

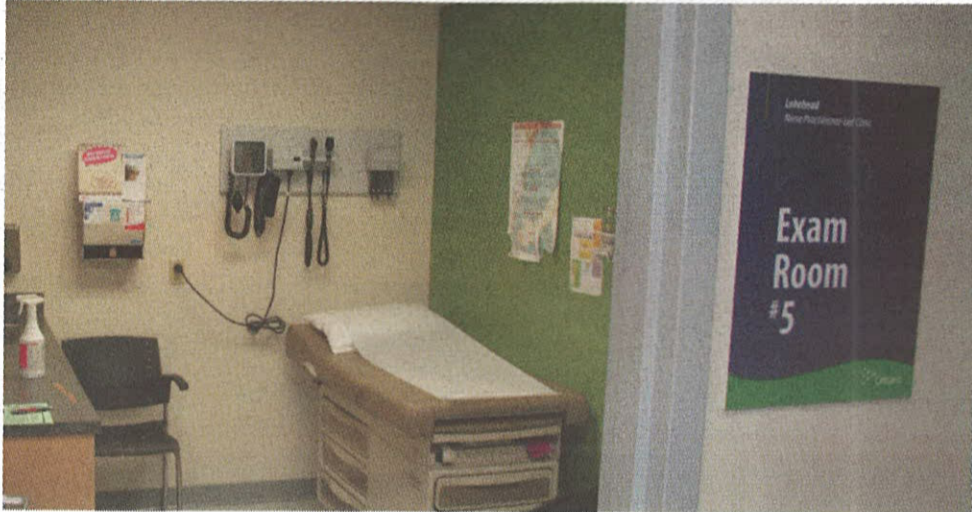
# Lakehead Nurse Practitioner-LED Clinic Provide Valuable Service in Thunder Bay

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER  
**Thunder Bay BUSINESS**

The number of people in Thunder Bay that don't have access to a family doctor has been well known in recent years. A recent initiative by the Ontario government has helped this shortage with the opening of nurse practitioner clinics.

Ontario. The original push in Thunder Bay came from a group of local Nurse Practitioners who promoted the idea of this clinic for Thunder Bay. Sudbury had the first Nurse Practitioner clinic in Ontario and based on that the government decided to fund more in the province. Thunder Bay is one of the original Nurse Practitioner clinics in Ontario.

Pam Delgaty is the Clinical Director and



Lead Nurse Practitioner at Lakehead Nurse Practitioner LED Clinic. Kyle Jessiman is Clinic Administrator. It was fun to visit their very professional 5000 square floor office located on the main floor of the former McKellar Hospital on Archibald Street in the Southward of Thunder Bay. Their office includes 7 exam rooms plus areas for the registered dietician and social worker on staff. The staff also includes 4 Nurse Practitioners, a pharmacist part time plus 3 support staff.

The Nurse Practitioner-LED Clinic opened in the fall of 2010, some 3 years ago. The Ontario government has since supported 26-nurse practitioner clinics in

"The goal is to identify problems and prevent them so people have a healthier life. That is what we do. A lot of what we do is patient education and prevention. Lifestyle change is important and we have a dietician and social worker on staff to help in this area. Healthcare in Ontario is really moving towards health teams and people will come to expect this type of service." said Pam Delgaty.

Nurse Practitioners are Registered Nurses whom have a certain degree of experience and have gone back to school initially for 1 year in a certificate program. Now it is moving to a Masters program where some advance skills are being learned. Nurse Practitioner's can now pre-



Kyle Jessiman is Clinic Administrator and Pam Delgaty is the Clinical Director and Lead Nurse Practitioner at Lakehead Nurse Practitioner LED Clinic.

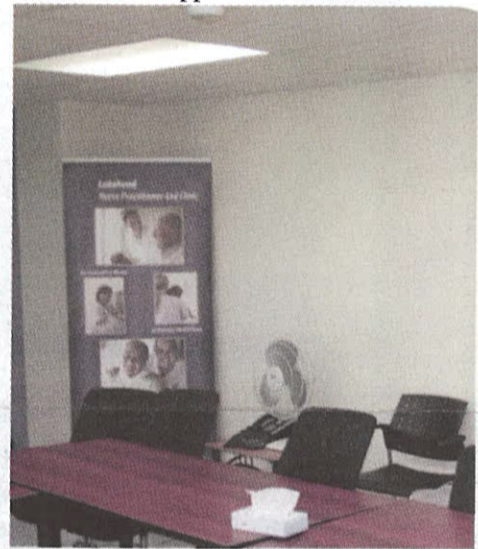
scribe medications, communicate diagnosis and order diagnostic tests such as X ray's or labs. The only medications they can't order currently are narcotics but that may change shortly as well. Narcotics provide more risk for abuse. You need a 4-year university degree as a registered nurse and then two years of experience ideally in a primary health care role. Then you go back for a series of courses, which are now a Masters over a two-year program. You are looking at 8 years training in total.

"We have 3200 patients here at the clinics, 800 for each Nurse Practitioner. 800 is a good balance because we don't want our patents waiting too long. We were full after 1 1/2 years of operation as it takes time to bring patients on. We focused on anyone who didn't have a health care provider and they were eligible to come here. We have always had a waiting list of patients. The only other options for people are walk in clinics or emergency at the hospital. Many people don't do any health care if they can't get in." said Kyle Jessiman.

"The Lakehead Nurse Practitioner-LED Clinic has a physician we work with, DR. Rick Almond who has been tremendously supportive of Nurse Practitioners. If certain things are out of our scope we discuss with him and can then refer to specialists. We provide care across the life span from infants to families and seniors. Chronic disease management is one of our focuses. People need ongoing routine care and it is better if they can get that at a setting like this," said Pam Delgaty. "If you have diabetes we have a partnership with Diabetes Thunder Bay who come in once per month and work closely with us. The social worker can help here as well and the team

approach is important."

"The clinic had worked well. We run a patient satisfaction survey ongoing and get 98 % positive on many components covered such as wait times and quality of care. We do have a wait list currently but you can fill out an application on line at



www.ledpc.com or here at the office. We have some patients leave or pass away and can then take on more patients," said Kyle Jessiman. "We have the clinical rooms for two more Nurse Practitioners and hopefully the government will fund us for that shortly. There is the need in Thunder Bay and many people are still looking for primary health care with the number we hear anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000. There are also some family health physicians that are taking on new patients and another Nurse Practitioner clinic in Thunder Bay. We feel every person on Thunder Bay should have access to primary care."

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