

“The Scots are the backbone of Canada. They are all right in their three vital parts — head, heart and haggis.”

Sir William Osler

Hi Everyone

One of the signature longstanding ongoing efforts of our hospital and Department that we can all take pride in is the Northern Program. In early October, **Johanne Morel**, organized a highly successful two day event for health professionals focusing on the health-related challenges faced by children from Northern Quebec. For this particular effort, and for her sustained ongoing involvement in the Northern Program, this week's Departmental Acknowledgment goes to Johanne.

There is no doubt that for a variety of reasons, children in the remote regions of Northern Quebec, predominantly of either Cree or Inuit heritage, are a vulnerable pediatric population at high risk for a number of significant disorders. Together with her colleagues **Margaret Berry, Kent Saylor, Chi-Minh Phi and Josée Chouinard** under the leadership of **Gary Pেকেles**, our Northern Program has provided direct and supportive medical care to these children. For over 20 years, through a lot of inclement weather, Johanne has been regularly spending a week a month conducting on-site clinics in remote villages in the Hudson Bay area (Kuujuarapik), Ungava Bay (Kangirsuk, Aupaluk, Kujjuaq, Kangiqsualujjuaq) and James Bay (Whapmagoostui) regions. Challenge yourself geographically and get a handle on the distance to these places and their remoteness by looking for them on a map. Not only does Johanne, and the other members of the Northern Health team travel to these sites, they provide continuous telephone support to front line clinicians in these villages and are a vital medical link in arranging and providing care when these children and their families travel to Montreal. They do so in a resolutely culturally sensitive way that epitomizes the values (compassionate caring, continuous dedication to improvement are but two examples) of our Department. They also do so in an exemplary and quiet way that overcomes much in the way of considerable logistical challenges that are probably the greatest encountered by any of our Programs or Divisions.

The Conference ably organized by Johanne focused on pragmatic issues such as transport stabilization, the ongoing challenges of a premature infant, infantile fever, and respiratory infections that will provide an immediate clinical benefit to improve health outcomes in this sector of our population.

It is indeed unfortunate that for some Canadians, the conditions of a less developed society with all its attendant social and medical issues exists within the borders of our most-blessed G-8 nation. That health metrics for our First Nations population lags consistently and measurably behind that for Canadians as a whole is a challenge to us all. The members of our Northern program for many years rather doing merely the talk, have been doing the walk to make things better. They most truly are an example and inspiration to us all.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael