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Special Education
Issue Inside

April 2006
Volume 9, Issue 4

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Education and Products

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For more information please contact:

Advertising: Cheryl Lee

cheryl@mccronehealthbeat.com

Toll Free – Ph 1.800.727.0782

Publisher: Jan Henry, McCrone Publications

mccrone@interbaun.com

Letters & Articles: Jay Sherwood

jay@mccronehealthbeat.com

Graphic Design: Jackie Vogt

design@mccronehealthbeat.com

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9768 – 170 Street, #319

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Ph: 780.413.9342 Fax: 780.413.9328

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Our Mission

To provide healthcare professionals with job opportunities, continuing education, new products, resources, and editorials to help them succeed in their careers.

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Health professionals have always needed to keep their skills current. It is however becoming more difficult to do so with the rapid expansion of research and subsequent knowledge in all the disciplines. As well, many of the pieces of legislation regulating health professionals contain requirements to demonstrate continuing competence. Participating in continuing education and documenting that participation is one way of demonstrating that professionals are continuing to be competent to do the job they are doing.

When professionals enter a profession their knowledge and skill level have met the standard required in professional legislation. How long that level of competence lasts without continuous learning is subject to some debate. However, it is generally agreed that because of rapid knowledge turnaround, professionals need to continue to re-educate themselves. Fortunately, the equally rapid expansion of distance learning opportunities has provided some solutions for meeting the needs of busy health professionals.

The terms distance education and distance learning are often used interchangeably in program advertisements and much of the research. The hallmarks of these definitions are that the teacher and learner are separated physically through geography and that the control of learning is in the learners' hands rather than the teacher's. The earliest form of distance learning was in the form of correspondence courses. A learner enrolled in one of these courses would receive a package of material

Editorial: by Jennifer (Jay) Sherwood, BScN, MEd.

Distance Education, Distance Learning: An Overview

in the mail, sometimes including a list of readings and a time frame for meeting the objectives of the course and writing the final exam. There was little or no contact with a teacher and communication was through the mail.

In the last half of the 20th century, educators have added a vast array of distance education methodologies to the original correspondence course. Public and professional interest in distance education remains high today especially in a country like Canada where the population is widely distributed over the vast regions of our country. Many institutions, both public and private, offer credit and not-for-credit courses and programs from a distance, using technologies that are available and suited to a diverse population of learners.

The biggest issues for learners participating in distance education are: maintaining their motivation to learn; and, the discipline to work on learning on their own without the contact with other learners and their teachers. Health professional learners like others learn in different ways. In distance education, learner characteristics such as active listening and the ability to work independently in the absence of face to face contact with a teacher and other learners become crucial to success. Instructional designers, recognizing that interaction with teachers and other learners is supportive to the learners' success have incorporated strategies into distance education courses and programs that make such interaction easier. The electronic phenomena of e-mails and

internet have forever changed the ways in which distance learners communicate with each other and with their teachers. There has been a lot of attention given to those innovations in education but as the experts observe, the majority of institutions are still not ready to take full advantage of the technology that most closely mimics a traditional classroom, and structure of learning with which it is associated.

Online courses provide for rich interaction between learners and teachers and among all learners enrolled in the course. Online courses often have scheduled learning activities or assignments in which learners may work in collaborative groups or participate in discussion forums. Individual contact with teachers follows a pattern similar to that in a classroom. Usually, expectations for frequency of communication between learners and teachers are established at the beginning of the course. Communication and interaction can be through e-mail and bulletin board. (BCIT Website: www.bcit.ca) Some other features of online education are: learning materials can be posted in "real time"; outside professionals can be electronically brought into the course to provide the benefit of their expertise; graphics, text, and sound can be integrated into a single tool; a classroom home page can be developed that covers information about the course such as the syllabus, exercises, literature references, and teacher's biography; and, links to information on the internet that would be useful to learners in the class can be provided. In other words, online education can become a "virtual classroom", – a very appealing idea for technologically savvy learners!

To enhance competence and career progression, almost all the regulated health professions encourage their members to pursue continuing education and credentials, such as undergraduate post diploma and graduate degrees. As a result distance education has become crucial in providing professionals wherever they live or work with opportunities to pursue further education to meet their professional needs. As distance education continues to grow in popularity and educators will meet the challenges of providing a distance environment conducive to successful learning.

For those of you who would like to read more about Distance Education I am referring you to www.petersons.com/distancelearning. Athabasca University's website (www.athabasca.ca) carries both the latest and archival copies of The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning free of charge and a search using the keywords "Distance Education" or "Distance Learning" will produce plenty of information on this topic.

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Over 70 programs for health professionals

by Jennifer (Jay) Sherwood, BScN, MEd.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) has five main campuses and 10 satellite campuses serving over 45,000 students at any given time. Founded in 1964, BCIT is a polytechnic institute. According to one of its descriptive brochures, "The term polytechnic comes from the Greek words for "many" and "arts". ... a polytechnic institute offers a diverse range of programs. What makes a polytechnic institute different from a university is that the merging of academic and applied (practical) learning is emphasized. Polytechnic institutes also maintain close ties with industry and conduct research."

In support of BCIT's School of Health Sciences advertisement in this issue I interviewed Deacon Devlin, Marketing and Communications Officer. The purpose of the interview was to learn a bit more about the school, its offerings and its program delivery options. While the school provides entry level programs in a variety of health disciplines, our focus during the interview was on continuing professional education courses and programs.

Devlin explained that there are a number of different credentials offered in the area of continuing professional education. These include: certificates, advanced specialty certificates, diplomas, and degrees and in at least one case, a graduate certificate. On the BCIT website there are over 70 different programs to provide health professionals with opportunities to advance their knowledge and skills in a specialty area of their respective disciplines. Most of these programs are offered through one or more of the delivery options that allow students to complete the requirements from home or workplace. Broadly speaking the delivery options fall into two categories. These are: distance education and distributed learning.

Distance education is a formal process that engages instructors in helping students reach learning goals without having teacher and learner in the same classroom. Distributed learning puts learners in contact with each other so that they can work towards learning goals cooperatively. The most common delivery method in the distance education category is the "correspondence" option. Correspondence courses are primarily self directed with the student completing the work at their own pace within a specified time period. Some of these self directed courses/programs are term based and last 12 weeks, others are part of a "continuous intake" process which allows the student to complete the program within one year from the time of registration.

The most commonly used delivery option in the distributed learning category in the health sciences area is that of "guided learning". In this option, learners receive sets of course materials and have 12 weeks to prepare for their final examination or evaluation. As well, assignment due dates are scheduled. Help from the instructor is available at set times each week through telephone, e-mail, or WebCT. These courses frequently encourage group work through telephone conferencing or computer technologies. Devlin and I agreed that this kind of delivery option is probably the most appealing to people who are making their first foray into the field of distance education since it offers the kind of support that people need to keep on track and get help with problem areas while using common technologies.

Some courses are offered through an option called online learning. These courses provide a "virtual classroom" with opportunities for rich interaction between and among the instructor and other students. Online learning courses often have

See BCIT page 7

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Leadership & management education for health care professionals

by Jennifer (Jay) Sherwood, BScN, MEd.

The development of health professional education at McMaster University began in the 1940's with the establishment of the School of Nursing. In later years, a medical school was founded and today educational programs in nursing, medicine, midwifery and rehabilitation science coexist in the Faculty of Health Sciences. This year, the School of Nursing will proudly celebrate its 60th anniversary. The School of Nursing at McMaster University offers a number of programs that are considered to be part of continuing professional education for nurses and health care professionals. These include a Post RN baccalaureate program, a Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner program, a Graduate Program in Nursing, Psychiatric Mental Health Program, and the Leadership and Management Program. For the purpose of this article, I shall focus on the Nursing and Health Care Leadership/Management Program. Earlier this month, I spoke to Dr. Colleen McKey, Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing and the Director of the Nursing and Health Care Leadership/Management Program. Dr. McKey explained that this program had its roots with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and the Canadian Health Care Association (CHA). For many

years the Program was offered through these two organizations by correspondence. In the early 1990's, both CNA and CHA made the decision to award the Program to a university and McMaster University competed for and won the right to deliver the program. Since then, the Leadership/Management Program has gone through a number of changes that reflect the changing education technologies, the changing health care system, and the evolution of roles for both formal and informal leaders and managers.

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See *Leadership and Management* page 7

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Shiatsu theory integrates the wisdom of eastern medical philosophy with western anatomy, physiology and pathology, and recognizes that body, mind and spirit are a unified whole. It is an excellent complement to other forms of therapy, and regular treatments help to maintain a state of health and wellness.

See Langara page 6

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Centre for Continuing Studies

MALASPINA UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE'S ONLINE PROGRAM

The changing landscape
of the health care field

Vancouver Island, BC

Malaspina University-College is proud to announce the delivery of the online Continuing Care program commencing September, 2006.

As a result of the changing landscape of the health care field, Malaspina University-College recognized the need for a comprehensive health administration program designed to meet the needs of health care professionals fulfilling administrative functions.

Malaspina University-College enlisted the services of a professional researcher with a background in health care to complete a labour market assessment. Representatives from stakeholder groups included students, instructors, administrators and a dynamic cross section of health care professionals.

Through this research and a consultative process, Malaspina University-College designed a program for a credential in health services administration in continuing care. This innovative program provides students with a unique blend of theoretical and practical applications where students have access to studies in: health care systems and policy; human resource development; organizational leadership, technical administration skills, ethics of delivering continuing care; quality assurance and risk management; gerontology; accounting; management of support services; client care services; and nutrition. "There is such a demand for this program across Canada and the delivery of an online credential is very timely", stated June Rushton, Instructor/Curriculum Developer.

The online format provides ease of access for all students, fostering flexible learning opportunities for part-time and full-time learners. It offers a supportive educational environment for adult students and working professionals. "This is an ideal program for the working professional", notes Program Manager Cheryl O'Connell. "The program will meet the needs of practitioners/students in remote communities who require training, but can't leave their jobs and don't have access to skills upgrading."

The program will be of interest to individuals pursuing or currently employed in the health care industry in; Long term care, Residential Care, Assisted Living Care, Extended Care, Complex Care, Palliative Care or Hospice Care.

For individuals questioning the suitability of this program, consider the following questions: Are you an experienced R.N. in a supervisory position? Do you have additional knowledge for your leadership role? Are you aware of the new legislation required and accountability rules for health care? Do you know what changes would benefit your organization? Are your staff aware of best practices? Do you know how to pass this information on to your staff? Do you love a challenge? Do you enjoy working with people? Do you strive to succeed?

For more information on the Online Continuing Care Administration Program please contact Glenys Wood at (250) 740-6169 or email at woodg@mala.bc.ca.

Langara from page 5

What is the Langara College Centre for
Holistic Health Studies?

Langara College Continuing Studies is a leader in complementary therapy education programs. The

Centre for Holistic Health Studies offers an expanding range of clinical-education programs that reflect the changing nature of health care. For full program information call Langara College Continuing Studies at 604 323 5322 to order a Continuing Studies catalogue, or visit our website and online calendar at www.langara.bc.ca/cs

Special Programs
over the summer:

Dr. Melinda Connor, director of the Karen Connor Optimal Healing Research Program associated with the University of Arizona is presenting a weekend workshop: **Biofield Research: Latest Developments**, June 9, 2006; **Energetic Repair of Spinal Cord Tissue**, June 10, 2006; **Tracing the Energy Wave**, June 10; **Advanced Distance Healing**, June 11, 2006

Debbie Danbrooke of Healing Music will be offering a **Labyrinth Walk and teaching The Spirit of the Shaku-hachi**, Saturday, July 15, Workshop is 10 am to 3 pm and Labyrinth Walk is 7-9 pm.

Dr. Meg Jordan will present **Shamanism in the Modern World**, June 3, 2006 and an **Overview of Complementary Therapy**, July 8, 2006.

Astin, J. (2002). *An integral approach to medicine, Alternative Therapies*, 8(2), 70-75.

Ballegaard, S., Norrelund, S. & Smith, D. (1996). *Cost-benefit of combined use of acupuncture, Shiatsu and lifestyle adjustment for treatment of patients with severe angina pectoris, Acupuncture Electrotherapy Research*, 21(3-4), 187 - 97.

Benor, D.J. (2002). *Energy medicine for the internist, Medical Clinics of North America*, 86(1), 105-125.

National Institute for Health (2005). *Prayer and spirituality in health: Ancient practices, modern science, CAM at the NIH Focus on Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 12(1), 1-5.

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- Ensure patient and employee safety

Qualifications

- Current CARN Nursing Registration
- Excellent interpersonal & communication skills
- Ability to prioritize and work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team
- Self-directed

Other Information

- Hours of work are usually Monday to Friday
- 8 hour days
- Reliable vehicle

How to Apply: Jodi Wilson, Human Resources

E-mail: jwilson@aetashealth.com

Fax: (403) 232-8770 Please state location of interest

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Director of Clinical Services,
Greenslopes Private Hospital,
Newdegate Street,
Greenslopes Qld 4120 Australia
E: emmerj@ramsayhealth.com.au

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organizations to: provide education to current and future leaders, to develop leadership capacity, and to be an integral component of succession planning for clinical and front line leadership roles.

One of the underpinnings of the Program is a model education, known in the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University as the "McMaster Approach". This approach to learning was developed in the 1960's by a group of "reform minded" educators when McMaster started the medical school. When I asked Dr. McKey to explain what is meant by this approach she indicated it is based on a problem based, self-directed approach that supports critical inquiry and life long learning. A belief that students need the tools to become life-long learners with strong problem solving and team abilities underlies the community-oriented, people centered, interdisciplinary and problem based approach to learning.

Dr. McKey says that the Leadership/Management Program is designed for nurses and other health care professionals. The Program continues to be endorsed by the CNA and accepts students from across Canada and around the world. The Program is currently comprised of six courses and provides elective credit towards a baccalaureate degree in nursing. The concept of leadership is approached from both clinical and business perspectives, reflecting both the CNA's and the Canadian College of Health Service Executives' position of leadership.

Reviewed and revised annually, the Program reflects the current health care environment, structure and funding of the health care system, current thinking on health care policy and human resource management. McKey also mentioned that one of the courses – the "Leading Teams in Health Care Organizations" course addresses the effective operation of interprofessional teams in organizations.

The newest course introduced in the Program for 2006 is the Advanced Leadership/Management in Health Care Organizations course. The Advanced course builds on the core course of the Program, the Leadership/Management in Health Care Organizations. The Advanced course is designed to enhance health care providers' knowledge and skills related to leadership/management topics including: transformational and quantum leadership, emotional intelligence and organizational culture. A focus of the course is the critical analysis and application of theories and concepts to the current work environment. While the Program can be completed entirely by distance education, currently four courses are offered in "tutorial" class format as well. Leadership/Management, Advanced Leadership/Management, Leading Effective Teams, and Conflict Management are available in tutorial format both on-site at McMaster and other locations across Ontario. Contact with the Leadership/Management Program office

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scheduled learning activities including collaborative group work or discussion forums.

At the conclusion of our conversation, I asked Devlin what stands out most for him when he talks about learning at BCIT. Without hesitation he emphasized the role of a polytechnic institute with its commitment to maintaining quality of learning and the relevance of such learning to the workplace. Students learn to do by doing and are encouraged to apply theory directly through assignments and

their daily work. Throughout the programs there is contact with clinical areas, through arranged, scheduled, or self directed clinical experience and each program has an advisory committee whose members represent the latest and the best practices in the relevant clinical area.

**For more information: Website: www.bcit.ca
Phone: (604) 434-5734 or 1-800-663-6542
Mailing address: 3700 Willingdon Avenue,
Burnaby, BC., V5G 3H2**



The Weeneebayko General Hospital

located in Moose Factory, Ontario, on the southern tip of James Bay is a fully accredited general treatment acute care facility servicing a population of 10,000 residents in the Mushkegowuk Territory.

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**Human Resources Department, Weeneebayko General Hospital,
P.O. Box 34, Moose Factory, ON P0L 1W0
Ph: 705-658-4544 ext. 2327 Fx: 705-658-4917 Email: della.miller@wha.on.ca**

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BC, Ontario, NWT and Nunavut Careers

will provide information and assistance for an organization to become a host site for tutorial courses.

Students successfully completing individual courses are awarded university credit and a certificate of completion by the McMaster University, School of Nursing.

For more information: Nursing and Health Care Leadership and Management Program - Ph (905) 525-9140 ext 22409 or Fx (905) 570-0667 or Email mgtprog@mcmaster.ca and Visit www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/nursing/distancedistance.htm



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The closing date will be May 5, 2006. Competition #: 041-043006-NII.

Apply to: Human Resources Administrator, Nunavut Arctic College, P.O. Box 600, Iqaluit, NU XOA 0H0. Telephone: 867/979-7221. Fax: 867/979-7108. E-mail smulley@nac.nu.ca





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Advance Online with Athabasca University's Nursing & Health Studies

Accessible. Accommodating. Achievable. Do these words describe what you are looking for in your nursing education? Whether you are a successful RN looking for an opportunity to complete your BN, an LPN planning to become a BN, or a health-care professional looking for graduate education Athabasca University has a program of studies for you. The best news is that our programs are offered online so that you can complete courses when you want, wherever you are! We know that you have many competing urgencies in your life – work, family, travel, recreation – and we have found a way to offer you ongoing learning of exceptional quality that respects your needs. If accessible achievable learning that accommodates your lifestyle appeals to you, AU is the right choice. The Centre for Nursing and Health Studies at Athabasca University (AU) has 10 years of experience in online education. Creating an exemplary learning environment for both undergraduate and graduate students is the goal of the faculty and staff at the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies.

Athabasca University is Canada's leader in distance and online education. Founded in 1970 by the Government of Alberta, AU currently serves over 32,000 students in its many degree programs and individual courses. According to its mission statement, Athabasca strives to remove "barriers that restrict access to, and success in, university-level studies and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide" (Mission Statement, 2002).

Undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing – A highlight of the undergraduate bachelor of nursing program is that all non-clinical courses are unpaced, with individualized instruction and continuous enrollment. This means students are not restricted to a specific study schedule – you don't have to put your life on pause to prepare for your future. Courses begin the first day of any month year round and students progress through courses at their own pace. Advantages include no semesters and personalized support from the course tutor.

Athabasca offers three routes to a Bachelor of Nursing degree -

Post-RN program – This 120 credit program provides registered nurses the opportunity to gain a liberal university education emphasizing advanced knowledge and clinical practice skills. When students apply to the program, 60 of the required 120 credits are awarded for an RN diploma. Additional advanced credits may be awarded for completed certificates or specialty programs.

To enroll in the Post-RN Bachelor of Nursing program students must have graduated from an approved nursing diploma program. Students must also have a current registration/licensure with a provincial, state or national nursing association. RN diplomas will be accepted no matter the year of graduation, and a minimum GPA of 2.0 is required in all courses being applied to the degree.

Post-LPN program – This 120 credit program provides licensed practical nurses the opportunity to continue their education in nursing with opportunities to develop a clinical focus while obtaining a BN degree. After graduation students are eligible to write the Canadian Registered Nurse Examinations and to apply for registration with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta.

To enroll in the Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program students must have current licensure with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta and the equivalent of one year full-time work experience (1,700 hours) as a Licensed Practical Nurse. Prospective students must also have an average grade of C- (60 per cent) in English 30 and two science courses at the 30 level.

Once admission is granted, students must annually provide proof of current licensure. As with the Post-RN degree program advanced credit is awarded. In the Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program 30 of the required 120 credits will be awarded for Licensed Practical Nurse Certification. While this program also offers unpaced individualized study, courses must be followed in a particular order to fulfill prerequisite requirements. Students must complete all degree requirements within seven years of admission.

Athabasca University at Mount Royal College program – This four-year 124 or 127 credit program is designed for students just entering the field of nursing. Courses are offered collaboratively through Mount Royal College and online through AU. Students must reside in the Calgary area to complete this program. Once students have graduated, they are eligible to write the Canadian Registered Nurse Examinations and may also apply for licensure as a Registered Nurse.

Admission requirements to this integrated degree program vary based on secondary school, post-secondary or mature student standing. For a

detailed description of admission requirements, interested students may visit www.mtroyal.ca/healthcomm/nursing/BNDAR.shtml

Graduate Programs in Nursing and Health Studies – AU offers three graduate programs in the fields of Nursing and Health Studies. Unlike the undergraduate programs, courses in the graduate programs are paced and offered in three semesters of study per year.

The graduate programs include:

Master of Health Studies (MHS) – The Master of Health Studies Leadership Stream gives health professionals the experience and the knowledge needed to assume leadership positions within the health system. The program helps professionals to spot current and future trends in health services and helps to equip them with leadership, planning and management skills. This program is composed of 11 three-credit courses including three core courses, six leadership stream courses and two electives.

To be admitted to the MHS program applicants must be graduates of a health-related Canadian baccalaureate degree program from an accredited university or the equivalent and have a 3.0 GPA. Prospective students must also have a minimum of two years professional health care experience.

Master of Nursing (MN) – The Master of Nursing program is composed of two streams: *Generalist and Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP)*. The Generalist Stream equips nurses with the skills to plan and evaluate nursing practice. The ANP stream prepares nurses to assume a broader role in the provision of health services to clients of all ages as community-based primary health care nurse practitioners. This program is composed of 11 three-credit courses including three core courses for each stream. There are seven required courses and one elective in the ANP stream. There are six required courses and two electives in the Generalist Stream.

To be admitted to the MN program applicants must be graduates of a Canadian baccalaureate degree program in nursing from an accredited university or the equivalent with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Incoming students must have a minimum of two years professional nursing experience.

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