

Debbie Johannesen

Alumni Recognition Award 2022

“Just as a foundation holds up and holds together a structure to withstand pressure and keeps people safe, Debbie quietly and confidently holds things together.”

After completing her BSN at UBC in 1986, **Debbie Johannesen** successfully completed her Masters in Leadership in 2011 and was an adjunct professor at UBC’s School of Medicine.

Debbie has had a long and storied career in nursing, from charge nurse in 1987 through Research Coordinator and Nurse Clinician to her most recent position as Director of Quality, Safety and Accreditation for BC Women’s Hospital and Health Centre – or BCW – a role she has held since 2009 and from which she is retiring.

Debbie has taught patients, nurses and leaders in the ways of quality improvement through prenatal teaching, Leader Quality Improvement (QI) and Physician QI programs.

Throughout her career, Debbie has engaged in scholarly and professional activities ranging from chairing committees to presenting research posters and publications. As accreditation lead, she guided her team to achieve Accredited Exemplary status for BCW. Debbie’s colleagues say that she “exemplifies nursing as we all would like it to be known; her welcoming demeanor embraces all learners, from the most novice nurses to highly trained care providers. She is a natural teacher and mentor.”

As a leader,

- She has promoted initiatives such as the Safe Surgical Checklist, Falls Prevention, Patient’s View and Releasing Time to Care;
- She has developed mechanisms for measuring and monitoring quality in an ongoing, regular, and person-centred way;
- She has developed networks and collaborated across boundaries with Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal to bring a staff-led quality improvement model to BCW.
- She re-visits Accreditation Canada standards and requirements every six months with services, personnel and patients across BCW;
- She enters into the service delivery area to directly support improvement;
- She is adept at keeping an entire team focussed on their goals;
- She worked with other leaders to build the initial patient engagement strategy at BCW, and
- She models a culture of safety that promotes quality improvement and the provision of extraordinary care.

Debbie’s ability to work collaboratively with other teams and her open-door style of leadership has helped bring down barriers and created opportunities. Indeed, her team members have stated “she’s the rock and a rock star” and note that “she is always approachable and reasonable.”

There can be no doubt that the region’s healthcare and nursing workforce has been greatly enhanced by the unflinching enthusiasm of our 2022 Alumni Recognition Awardee.

