

31 Ontario Oncology Nurses awarded Fellowships for Graduate Studies

TORONTO, ON (May 13, 2009) Thirty-one top oncology and palliative care nurses across Ontario have been awarded fellowships to support their Masters and PhD degree studies.

The fellowships, valued at \$10,000 to \$20,000 each, were awarded by The de Souza Institute, an innovative centre of learning dedicated to improving cancer care in Ontario by supporting excellence in oncology nursing.

"We're investing in our future leaders in oncology nursing," says Mary Jane Esplen, Director of the de Souza Institute. "Whether they become educators, academics, researchers or administrators, these nurses will be playing a critical role in advancing cancer care in this province. The de Souza Institute is pleased to recognize and support this promising group of scholars."

The fellowship recipients were selected by a committee of recognized experts in oncology and palliative care. Applicants were evaluated based on demonstrated achievement in their nursing practice, strong academic performance and a commitment to careers in oncology or palliative care.

Prisco Salvador, a PhD degree scholarship recipient from Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH), is going back to graduate school to pursue his research interest in oral mucositis (sore mouth resulting from cancer treatment). His aim is to implement early prevention strategies, improve the patient experience and quality of life outcomes.

"My day-to-day interactions with patients drive me to pursue higher education," says Prisco, who has worked at PMH for more than 18 years. "This fellowship will allow me to continue my research in hopes of finding cost-effective interventions for this clinical issue."

In addition to providing the nurses with financial awards, the de Souza Institute will support their academic development through monthly teleconference academic seminars.

"The field of oncology is changing rapidly," says Dr. Esplen. "We need to identify nurses with leadership potential and help them advance their education and their careers. As this is Nursing Week, what better time to highlight this important investment in future cancer care for all Ontarians."

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About the de Souza Institute

The de Souza Institute is an innovative centre of learning for oncology nursing in Ontario. Established in May 2008 with funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the virtual Institute is building capacity and setting a new standard of oncology nursing excellence by delivering education and mentorship programs, supporting specialty certification and graduate study, and enhancing career development for nurses who provide cancer care. For more information, visit www.desouzanurse.ca

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