

The PEP Connect



at Markham Stouffville Hospital

Welcome to the second edition of our bi-annual newsletter detailing the Patient Experience Participant (PEP) Program at Markham Stouffville Hospital. PEPs are specialized volunteers ingrained within our hospital who contribute in a rich variety of ways: sharing perspectives, opinions, and providing input on decisions that improve quality of care.

EDITOR'S NOTE

They say the only constant is change- and now more than ever, those words ring true. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives undeniably and left a deep ripple of impact through our hospital and communities. We have seen incredible resilience from our staff, patients and local residents, and a remarkable ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances.

This edition of the PEP Connect uniquely highlights the *lived experiences* of our patient advisors throughout the pandemic; how they found ways to cope personally, how they stayed connected and provided support to the hospital, and the unique ways in which they were able to give back to their communities.

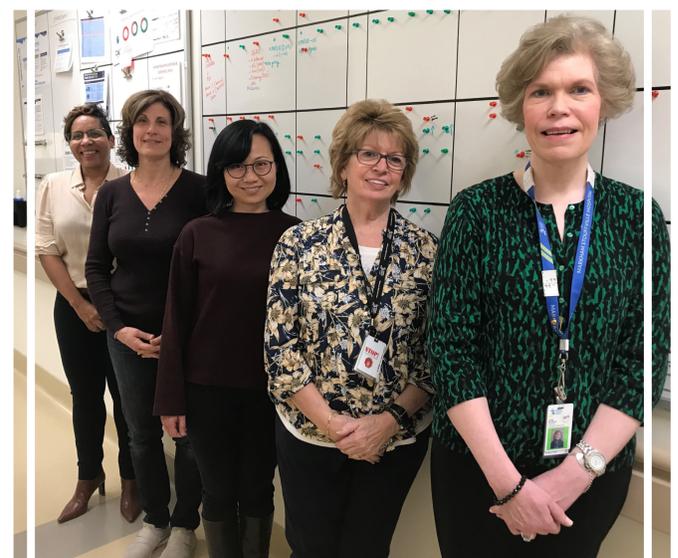
We are thankful to our PEP team for walking alongside us towards the *new normal*. Your desire to contribute and your commitment to our hospital is so very appreciated.

thank you!

TO OUR PATIENT EXPERIENCE PARTICIPANTS:

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Betsy Antonik | Pamela Davis | Deborah Rotta-Loria |
| Theresa Arbuthnot | Donna Dougan | Anne Rouillard |
| Shana Betz | Cynthia Hiatt | Debbie Talbot |
| Barb Bitter | Shafic Kara | Michael Teutenberg |
| Barbara Caiger | Susan Knetsch | Meiki Tsang |
| Sherene Chen-See | Nancy Leung | Ruth Wallace |
| Lih Ling Chung | Dianne Mann | Brenda Young |
| Kyle Comishen | Jim Penny | |
| Jacquie Cushing Dill | Marsha Permut | |
| Allan Davis | Joanna Reesor-McDowell | |

NEW MEMBERS



welcome

A warm welcome to our NEW team members, who joined in March of 2020 (pre-pandemic).

Dianne is a resident of Stouffville and describes having excellent experiences as an MSH patient. She learned of the PEP program while chatting with one of our physicians in the Tim Hortons lineup - and we are glad she did! Dianne is passionate about giving back to her local community hospital.

Meiki lives in Markham and has been closely connected to MSH for many years. She believes in bringing the 'voice of the customer' back to the hospital, and brings a background in pharmacy and quality improvement.

Brenda is a long-time resident of Markham with deep roots at MSH - she helped fundraise door-to-door to help the hospital open 30 years ago! Brenda volunteered across many hospital areas for the past ten years before becoming a PEP. She is also the proud grandmother of 8 MSH-born grandbabies.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

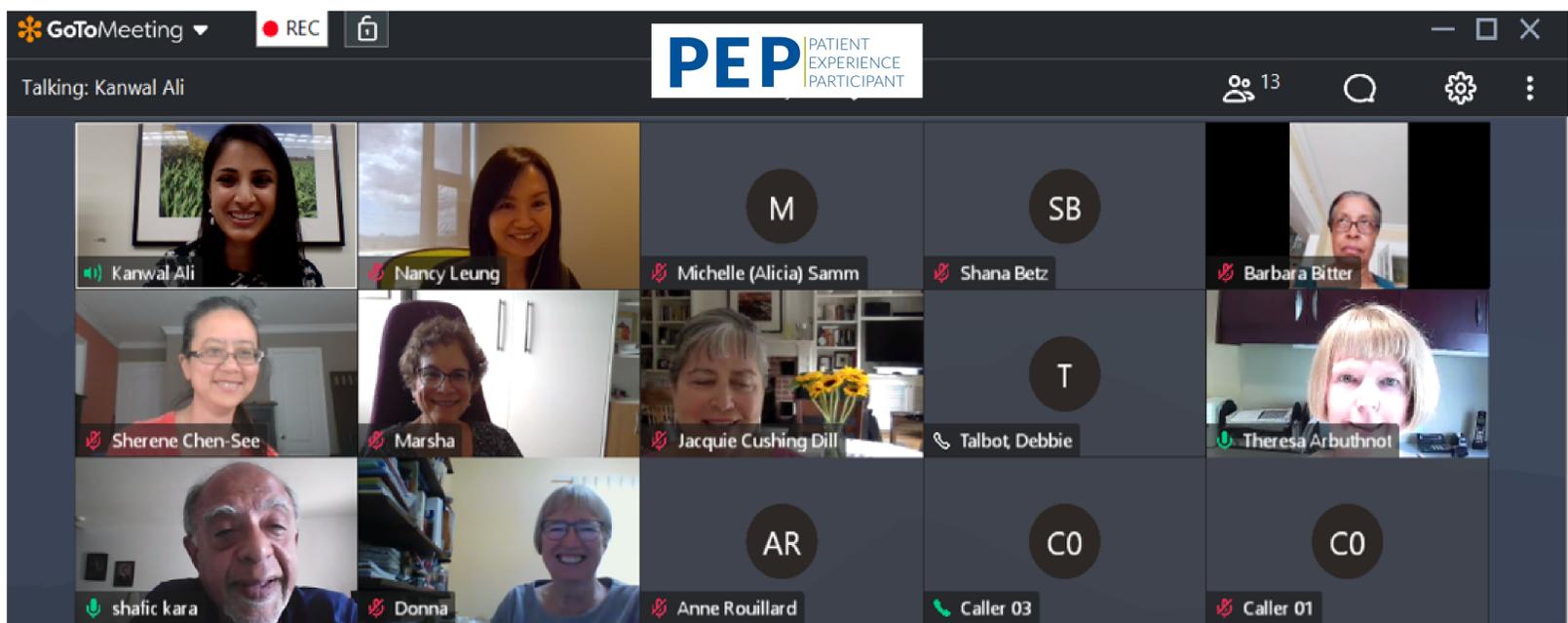
Below are just a few examples of the depth and breadth of activities our PEPs have been involved in:

	IMIT Strategic Plan		Corporate Quality Committee		Leader Rounding Working Group
	Research Ethics Board		VP & CNE Hiring Interview Panel		Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee
	Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network		Mobile Registration Steering Committee		CIHI Framework for Patient Engagement
	Trillium Gift of Life Steering Committee		Extraordinary Experience Pillar Meeting		Quality Committee of the Board

We've Gone Virtual!

'Though we can't meet in person, we're still in this together'

This has been the driving force in maintaining our regular bi-monthly PEP meetings throughout the pandemic. Though unable to meet in person, our PEPs have quickly pivoted to connecting virtually through phone and video. Recent virtual meetings in May and July included updates on hospital operations impacted by COVID-19, discussions around impact to staff and patients, a deep dive into IPAC (infection prevention and control) measures and the evolution of our visitors' policy. We have been thrilled to continue to "see" so many of our PEPs over the past months!



CELEBRATIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS



All of the hard work has paid off!

Heartiest congratulations to PEP member Kyle, who was recently accepted into the School of Medicine at Queens University. Kyle begins his new chapter this September and we wish him the best of luck as he sets forth to pursue his career as a physician.

Kyle is a treasured PEP member who is a longtime resident of Markham and volunteered for many years with the MSH Emergency Department prior to joining our team. He quickly became known for his caring nature, his sharp intelligence and his ability to share opinions and perspectives in a kind and respectful manner.

Kyle will continue on as a PEP and stay connected to us virtually as he progresses through medical school, as he believes his involvement will only make him a more empathetic and understanding physician.

Congratulations Kyle, we look forward to being a part of your journey ahead!

A familiar face outside hospital walls

PEP member Shafic was recently featured on a larger-than-life billboard, celebrating his contributions as an MSH Hero! Having volunteered for over 10 years in the Emergency Department and Outpatient Labs, Shafic has spent countless hours greeting patients and ensuring they are being taken care of. Shafic has described his duties each day as “making sure everyone is OK, and keeping the atmosphere a bit lively.” He shares a kind greeting with everyone he meets, and helps them to navigate comfortably and feel at ease.

As a resident of Markham since 1982, Shafic is committed to serving his community and helping to provide a great patient experience. He was honoured as an MSH Hero in 2018 by the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation.

Although the pandemic may have put his regular volunteer duties on pause, his warm smile still greets us daily thanks to this wonderful billboard!



OUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

This edition of the PEP Connect takes a slightly different turn, as many volunteer activities were put on pause over past months due to pandemic. Instead, we are highlighting the lived experiences of our PEPs during COVID-19 - how they were impacted, their thoughts and feelings, and ways in which they continued to 'give back' to our community.

Donna Dougan



Above: PEP Donna, who has spent countless hours knitting comfort straps for MSH staff



"Although COVID-19 has really impacted all of us, I have tried to make this a positive experience and help as many people as possible. When the wearing of masks by all MSH staff became the norm, my sewing talents and supplies came to good use, by providing over 1,000 elastic and spandex comfort straps to the staff with the help of my daughters and a few friends. I have been supplying fabric to others who have been making masks to those in the community, free of charge. This group has made over 3,000 masks. I have just started making masks myself, for family and neighbors. I have 2 rooms full of supplies and equipment from when I had my own sewing business.

"COVID also impacted our favourite pastime of cruising, and we had to cancel many of our travel plans for this year. I am making the time each day to spend 1.5 hours exercising and walking in the Milne Park Conservation Area. I really enjoy doing this and get to witness the joy of seeing so many people using the pathways that I had a role in planning during my previous role with the Town/City of Markham. I am feeling great!

"I also had the opportunity to volunteer to proof read a book for a writer, whom I met as a result of my cancer journey. This children's book, "The Misadventures and Tribulations of Princess Persnickety and Stefan the Stableboy" by J. Amanda Menzies has just been published. I have proofed many things over time, but this is the first book. I really enjoyed doing this to keep busy."

Donna has also been involved virtually as a PEP with the Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network team (3CTN) and as a member of the MSH Research Ethics Board.

Anne Rouillard

"I think like most people in the early stages of COVID-19, I could not believe that in 2020 we were dealing with a world wide pandemic, but we were and are. I can remember my grandfather talking about how he lost his youngest brother to the flu, to which he was speaking about the Spanish flu, but I always thought that could never really happen again. For good or for bad we are part of history and obviously part of a very large pendulum swing in our society.

"With respect to my activity as a PEP I do recall my last in person meeting at the hospital was actually March 12th, and I have continued attending Quality and Safety Committee of the Board meetings virtually. This has gone well and we are all doing the best that we can, however I have to say that in person discussion is still preferable. Until that can happen again safely, this is fine. Later this month we will continue with our Corporate Quality Meetings virtually, and of course our PEP meetings have continued in a virtual format as well."



Above: PEP Anne (left) attending a meeting in the Quality & Safety department, pre-pandemic

OUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

Brenda Young



"Since March this year, Covid-19 has been a roller coaster of living. I had just finished signing on the closing of a new condo, when the term 'pandemic' hit us. I had one week to finish occupancy, but postponed actual moving for another month. I needed time to adjust and figure out how to deal with everything. My volunteer work at MSH halted, my granddaughters school closed, my son was an essential worker and had to go out. These two loved ones were the family I was sharing a home with and the worry and concern was heavy every day. Three generations together, my son exposed every day and myself - the top level of age-related exposure concern.

"Amid packing, I was dealing with the builders, lawyers, banks and a mountain of paperwork, no longer able to meet with any of them. The stress was exceptional. Because of my age, I heeded every warning, wearing a mask immediately if I even stepped out the door to pick up the mail. Entertaining my 8 year old granddaughter and trying to keep her from worry or becoming anxious was a feat, but it was rewarding to spend so much time with her. Moving in mid-April to a new condo was quite scary, as there were so few people around in an unfinished building - the workers were also removed from continuing their jobs. I felt isolation in a strange environment, afraid to go out, asking family to help me while maybe endangering them, missing my loved ones, worried about all of us and this left me with many, many sleepless nights. How am I going to function, stay independent, stop stressing, in a world that no longer allows me to enjoy a walk, a visit, dinner out, a movie, a family get together, seeing friends, a chat with a neighbour, a birthday celebration, holding a newborn in NICU, visiting my doctor, enjoying my time volunteering... everything we take for granted? Living alone again, now in this isolation, was painful.

"Then I turned my thoughts around to the people who are now ill, or dying alone and the doctors and nurses who couldn't see their families at all - and the sacrifice they were making every day. To the families who will no longer share even one day with their loved ones because they are gone. I realized I am still lucky and need to be grateful that in time, with great hope, the world will overcome this devastation with a cure found, a vaccine developed and we can all hug again. Hanging onto these thoughts brought back my fight, my spirit, my strength to get up every day and make it as 'normal' as possible. I still wear a mask every time I step out my door, I wash my hands constantly during the day, I social distance, I talk on the phone daily to hear a voice, I treasure my family even more, I smile at people passing with my eyes, I listen better, I greet strangers enthusiastically with a "good morning/afternoon" now, and I pray for those families in grief.

"Now, I leave little gifts at the doors of my many new neighbours (most of whom I don't know), a baby gift for a newborn, simple acts of kindness to brighten someone's day. I bake treats for the returned workers here, wrapped individually and given out with gloves and a mask. They smile, and seem grateful for a treat! This gives me something positive to do and brings me joy, however small the gesture. I have reconnected by text and Facebook with distant family and friends, it has been many years since I have been in touch with some of them and I love to hear about their lives, losses and challenges.

"I am so proud of our community and the resolve and dedication to be there for others and I cannot praise enough every person who has stepped in to help, in any way, to see us through these difficult times. They may not know me or hear my words, but "Thank You", "Thank You", my heart is with you all!"



Right: Fresh homemade chocolate peanut butter balls brought smiles to many of Brenda's new neighbours

Left: A quote provided by Brenda shines a ray of hope during an uncertain time



OUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

Marsha Permut

"Frankly the pandemic has been very difficult as I arrived back from Florida sick on March 1. It took me 6 weeks to feel better but all the medical and public health contacts I made said I did not have COVID. I still believe I did, and perhaps that is the only reason I have stayed well ever since! Maybe I have antibodies, who knows?"

"I live in a high rise condo building full of seniors who do not always follow guidelines such as wearing a mask when using the elevator. This has forced me to be super cautious for so long, which is very difficult. On the plus side my Nordic Walking business is booming. I offer classes of less than 5 people, outside of course, and we all get a full body workout safely. We all wear masks or face shields and do our best to physically distance at all times. I have had to totally adjust how I teach and it was a challenge at first. Now it is really working out well. So this has been beneficial for my business as well as for my mental and physical health too. In these difficult time, a win-win situation.

"I also make an effort to call friends and check up on them all the time. Even friends overseas. We do zoom calls and it has been great."

Kyle Comishen

"To say the COVID-19 pandemic has been a trying ordeal would be an understatement. While I have been fortunate in many ways - I'm living at home with my family and still able to work - I recognize that I am one of the lucky ones. I have numerous friends and colleagues who are feeling isolated during this time and need help.

"One of the simple things that this pandemic has shown me is the importance of doing wellness checks on those around us. As a result, I have been proactively reaching out to friends and colleagues over scheduled zoom chats where we talk to one another and voice our frustrations and concerns. By being sensitive to one another's mental well-being, we're showing that we are in this pandemic together."

Barb Caiger

"The pandemic has given me lots of time to reorganize my life and clean out cupboards. This activity has produced multiple items to donate to the Salvation Army thrift store.

"It is very difficult for a catering business to survive during a pandemic and a young caterer used her imagination and offers dinner, delivered, 3 times a week. This service gives her some income and gives us a terrific variety of dinners and 3 nights off kitchen duty each week. It is a win-win situation for us all!"

Shafic Kara

"As we went into lockdown, I assumed it would be for a few weeks but the daily news painted a grim picture of the situation, and I was getting bored at home. So one day my daughter told me that Daddy, you always kept patients cheerful at MSH. If you cannot cheer up the patients, you can cheer up everyone at home!

"So we came up with the idea of saying jokes - it started every morning on my Facebook. If I was late, I would be getting messages, 'Where is the joke of the day?' It went on for a month, and I started running out of good jokes, but CP24 was asking people at home what they were doing during the lockdown. So my daughter responded by sending one of the jokes which they then featured on their Saturday morning show!

"Now, I am up early at 5am, after my prayers, and I am out on the track walking more than 10,000 steps or 6 miles. I also take care of my backyard vegetable garden, and help the Food Bank whenever help is needed."



Above: Shafic's debut sharing jokes on CP24!

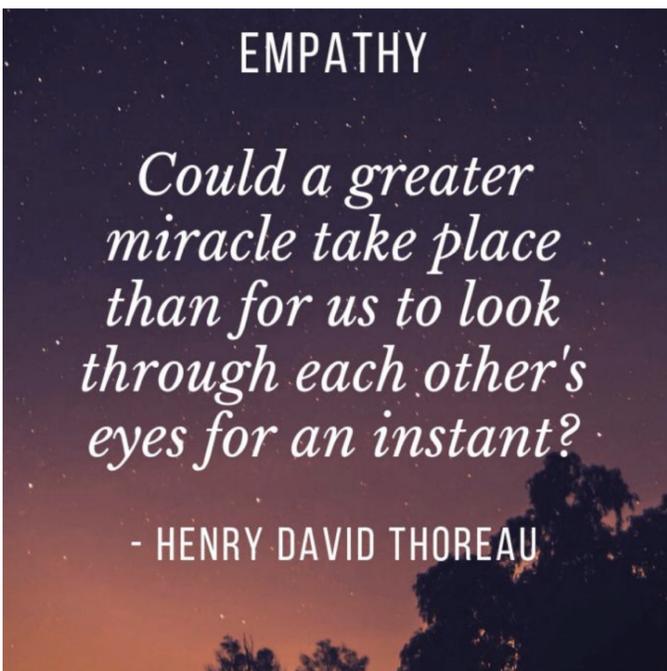
OTHER NEWS



Left: we are thankful for all of the contributions Allan and Pam Davis have made over the past 2.5 years as part of countless committees, working groups and initiatives at MSH.



Above: Theresa has been a great asset to HR interview panels and recently participated in selection of staff for our Quality and Safety team.



Above: a beautiful quote shared by Anne Rouillard, especially poignant during this time



Below: one of our last in-person PEP meetings, pre-pandemic. PEPs have done a fantastic job of pivoting to online meetings over the last few months!



Below: Susan shares that being patient-centred is vital because "people can be vulnerable when they come to the hospital, and need to know that they are important to us and will be listened to." We love seeing Susan at MSH as she has recently resumed her volunteer work at the Fracture Clinic.



PEP TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Health Quality Ontario
Let's make our health system healthier

Health Quality Ontario: Patient Partnering Toolkit

<https://hqontario.ca/Patient-Partnering/Patient-Partnering-Tools-and-Resources>



Canadian Patient Safety Institute: Engaging Patients in Patient Safety

<https://www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca/en/toolsResources/Patient-Engagement-in-Patient-Safety-Guide/Pages/default.aspx>

Ontario

Ontario Ministry of Health: Patient Declaration of Values for Ontario

https://www.ontario.ca/page/patient-declaration-values-ontario?_ga=2.137237621.475001927.1575039696-1827321249.1575039696

THE BERYL INSTITUTE

The Beryl Institute: Resources to Support our community during COVID-19

<https://www.theberylinstitute.org/page/COVID-19Resources>



Canadian Institute for Health Information: Public Reporting of Patient Experience Data

<https://www.cihi.ca/en/bulletin/canadian-patient-experience-data-public-reporting>



Patients Canada: Join the Patient Advisor community and sign up for *The Patient Voice* newsletter

<https://patientscanada.ca/get-involved/join/>

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

CONTACT US:



Email

patientexperience@msh.on.ca



Phone

905-472-7373 ext. 6914



Web

msh.on.ca/PEP



Twitter

@MSHSafety

We're always looking for new members! If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a PEP, please contact us to fill out an application or to speak to a member of the Patient Experience department.

We can't wait to have you join us