

# Joan Jickling

Senior Vice President Patient Engagement & Chief Nursing Executive



## Introducing Joan Jickling, Senior Vice President Patient Engagement & Chief Nursing Executive

As part of Halton Healthcare's commitment to supporting the 2,000 members of our professional nursing teams and the care they provide to our patients and families, Halton Healthcare is proud to introduce Joan Jickling, RN, as Senior Vice President Patient Engagement and Chief Nursing Executive, with a cross-appointment to the Board of Directors.

Joan is a Registered Nurse, with more than 30 years of experience in a variety of clinical, advanced practice and management roles and has been part of the Halton Healthcare team since 2014.



## Q&A

### **Q: What's your professional background?**

A: I'm a Registered Nurse, with a Bachelor of Science from Western University and a Master of Nursing from the University of Toronto. I have had advanced training in Interprofessional Education from the University of Toronto and Clinical Safety and Effectiveness from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre. With this training I joined the IDEAS Foundations in the Quality Improvement Program as a faculty member, at the University of Toronto.

My clinical background has been primarily in cancer care however I have had the opportunity to work in the area of Clinical Informatics and Professional Practice. Here at Halton Healthcare I have led the Quality and Patient Relations Program since 2014, focused on quality improvement, patient safety and patient relations. A highlight for me has been the evolution of our Patient and Family Advisor team and patient engagement program. Other aspects of my portfolio include. Risk Management, Ethics and Spiritual Care and more recently the Office of Professional Practice.

As part of the team, I've also had the privilege of supporting the Board Quality Committee and supported our Accreditation readiness activities. Our organization rose to the challenge presented by this rigorous assessment process and we were rewarded with the highest award possible of Exemplary Standing.

### **Q: What are your priorities in your new role?**

A: I'm coming into this role at a remarkable time. In the midst of a pandemic, our workforce has met its greatest challenge in a generation. One of my top priorities is to focus on the revitalization of our nursing workforce, reinvigorating our emphasis on professional development and addressing other pressing issues within the workplace.

These first steps will assist with restoring an environment in which nurses can deliver their best work. While we have never stopped providing the best possible care, the time we were able to spend

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connecting with our patients and families just hasn't been the same. I think that has added a lot of emotional and professional distress on our teams and our nurses are struggling. As we learn to work within the unpredictability of the pandemic our goal is to help all of our patient care teams recover.

Additionally, I am also committed to continuing to evolve our patient and family engagement activities, knowing they are key to understanding how to best design the system intended to serve them. When we involve people in their care, they heal better, faster and overall have better outcomes. It's an approach that helps patients, families, providers and the system as a whole.

## **Q: What do you see as your biggest challenges?**

A: I am committed to strengthening a healthy, robust nursing team so that they feel valued and are able to better support the organization and its vision of providing exemplary patient experiences, always.

So much of our work through the pandemic has been reactive. It is going to take time to get us back to a place where we have room to be proactive and to fully understand the widespread impact of COVID-19. We'll need to find creative ways to make sure that we're improving the environment for staff and patients, for developing great leaders and for using technology for efficiency and safety.

## **Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up, and why?**

A: I grew up surrounded by nurses and other healthcare professionals - it was all I knew as a youngster and as I considered my options it became clear to me this was a fit. I have never looked back.

## **Q: What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given?**

A: I think for me, one of the most inspiring idea was hearing Elyse Allan, who at the time was the CEO of GE Canada, speak about a new business philosophy that fundamentally changed her company. What she described was the notion of the lean start up, from the Book by Eric Reis. In this he shared an approach to product development that favours experimentation over elaborate planning. It also encourages early engagement as key to success and innovation. When I heard this, I realized that we can apply the same principles in the service oriented industry of healthcare, particularly as we think about quality improvement. While the pandemic has forced us to operate in these ways, I believe this philosophy will be critical to our continued success and as we embrace patients and families into the care and design processes as we rebuild. We'll experiment and find the best strategies - together.

## **Q: Any final thoughts?**

A: Our teams are tired and the pandemic seems never-ending. While that feels ominous in many respects, I am optimistic, as I have seen our teams and the organization as a whole rally in the most difficult of times. As nurses we touch the lives of patients and families in profound ways. As a key piece of the entire healthcare team, our relationships across teams are crucial - success will mean that we're all working in lock step with our strategic priorities of Connect, Advance, Response and Engage.