

Nursing department is one of the largest in the hospital and have a wide variety of duties to perform. Photo by Dave Chmara

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One of the largest departments

McCausland Hospital, the

Nursing staff totals 30 full and

part-time people.

Linda Stewart, Director of Nursing since 1986, has worked in the Nursing Department since 1974. She said the move about a year ago to 12-hour shifts, was welcomed by the nursing staff as it allows for more time with the patients and gives them continuity of care. Stewart said the longer shifts also allow the nurses to get to know their patients better.

The registered nursing assistants (RNA) began working 12-hour shifts on Dec. 4, 1989 and registered nurses (RN) about

a year ago.

The day shift at the hospital is staffed by 3 full-time RNs and 2 full-time RNAs. Evenings there are two RNs and one RNA on the floor.

Home care nurses work in the community visiting people's homes to help with patient care. They perform such work as changing dressings and giving patients baths and also help educate the public towards health

To become a registered nurse requires taking a two-year college program or a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Registered nursing assistants must take a nune month program.

All three programs are available in Thunder Bay.

Upgrading programs which some of the nurses have been involved in recently include a course in sterilization techniques, advanced cardiac life support, and basic life support training.

Compared with a larger hospital, the nurses at McCausland are responsible for more departments. They work in the emergency, coronary care, operating room, maternity and delivery departments. Their counterparts in the city would only work in one or possibly two of these areas.

Stewart said working in all the departments makes for an extended orientation time, but it's a good learning process for the nurses.

Compared to the rest of the province, or the doctor situation, Stewart said, "there is no nursing shortage here. It seems they come and stay and retire."

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Because of the size of

McCausland, and the length of time the nurses stay, they get to know the patients well.

"For example, in emergency, they almost know the history of the patient before they ask," Stewart said.

The Nursing Department, once or twice a year, has nursing students come in as part of the education program. Students come from Confederation, Conestoga, and Sault Colleges and Lakehead University. They

come to the hospital in their final year of schooling for a period of six to eight weeks and are assigned a buddy nurse. The students work the same shift as the nurse and this year the Nursing Department has had six students work there.

McCausland provides accommodations for the students who come in twos; from the same school and class so they have some companionship during their stay.

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 223

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December 31, 1989 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.

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For more information contact

Mary 825-9532 or Therese 825-3556

