

## **Shannell MacKinnon Nurse Practitioner**

I completed my BscN at UPEI in 2004, and proceeded to have a diverse and fulfilling career as an RN. The majority of my career was as an emergency room RN at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, with experiences in ICU/CCU and northern outpost nursing. The skills and knowledge built as an RN have proved an invaluable asset for the progression to the next chapter of my career.

I have always known that I would advance my education and the nurse practitioner role felt like a natural progression for me. I graduated from Dalhousie University in 2015 with my Masters of Nursing- Nurse Practitioner (Family/all ages). For the past two years I have worked within the provincial diabetes program and primary care.

My role within the Provincial Diabetes Program is to provide care for islanders living with type 1 and 2 diabetes, who do not have access to a primary care provider. I work autonomously as well as collaboratively with clients and health team members to identify the best management as guided by evidence and theory, with careful consideration of the determinants of health. Achieving and maintaining optimal diabetes management is inherently a team effort. I have been privileged to work collaboratively with RN's, physicians, social workers and dieticians (amongst others) in order to assist patients in managing their life with diabetes.

Health education regarding diet and lifestyle is central to diabetes management- however, various medications are also available to assist with diabetes management for both blood sugar control and vascular protection. I assist patients in making the decisions for their care plan by ensuring they have evidence based information, engagement and opportunity for discussion. Each client is central in any decision.

Diabetes care is complex and the technology is rapidly changing and expanding. As a part of my role in the diabetes program I am a member of the adult insulin pump team- caring for islanders who are using insulin pump therapy to manage their diabetes. While insulin pump devices, sensors, and blood glucose meters key to care, the technology progresses at an astounding rate that challenges me to ensure I maintain my education levels in this ever changing world of diabetes care.

Currently my role in primary care is providing prenatal care to women (who are referred from the patient registry) for up to 32 weeks, providing primary care to those clients living with diabetes, fill in for NP walk in clinics, and refer and collaborate when appropriate to ensure optimum patient care.

Thank you to the nurse practitioners who have facilitated the growth and progression of the profession to where it is now. I look forward to all of the opportunities for growth and learning that this role will bring, and to translate that learning and growth to the optimal care of the clients I am privileged to care for.