

Sharon Provost

*Executive Director
Vancouver Coastal Health*



Health care is under continual strain to meet demand, with dedicated professionals working overtime and giving it their all to ensure optimal patient care. Thankfully, people like Sharon Provost are there, helping the machinery of patient care function, helping nurses to practice safely, effectively and efficiently.

Sharon gets the most out of nursing processes and systems while never forgetting the people who run them. As Executive Director of Strategic and Operational Regional Scheduling and Timekeeping with Vancouver Coastal Health, Sharon has helped steer the eASI Electronic Scheduling and Timekeeping project to design and implement standard business processes, a regional staffing service, and implement electronic scheduling for about 20,000 VCH employees. This major initiative is just the latest in a string of projects throughout Sharon's career that have helped Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) meet its key goal of patient safety, even in times of fiscal uncertainty and restraint.

Sharon has been instrumental in developing procedures and policies to maximize efficiency while countering fatigue, knowing that tired staff can lead to increased adverse outcomes for patients. This is an extremely arduous and continuing challenge for the entire health care sector. To help deal with it, Sharon has led the three-year Provincial Responsive Shift Scheduling Initiative across VCH and in collaboration with other health authorities. Previously, she worked in a range of nursing administration positions running multi-million dollar budgets and many hundreds of employees, across specialized care areas as diverse as trauma and burns, neurosciences, and orthopedics. "Due to her work, many areas of VCH have been able to improve responsiveness and support for nurses," says Executive VCH Director of the Employee and Family

Assistance Program, Stacy Sprague. These changes effected improvements in patient flow and reductions in staff sick time, in line with VCH's organizational goals.

"Sharon's wealth of knowledge of how a hospital department and nursing unit run from both the clinical bedside perspective and from a financial, safety and nursing management perspective has helped her implement a sustainable standardized timekeeping and scheduling system," Sprague says. "The system reduces errors, lets us view trends and provides information for nurses to do their job effectively."

Another major initiative Sharon developed was a framework for nurses on her units to receive 360-degree feedback on their professional performance. This peer assessment became the basis for a full performance review and individualized professional plans to help ensure optimal professional practice. Sharon also lead the Experienced Resource Nurse Pool project which put experienced nurses in float pools, creating full time positions for new graduates and allowing staff to consolidate skills in a safe environment.

Sharon doesn't just rely on numbers, but takes the time to listen and understand the challenges and issues of her teams. "One of her greatest strengths is humanity," says VCH Executive Director of Clinical Education Barb Lawrie. "She is never too busy to inquire about your day, or ask about your sick child, for instance—even though she is one of the busiest people I know! She values your time and genuinely cares about people." That balanced focus on processes and people has helped make her one of the most effective nursing administrators in British Columbia.



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