Welcome to the sixth edition of Spotlight on Women & Babies, a newsletter for staff in Sunnybrook’s Women & Babies Program. You’ll find updates on M-Wing construction as well as news of interest to Women & Babies staff. If you have any suggestions for future content, please drop a line to sandeep.deol@sunnybrook.ca or call 416.967.8554.

One Night Live™ Host Chris Noth Visits Women & Babies

One Night Live™ celebrity host Chris Noth visited the Women & Babies Program at 76 Grenville St. the evening before the internal launch of this year’s concert at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Chris met with staff and patients as he took a tour of the Maternal & Newborn area, the Transitional Care Nursery, Labour & Delivery and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).
On February 11, 2009, Sunnybrook staff was invited to see One Night Live™ host Chris Noth as he announced the amazing line-up for this year’s concert.

International recording artists Sting, Sheryl Crow and The Canadian Tenors will perform at One Night Live™, presented by Sun Life Financial, on Thursday, May 21. Now in its second year, the concert will be held at the Air Canada Centre, and hosted by Sex and the City’s “Mr. Big”, Chris Noth.

Sunnybrook President and CEO Dr. Barry McLellan kicked off the official launch with his opening comments, followed by Dr. Jennifer Blake, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Anissa Benett shared her experience as a patient in the Women & Babies program.
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Babies Program with the audience. Anissa’s son Dylan was born at Sunnybrook’s NICU late last year. The story of his survival and heart-wrenching recovery brought tears to the eyes of Sunnybrook staff as Anissa thanked the Program for its efforts and hard work.

There was also a raffle for amazing One Night Live™ prizes, including tickets to the concert and refreshments for all staff.

“We are thrilled that such mega star talent have thrown their support behind Sunnybrook’s Women & Babies Program,” said Kevin Goldthorp, Chief Executive Officer of Sunnybrook Foundation. “All of the proceeds raised by the concert will assist in building a new state-of-the-art home for our

Women & Babies Program and help Sunnybrook continue to provide the very best care for our smallest patients and their mothers, when it matters most.”

Tickets for One Night Live™ went on sale Saturday, February 14 at 10 a.m. Tickets can be purchased online at www.onenightlive.ca or through Ticketmaster.

The money raised will support the construction of the province’s most advanced facility for births and high-risk pregnancies. The critical care unit for premature babies, which cares for more of Ontario’s most vulnerable babies than any other hospital, will be five times larger than the current facility.

**New Division of Obstetric Anesthesia Opens at Sunnybrook**

In October 2008, the Division of Obstetric Anesthesia at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre was formally created in preparation for the Women & Babies Program move to the new facility in M-Wing.

The purpose of the Division is to provide specialized maternity anesthesia care for the approximately 4,250 women each year. Anesthesiologists in the program provide antenatal assessments/counselling for pregnant women, related to anesthetic care and risk management in the Obstetric Anesthesia Clinic as well as similar services for in-patient high risk pregnant women.

The new Division provides state-of-the-art anesthesia services for labour pain relief such as patient controlled epidural analgesia and multi-modal pain relief following deliveries. Well-known nationally and internationally for research and innovation in obstetric anesthesia, the program attracts international fellows seeking clinical and research training. Anesthesiologist researchers within the program are also involved in a variety of innovative research.

The Director of Obstetric Anesthesia, Dr. Pamela Angle, is currently running a multi-centered clinical trial across Canada to reduce post-dural puncture headache, which is one of the most significant complications of epidural placement.

The Obstetric Anesthesia Research Unit (OARU) situated in the Sunnybrook Research Institute is the first OARU in Canada. OARU is devoted to developing research capacity in obstetric anesthesia within Canada and in the development of evidence-based practices. Current projects include large clinical trials, simulator-based team training research, clinical practice guideline formulation, and bedside imaging innovation. There are plans to include knowledge translation and training for community anesthesiologists and family physician anesthetists. The Division of Obstetrical Anesthesia is currently fundraising for a Chairperson who will assist with these innovative endeavours.
Sunnybrook’s M-Wing vertical shell expansion will be a significant change to the landscape of the hospital. The project will create four additional floors on top of M-Wing at Sunnybrook Campus. Two of the four floors (Floors Four and Five) added to M-Wing will be the future home of the Women & Babies Program. The fourth floor will be occupied by the state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Ambulatory Care & Obstetrics, Neonatal Follow-up Clinic, and Program Support space. The fifth floor will house the Birthing Suites, the High Risk Area for expectant mothers, Combined Care, the Operative Delivery area, Breast Feeding Clinic, and other Support Areas. The sixth and seventh floors are currently planned for Sunnybrook research.
As one of Canada’s top experts in women’s health and menopause, Dr. Jennifer Blake, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, recently co-authored the new clinical guidelines and updated research information about menopause and osteoporosis, challenging myths associated with the risks of hormone therapy.

Preeclampsia is a disease that affects two to seven per cent of all pregnant women. Throughout the world, this disease is one of the major causes of death and illness for mothers and their babies. Evidence from Dr. Librach’s team suggests that a mutation in the HLA-G gene is associated with the development of preeclampsia. Over the next three years, Dr. Librach and his team will test patient subjects for the HLA-G gene mutation in order to develop this predictive tool for preeclampsia further.

Early detection of those patients at high risk for this disease would allow obstetricians to increase vigilance when caring for these pregnant women, allowing intervention before the condition becomes severe and dangerous to the mother and her baby. In the long term, this detection method could be used as a tool to study potential preventative therapies for patients at high risk for developing preeclampsia. Dr Librach also hopes that his research will lead to a better understanding of the underlying cause(s) of this enigmatic disease.

Sunnybrook’s Chief Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Co-Authors Important Menopause and Osteoporosis Update

The updated guidelines and information were commissioned by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and have just been published in this month’s Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada (JOGC). The purpose of the recent Update is to review and clarify the use of hormone therapy for postmenopausal symptomatic women, the cardiovascular risks associated with hormone therapy, the breast cancer risks associated with hormone therapy, and hormone therapy and osteoporosis fracture risk evaluation.

“More and more research literature points to the importance of timing with respect to when estrogen use begins and its relation to risks for breast cancer, heart disease and cognitive decline” said Dr. Jennifer Blake, who is also a professor in Ob /Gyn with the University of Toronto. “For example, media reported recently that estrogen supplementation is linked to a greater rate of cognitive decline. We need to look more closely at that study to see that it pertained to older women who had never received estrogen until age 65. The negative impact was not shown for women who had received estrogen in early menopause.”

Canadian demographics reveal that in the next decade, health-care professionals will see the largest population of newly menopausal women ever. In Canada, there are now 2.5 million women between the ages of 45 and 54.

This clinical Update provides new guidance to Canadian women and their healthcare providers and addresses many of the controversial issues raised by the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) Study in 2002. The WHI study overemphasized the risks associated with hormone therapy, consequently making women and their health-care providers wary about hormone therapy due to misunderstandings about the actual risks associated with this option.

The Update concluded that hormone therapy does not increase the risk of heart attack in younger women experiencing menopause. The Update also confirmed the debilitating impact that osteoporosis can have on a woman’s quality of life. The Update’s authors emphasize that even though menopause is a natural transition in a woman’s life, there is no “one size fits all approach” when it comes to menopause symptoms or treatments.
In November 2008, the Third Annual Obstetric Anesthesia Day took place in the form of a Continuing Medical Education (CME) session for physicians providing maternity anesthesia in community hospitals. Organized by the Obstetric Anesthesia Division of Sunnybrook’s 76 Grenville site, the meeting was run as part of the Toronto Anesthesia Practice Meeting.

“Anesthesiologists are a critical part of the maternal newborn safety net,” says Dr. Pamela Angle, director of the Obstetric Anesthesia Research Unit at Sunnybrook. “If we don’t support the rural family physician anesthetists, cesarean section capacity, which has already closed in many small communities, will further collapse. This means women cannot deliver close to home and there is more crowding of high risk units with low risk births. There is also greater risk for women and their unborn children who live in small town or rural Ontario since they have to travel longer distances to receive medical help.”

Participants from across Ontario and Canada attended the workshop, as well as a few participants from New York. The meeting was geared toward the learning needs of maternity anesthesia providers and focused on practical cases. This workshop was a response to research that Dr. Angle is examining, regarding issues and barriers to maternity anesthesia care in Ontario. The workshop occurred at the request of the Ontario Maternity Care Expert Panel and was partially funded by the Ontario Women’s Health Council.

Carina Wong, a nurse with the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, arrived from Tanzania on February 18 after conquering the Uhuru summit of Mount Kilimanjaro on an amazingly, brave seven-day climb.

“The view up there is absolutely gorgeous, but the trek is certainly not for the faint of heart,” says Carina. “It’s a physically demanding climb. Our group received a lot of help and encouragement from the guides who accompanied us on the journey.”

Carina, who is 55 years old and just last year was recovering from a pelvic fracture, began preparing for this trip many months ago. Inspired by an article in the Globe and Mail that was written by a group of women who set out to conquer the very same summit, Carina arranged for a similar experience with her colleagues at Sunnybrook. Anne Friedl, an NICU nurse, Rosanna Manarin, a former NICU nurse, and Cheryl Harris-Taylor, a social worker at Sunnybrook, joined Carina in signing up for the mountain climb through www.climbingkilimanjaro.com.

The group practiced walking with weights and worked on their endurance and strength training, while slowly amassing items that would fit into their relatively small backpacks. Departing for Africa on February 2, Carina and her friends started their climb the next day. The harsh conditions closer to the summit nearly halted their journey.

“All four of us were ready to give up,” Carina says. “It’s very hard to breathe the higher you climb and it’s quite cold. However, our guide was wonderful. We were encouraged to go further and not give up because we were so close to accomplishing our extraordinary goal.”

Another of Carina’s intentions for this trip was to support one of Tanzania’s orphanages. She pledged to raise money for the Amani Children’s Home in Moshi, with this hike, and turned over close to $2000.00 to the organization for which she fundraised through private donations and sponsorships.

Carina also visited the Amani Children’s Home personally. “The Home currently supports 90 children, all from different backgrounds,” she explains. “These children were either abandoned or are runaways. The Home cares for these children well and provides proper schooling. If and when the children qualify for higher education, the Home also helps to fund their tuition.”

Currently, Carina is back at work in the NICU and is busy thinking of other ways to continue raising funds for the Amani Children’s Home. The organization can be found online at www.amanikids.org.

**Courageous NICU Nurse and Co-Workers Conquer Summit of Africa’s Mount Kilimanjaro**

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Women & Babies Program: Home to the second largest high-risk birthing centre in Ontario

Charlie was born three months premature and there was little hope that he would make it. His parents credit the healthcare team of the NICU with Charlie’s healthy and happy outlook.

Building a new home for the Women & Babies Program

The Women & Babies Program will occupy two new floors at the Bayview Avenue campus by mid-2010. This new and spacious facility will offer women and their families the most advanced care in a warm and nurturing environment.

Make a donation at www.sunnybrookfoundation.ca or call 416-480-4483
Women & Babies Program Changes in Leadership

Effective January 27, 2009, Denise Zayack, former Operations Director Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, is no longer with Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Denise had been with the NICU for twenty-seven years and during that period, it has become nationally renowned for the care of critically ill newborns. The unit is one of seven Level III NICUs in Ontario and, under Denise’s leadership, has developed a reputation as a leader in safety best practices and innovative, family-centred infant care.

The Program thanks Denise for her years of service and we all wish her the best in her future endeavours. She will be missed by the NICU team and those she has worked with on the numerous quality and facility planning initiatives.

Jo Watson is now the Operations Director for the Perinatal & Gynecology Program, including the NICU. Jo will work in partnership with Program Chief, Dr. Andrew Shennan, and the clinical leadership of Women & Babies to ensure the Program continues to run well in its current location as it prepares for the move to its new home in M-wing on the Bayview site in spring 2010.

Other changes and confirmations in leadership include:

- Marion Deland will continue in her role as Patient Care Manager in the NICU.
- Donna Brown, the Patient Care Manager and Nurse Practitioner for the High Risk Pregnancy Unit, will add the High Risk Obstetrical Clinics to her leadership role.
- Biz Westcott, the Patient Care Manager for the Maternal & Newborn Unit, will add the Gynecology Surgical In-patient Unit to her responsibilities.
- Advanced Practice Nurse, Sue Herman, will co-ordinate care in the Breastfeeding Clinic.
- Monica Nicholson has begun her role as Patient Care Manager in the Birthing Unit, effective February 9, 2009. Monica has been working as the Project Team Leader for Obstetrics and Gynaecology, planning our move to Sunnybrook. She will now transfer those skills and the relationships she has built with many Sunnybrook folks to her role in the Birthing Unit.

There has also been a change in Medical Leadership for the Department of Newborn and Developmental Pediatrics at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

As of February 13, 2009, Dr. Michael Dunn stepped down from his leadership position as Chief, Department of Newborn and Developmental Pediatrics at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. In this role Dr. Dunn provided medical leadership for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at 76 Grenville. He will continue his role as a staff physician in the NICU.

Dr. Dunn has been with the NICU since 1982 and has held the Chief position since 2001. During his time as Chief, Dr. Dunn has helped develop a culture of continuous quality improvement and safety for staff, patients and families of the NICU.

The Program would like to thank Dr. Dunn for this leadership and wish him the best in his future endeavors. While we conduct a search for a new medical chief for the NICU, Dr. Aideen Moore, a staff neonatologist at the Hospital for Sick Children and Mt Sinai Hospital and the co-medical director of the Fetal Alert Network of Ontario, has agreed to assume the role of Acting Chief. Welcome, Dr. Moore, in this interim role.

New Staff

Division of Obstetrical Anesthesia

Sunnybrook welcomes Dr. Vinod Chinnappa. Dr. Chinnappa is a graduate of the University of Bangalore, India (1992) who subsequently did specialty training in Anesthesia in Ireland (2005) with further fellowship training in Obstetrical Anesthesia (2006-7) at Women’s College Hospital and a second fellowship in Ambulatory Anesthesia and Regional Block at the Toronto Western Hospital (2007-8). Dr. Chinnappa is an Assistant Professor and a clinician-teacher at the University of Toronto.

Birthing Unit

Laura Moore

Combined Care

Tina Temoche

Maternal & Newborn

Stacey Plourde

NICU

Kadeen Briscoe
Lisa Cornelius
Geraldine Goskey
Kristen Holwell
Erika Kokaly
Edlene Ledain
Kelley Lee
Susan Robinson