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Echo News - October 2012

Connecting vulnerable women to critical services - By Dr. Robin Mason



Many women who experience domestic violence also have problems with substance use and mental health issues. The problems are related, but the health-care services for them are woefully disconnected.

“Providers, and the woman herself, may not understand the complex way these problems are interconnected,” says Dr. Robin Mason. “The result is that the woman may not get the kind of help she really needs or she may be forced to look for help from multiple services – often in entirely different locations.”

That’s what inspired Mason and her colleague Dr. Brenda Toner (CAMH) to develop an innovative new curriculum, ***Making Connections: When Domestic Violence, Mental Health, and Substance Use Problems Co-Occur***.

“The curriculum is designed to help front-line workers, who are disconnected within the broader health and social service system, to communicate with each other,” Mason explains.

Funded by the province of Ontario, the evidence-based curriculum was enhanced by input gathered from 300 front-line workers from across Ontario, as well as women with lived experience.

“It’s so gratifying to see that our hard work is already helping women across Ontario.”

Making Connections is helping workers do just that. It’s multi-modal, to be accessible to all learning levels and styles. There is a text manual, a series of online modules, four dramatic scenarios in video format, and a one-day, face-to face, cross-sectoral workshop.

Mason’s curriculum is already having impact, as a direct result of its pilot testing phase.

“One of the workers who participated in the pilot testing phase needed to refer an extremely vulnerable woman to a service that would meet her

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needs,” says Mason. “Because of Making Connections, the worker was able to recognize the nature of the problem right away, and called someone she met at one of our workshops.”

As a result, within hours the woman was getting the help she needed.

“Before our program, finding the appropriate service would have taken days, or it may not have happened at all,” says Mason. “It’s so gratifying to see that our hard work is already helping women across Ontario.”

[Check out the Impact + Innovation Report 2012 online now!](#)

Dr. Robin Mason was awarded the Excellence in Education Award at the 18th annual Nursing Network on Violence against Women International Conference in Charlottesville, Virginia. The award recognizes her many important contributions to educate health-care professionals about how to better support women who are experiencing violence. At an event on International Women’s Day (March 8, 2012), Making Connections was showcased to different branches of the provincial government, as well as front-line workers who support women experiencing violence, mental health and or substance use problems. Also in attendance were community partners including the Ontario Women’s Directorate, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Echo: Improving Women’s Health in Ontario (the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care). Mason is a scientist at WCRI and a University of Toronto assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

Fetal Fibronectin Webinar presented by BORN Ontario



Join Echo and **[BORN Ontario](#)** on November 8 for a webinar on Implementation of Fetal Fibronectin testing! Although up to 10% of women present sometime during their pregnancy with signs and symptoms of preterm labour (PTL), the majority of these women will deliver at term. The rapid fetal fibronectin (fFN) test provides valuable information to clinicians managing pregnant women with signs and symptoms of PTL enabling them to make time-sensitive decisions about which women to admit, treat and/or transfer to a higher level of care. This presentation will provide an overview of a project to evaluate

- (1) the impact of fFN test implementation on maternity health services utilization for PTL,
- (2) the economic impact associated with universal implementation of testing, and
- (3) women and care provider opinions regarding their experience with fFN testing.

[Register now!](#)

[Read Echo’s Fetal Fibronectin Report](#)

[Read the Echo Advance for Policy Makers](#)

[Read the Echo Advance for Health Care Providers](#)

Caregiver's Hope in Peterborough



In October, Echo partnered with the [Alzheimer Society of Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland and Haliburton](#) to hold an Echo Conversation for women caregivers in the Peterborough area. The goal was to support local women to design a caregiver education and support program which fits their needs in their community. Building on promising practices research conducted by [St. Elizabeth](#) in partnership with Echo ([Supporting the Caregivers who Support the System: Recommendations for Policy Planners and Service Providers](#)) we asked local caregivers to reflect on this knowledge and their own knowledge of their community and of caregiving to identify the elements of a program that would be effective for the Peterborough area. Approximately twenty women attended the Conversation, held at the beautiful Naval Association centre, and designed a program they called "Caregivers' Hope". Watch for our report of this wonderful day which will be available in December.

Julie McFayden says farewell to Echo



This month we would like to bid farewell to another of our staff members and acknowledge their significant contribution to the agency. Julie McFayden, Echo's Associate Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement (PACE), initially joined the agency in June 2009 as the PACE Specialist. Her solid work ethic, strategic insight and commitment to Echo's mandate soon had Julie moving into senior management. Here's how she describes her time at Echo:

Q. Why did you decide to join Echo: Improving Women's Health in Ontario?

A. When I joined Echo in 2009, the agency was still in the early stages of development. This was before Echo had a website, newsletter or an engaged group of stakeholders supporting its important vision of improving women's health in Ontario. I was excited at the opportunity to be part of the building process and the challenge the role presented to develop and establish a brand from the ground up.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about your background?

A. I've been in the communications field for more than 15 years mainly working in the not-for-profit/public sector. While I started my communication career in Kingston Jamaica, I developed a passion for the public sector after I came to Canada. It was my role as senior communications officer at the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), which made me appreciate how satisfying it is to work for organizations making a difference and creating positive change in people's lives and communities.

I knew I wanted to continue to do this type of meaningful work, whether it be through my professional or voluntary endeavours. It has been incredibly fulfilling to apply my knowledge and skills to support change and create impact for organizations like OTF and Echo. My experience at Echo opened my eyes to the valuable role women play as managers of family health and primary users of our health system. It has been extremely rewarding to get that message out and to raise awareness of women's unique health issues.

Q. What did you work on during your time at Echo and what are some of your greatest achievements?

A. I was responsible for handling all of Echo's communications activities from facilitating web development and implementation to writing media releases and coordinating large scale events. There are many things that I'm proud of having accomplished during my time with the agency. I led the development of the online directory of women's health researchers, which was expanded to include robust information on researchers across Ontario. The directory is a valuable resource for anyone working in the field of women's health. I am also proud of having built a solid stakeholder base for the agency. Today, more than 2,500 subscribers are signed up to receive Echo communications with a growing number connecting with Echo on Facebook and Twitter.

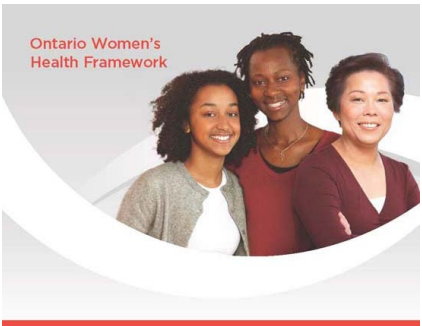
Q. What have you enjoyed the most during your time at Echo?

A. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the dedicated and talented team at Echo. The collaborative and supportive work environment really made me excited to go to work every day. I enjoyed the latitude I was given to help streamline processes and provide strategic advice to improve efficiencies.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about your new role?

A. I will be working as the Manager, Marketing and Communications for Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (**SEDI**), a not-for-profit organization working to expand economic opportunities for low-income Canadians. At SEDI, I'll have the opportunity to build on the breadth of experience gained through my work at Echo, particularly my knowledge of branding and stakeholder relations. I look forward to this newest challenge and trust that I'll find my work at SEDI truly rewarding!

Webinar - The Ontario Women's Health Framework **RESCHEDULED**



The [Ontario Women's Health Framework](#) webinar scheduled originally for October 2, 2012 has been rescheduled to **November 14, 2012 at 1pm - 2:30pm**. Please email fpark@echo-ontario.ca if you would like to participate in the webinar as remaining space is limited.

To view the original invite click [here](#)

Interesting Resources/Latest News:

[Women's College Research Institute - Impact + Innovation Report 2012](#)

[Women more stressed by negative news stories](#) - Victoria Times Colonist

Observances:

[October 30 - White Ribbon Campaign](#)

November:

[Woman Abuse Prevention Month](#)

[Incontinence Awareness Month](#)

[Lung Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#)

Events:



Oct 29 - 31, 2012
Advancing Excellence in Gender, Sex and Health Research (CIHR Conference)
Venue: Hilton, Montreal
Organizer: Canadian Institutes for Health Research

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Oct 30 - 31, 2012
The Summit on Sustainable Health and Health Care
Venue: Toronto Marriott
Organizer: The Conference Board of Canada
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Nov 1 - 2, 2012
Women in Mind 2012
Venue: Hampton Inn Conference Centre, Ottawa
Organizer: The Royal
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Nov 5 - 7, 2012
Health Achieve 2012
Venue: Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Organizer: Health Achieve
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Nov 21 - 22 2012
Ontario Health and Community Care Assessment Conference
Venue: Metro Toronto Convention Centre
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