

A Valuable Resource in Shared Care

Manitoba's innovative ***My Health Team*** program model has rolled out in several communities across the province. Since its December 2014 inception, ***My Health Team – Brandon***, a shared partnership between Western Medical Clinic, Prairie Mountain Health and the Western Manitoba Cancer Centre, has been successful in providing collaborative care for the patients of Western Medical Clinic.

As the team's shared care mental health counsellor and an employee of Prairie Mountain Health, Wanda Brine, RPN, has been a key point of contact for patients requiring mental health supports.

"It's important to create a safe and trusted environment that gives patients access to timely and efficient health services," said Wanda. "Working alongside the patient's primary care provider, as part of an interdisciplinary team, has definitely allowed for improved care".

Wanda's role encompasses the intake and screening of all mental health referrals within the clinic setting. She's available to provide supports to patients of all ages.

"Many of our patients are seeking mental health services for the first time," said Wanda. "We know that stigma still exists and this may have prevented them from accessing supports at the onset of their mental health concerns. We strive to make access to resources a comfortable and inviting process. We want the patient to know that it's okay to seek help and that they're not alone".

Wanda completes comprehensive mental health assessments to gain an understanding of the patient's circumstance and to determine necessary resources. In consultation with the family physicians, she initiates treatment planning that may



include therapeutic counselling, psychiatric consultation and networking with community mental health resources. In some cases, she also helps connect patients with necessary crisis supports and/or acute in-hospital treatment.

“Registered psychiatric nurses have foundational training in client engagement. With empathetic understanding, we assess their unique circumstance from their point of view,” said Wanda. “It’s the psychosocial position of learning about the individual from all aspects. It’s not just their medical health, social health or mental health, but from all angles”.



Photos courtesy of Wanda Brine and My Health Team - Brandon

In addition to Wanda’s role as a shared care mental health counsellor, **My Health Team - Brandon** comprises all of the physicians from the Western Medical Clinic, a full time registered dietitian, a social worker and a consulting psychiatrist. They are also connected with a nurse practitioner and with the Western Manitoba Cancer Centre.

“My experience with having access to a RPN at my office has been very positive. This set up makes servicing patients very efficient and offers me the opportunity to discuss issues with her in an informal manner,” said Dr. Theo Fourie, Western Medical Clinic. “Wanda has the knowledge, experience and connections to advise my patients in a timely and professional manner. Her experience in the field also serves us very well as she is able to point me in the right direction when specialized services are needed. I would recommend this kind of setup to any family practice.”

RPN Scope of Practice profile written by [Ashlee Espenell](#).