

Providence Care doctor takes rehabilitation expertise to Nepal

February 13, 2009 – Kingston – For the third time in six years, Providence Care Dr. Joy Wee will travel across the world to lend her expertise and look for ways to enhance the quality of life of people living with disabilities in Nepal.

Dr. Wee, who works in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation program at Providence Care's St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital, and as a member of the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at Queen's University, says she is committed to helping people in countries like Nepal, where there is limited access to specialty rehabilitation care and significant challenges for those living with disabilities.

"I am working with a team to help build sustainable rehabilitative care," Dr. Wee says. "We are also looking at practical applications like the redesign of low-cost wheelchairs for the Nepali terrain where many roads are not paved. Working with a bio-mechanical engineer, we are attempting to design wheelchairs that better meet the needs of patients."

Although Nepal and Canada are on opposite sides of the globe, meeting the needs of patients is what connects Dr. Wee's work in Kingston with rehabilitation patients at St. Mary's, to her work in Nepal.

"Providence Care's Mission is to enhance the quality of life of the people we serve," says Providence Care President & CEO Dale Kenney. "Like many of our staff and physicians, Dr. Wee lives our Mission to the fullest, as one of our medical experts and doctors locally, and through her personal commitment to people in other parts of the world."

"Several of my colleagues at Providence Care and at Queen's also integrate their work and service to the community," Dr. Wee says.

Commenting specifically on her own work in Nepal, she says, "Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre where I am working, has only been able to provide light canvas shoes to people who need braces and prostheses. Nepal is an underprivileged country with mostly rough terrain and dirt roads so it can be very difficult for people with disabilities to get around and lead more independent lives. Small things like sturdier shoes can help, and I hope to find ways to support the hospital's efforts to supply them to people in need."

Dr. Wee will leave for Nepal at the end of February and be in the country for approximately two weeks. It will be her fifth international trip to help improve rehabilitative care in lower income communities; she spent 2 weeks in Nepal in 2008, 3 weeks in Kenya in 2006 (in conjunction with Bethany Relief and Rehabilitation International), a month in Nepal in 2003, and in 2001, she volunteered in Yunnan, China.

Providence Care is southeastern Ontario's leading provider of rehabilitation medicine and therapies. Rehabilitation services span the full continuum of care - inpatient, outpatient, and community.

Providence Care is also a leading provider of specialized geriatric care, complex continuing care, specialized mental health care, palliative care and long-term care. One of Kingston's university hospitals, Providence Care has three main sites in Kingston: Mental Health Services, St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital and Providence Manor, as well as 18 community locations. Affiliated with Queen's University, Providence Care is a major centre for teaching and research.

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