award 2021 Selection

Hospital: Humber River Regional Hospital

Candidate's Name: Darlene Ginsberg

Position: Manager, Adult Mental Health, Addictions and Consultation Liaison Programs

Email address: dginsberg@hrh.ca

The pandemic has been challenging in many respects for both the patients we serve but also among the staff who serve them. Burnout has often been discussed and getting through tasks that seemed easy to accomplish before, seem daunting even on the best days. It is in this environment that a true leader is able to not only cope with the many changes the pandemic has forced upon us, but improve the environment we work in.

As the manager of the outpatient mental health program, Darlene Ginsberg has a very large portfolio of services to manage and even pre-pandemic, I was in awe of her ability to wear the many "hats" required of this role from leader to collaborator to advocate. Her passion to serve patients inspires my work on an individual level.

When the pandemic began, our program as a whole was hit with various challenges from staff needing to move to different areas of the hospital to beginning to deliver virtual care. She supported staff through these transitions, all the while emphasizing the need to continue to provide excellent care to the patients we serve. She was adamant about trying to ensure we balance both staff concerns around safety, while also ensuring that patients at high risk of decompensation still received the care they needed.

However, while many managers in hospitals across the world faced and met these challenges, Darlene also used this opportunity to tackle the issue of lengthy wait times to access psychiatric services by helping push transformation in how care is delivered at our hospital. She saw the pandemic as not just continuing to provide care, but a chance to transform the care we were providing. She helped change our program from a model where all referred patients first see a psychiatrist before accessing programs, to a stepped care model where patients receive different intensities of services best matched to their individual needs.

While the work of transforming an outpatient program takes the efforts of many clinicians, physicians, managers and stakeholder input, it also takes a strong leader to advocate for and support the team in this work.

I recall many of her discussions with staff and physicians encouraging them to ask the question "If we could start from scratch, what would we change?" This to me highlighted two important

approaches. The first was not making change for change sake as she always emphasized the need to continue what was working. The second was the spirit of collaboration she invited amongst the colleagues she works with. She approached the process with humility encouraging our team to provide input/feedback and ideas throughout the process.

The work has been challenging and time consuming. There have been many nights where she would work late in the evening only to start early again the next day. And while she worked hard and beyond regular work hours of the day, she also tried to model the need for self-care talking candidly like how a flooded email inbox can be overwhelming, or emphasize the importance of taking vacation days. Her ability to achieve balance has been a model for how I've been trying to cope through the increased demands of the pandemic.

While we have started our new model of care, much work continues to be done to improve the psychiatric services we provide to our patients. In front of all these changes, Darlene's leadership continues to be strong and continues to inspire the work of many including myself.

Thank you for considering Darlene Ginsberg as a recipient of the Jnr Chamberlin award as I feel she is truly deserving of this recognition.

Submitted by
Dr. Joshua Dias, Staff Psychiatrist
Humber River Hospital