



## Make It Personal: Interview Series

### An Interview with Brenda Dyck

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After years of nursing in Medicine and Public Health, Brenda began pursuing her passion of Infection Prevention & Control (IPC), working in hospital, community, and public health settings. Her experience led her to be involved on a regional, provincial and national level for many years. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, Brenda was invited out of retirement to return to her IPC role in Manitoba, advising on issues related to COVID-19. With a total of 40 years' experience as a nurse, Brenda also has a passion for patient safety, and began serving the public as a Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety volunteer in her retirement.



#### Intertwining of Infection Prevention & Control and Patient Safety

Brenda views patient safety as an individual's need to receive safe care within healthcare that is free of error and harm. "Patient safety is a cornerstone and a fundamental of any healthcare patient experience whether it is in the community, or in a healthcare institution or organization." From Brenda's point of view, in her profession, patient safety is "Prevention of infection and infection harm during any patient healthcare experience." She describes IPC as, "Evidence-based practices that would be applied in the healthcare setting that would prevent or reduce the risk of infection to healthcare providers, to clients in the community, to residents in a nursing home, or to visitors that come in." Brenda feels that IPC and patient safety are woven together, as though you cannot have one without the other, that IPC and patient safety are basically intertwined. She explains, "IPC is patient safety and lots of patient safety practices are IPC practices."

#### Saving Lives by Preventing Healthcare Associated Infections

Brenda participated in a national Patient Safety Summit to address IPC as a patient safety indicator across Canada. Healthcare associated infections (HAI) can be devastating to a person's health and impact the system financially. Brenda shared that approximately [1 in 9 patients in hospitals develop an HAI in Canada, of which about 8,000 will die due to the infection each year](#). Brenda states that, "If there were airplane crashes or epidemic disease, 8,000 deaths would galvanize the country."



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Brenda believes that healthcare professionals should focus on positive approaches and strategies for IPC, which reduce infections that impact our healthcare system. Brenda wants to see no infections, but sometimes they happen, so “it is important to reduce the types of infections that may cause major catastrophe to the patients, their families, their lifestyle, and to healthcare system.”

She also shares that, “If healthcare providers are not performing hand hygiene as they should be, patients and their families can bring that to the staff member’s attention.” If the patient sees something occurring, bring it to the staff attention by saying, “I didn’t feel comfortable about that.” For example, “I noticed you dropped that on the floor and are now trying to use it on me and I do not want you to do that.”

Brenda encourages patients to be informed and to ask questions. When you are meeting with a healthcare provider about an invasive procedure, you can ask, “What do you do in order to prevent healthcare associated infections?” as well as, “How can I help with that?” It is important for patients and families to use their voice and know what they can do to prevent issues from occurring. “Patients should feel comfortable to speak up, and for the healthcare team to make them feel they can speak up. It is important to be working together as a team.”

Brenda has also offered additional tips for the public to help prevent the spread of infection. Links are at the end of this article.

#### Strengthening the Patient Voice

Among Brenda’s personal friends and family who are getting older, she sees some feel comfortable having a voice, and some do not. Brenda recommends that we all should have a patient advocate, someone who can attend medical appointments with us when needed. “People can’t have enough information on this. I see it happen where people just get lost in the system or just do not ask the right questions. I feel very strongly about this, this is something that we need to stress and have lots of awareness about, as it is very important.”

Your patient advocate can attend appointments with you either: in person, virtually, or over the phone, for your visits with healthcare providers. “Whether it is having the phone on speaker so both people can hear the conversation with the physician, or a virtual visit, have your list of questions written down prior to your appointment. Make sure one of you write down the information of what happened at the visit, and recap after the visit with your advocate to keep track of your experience so that you are prepared for the next visit. Whether virtual or not, practice the same principles.”

Thank you for your many years of leadership in IPC, Brenda. You are making a huge difference for the province and helping keep us all safe. It is greatly appreciated.

*The Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety (MIPS) is an independent, not-for-profit corporation established in 2004 to promote and coordinate activities that improve patient safety and enhance quality healthcare in Manitoba.*

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### **“Tools” that We Can Use to Help Prevent the Spread of Infection**

1. Get an Influenza Vaccine
2. [Wash your hands using proper hand hygiene](#)
3. [Tips for wearing masks](#)