

# Southwest Family Health Centre: Nurses Making a Difference



With four family doctors and two registered nurses (RNs) working in one practice, things at Southwest Family Health Centre can get a little busy! This team found that they were experiencing challenges in getting patients seen by a healthcare provider in a timely fashion; so they decided to add a registered practical nurse (RPN) to their team. This new team member, Cynthia, is responsible for the routine aspects of healthcare visits — getting patients to their clinic rooms, taking blood pressure, performing ear syringes, providing injections, triaging phone calls and more. As a result, the doctors and RNs on the team are able to spend more time with patients who have more complicated health problems that require a higher level of medical expertise. Having an extra nursing team member has also enabled the physicians to more easily keep on top of their paperwork each day (there is a lot to write down!).

This team has also taken advantage of the skills and expertise of their nurses by running nurse-led clinics while some of their team doctors are away, and by utilizing nursing staff to offer more preventive care to their patients. Southwest Family Health Centre made it a goal to offer preventive care information and/or testing to every patient in their practice. To do this, they identified all of their patients who were due for a preventive care visit (such as a visit to discuss fecal occult blood testing or get a cervical screening (pap) test) and booked appointments; the nurse then completed all information sharing or screening with the patient. This allowed the physicians to spend more time talking to patients about more complex health issues, and it has also encouraged patients to play a role in actively maintaining their own health!

