



Alumni Profile

Leslie Starr-Hemburrow

BSW '88

Current Career

Organization: Trillium Health Partners

Title: Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services & Regional Vice President, Ontario Health (CCO)

Career Overview

I am currently in the role of Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services at Trillium Health Partners and Regional Vice President, Ontario Health (CCO). I began my career as a front line social worker at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario. Over the 18 years, I spent at St. Joe's I grew as a leader and developed through progressive leadership opportunities in Social Work, Patient Flow, ALC, Discharge Planning, and Professional Practice leading numerous regional initiative implementations. I then moved to Halton Healthcare for a short time, where I was the Director of Patient Flow and Corporate Projects leading the innovation and implementation of "Home First". For the past 10 years, I have worked at Trillium Health Partners (Credit Valley Hospital) where I have held progressively senior leadership roles leading large complex hospital operations spanning a number of diverse clinical programs including several large regional programs. I have led major operational changes, strategic planning, performance improvement, and innovations supporting quality improvement. My current role also includes Credit Valley Hospital site lead responsibility and Ambulatory Care executive lead. Additionally, for the past 4 years, I have also held the role of Regional Vice President, Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) leading the Mississauga Halton and Central West Regional Cancer Program, in collaboration with community and hospital partners to plan and implement improvements in cancer services. I am committed to whatever my role to continuously finding ways to deliver value-based healthcare and improving our health care system.

How did King's help you prepare for your current role?

King's College, and specifically the BSW, is what I call my "special sauce". For many out there who do not fully understand the education that is the basis for a BSW, they may not be aware that what a social worker brings to a leadership role in healthcare can be a differentiator. As social workers, we understand and utilize systems theory in how we think and practice, and are committed to advocacy and to population health: we endeavour together with those we serve to enhance their functioning and strengthen their capacity to adapt and make changes – and as leaders, we endeavour to advocate for the overall benefit of society, the environment, and the global community.

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How did King's prepare you for your current role?

We are change agents – this is what we do. And we are natural servant leaders. We are steeped in a Code of Ethics and values of self-determination and intrinsic worth of the persons we serve. Being able to understand group dynamics and lead groups (many courses on this back in the day!) is such a valuable, critical skillset in healthcare leadership – whether you are working with an interdisciplinary team, a group of physicians, the community, or an executive team. With my Social Work degree, I began my career as a front line worker helping individuals and families. As I moved to become a manager and director I was able to leverage my education and experience to help the teams I lead to make a difference, to serve larger groups of people, and to impact the community by implementing city and provincial wide initiatives. Now as a senior leader at Trillium Health Partners in Mississauga and a Regional Vice President of Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) I am afforded the opportunity to work with others to impact and influence change at a larger system level. As leaders in healthcare we are faced with significant challenges every day, and my decision making and leadership are anchored on that first degree of Social Work – that is my true north – and my special sauce. And, it all started at King's.

What advice would you give to King's students?

Be a lifelong learner - always be curious and be open to new ideas. Understand that we are all works in progress - and as a person and a leader continue to be aware and be willing to grow. And lastly, be present - take in every single moment of your life and your career... it is truly a journey, not a destination.

Further Degrees / Certifications

In addition to my BSW degree from King's University College, I have also obtained MSW and MBA degrees.

Continued education has included programs at Queen's University School of Business, Harvard School of Public Health and Rotman School of Management (University of Toronto) - Leadership Development Program.