

MAHCP Members Receive 2010 Outstanding Health Professional CDA Award

Norma and Nicole were nominated by Julie Dexter, with letters of support from Dr. Elizabeth Sellers and Dr. Heather Dean. CDA Manitoba & Nunavut Regional Director Linda Berg remarks included the following excerpt from the letter of nomination.

The Outstanding Health Professional Award is presented to a health professional that has made a difference in improving the lives of individuals living with diabetes in our region. The award recognizes the work of a health professional within her or his own medical field, rather than an individual working for the Association on a volunteer basis.

This year, we are very pleased to present the 2010 Outstanding Health Professional Award to two exceptional individuals: Nicole Aylward and Norma VanWelleghem. Norma and Nicole have made significant individual as well as combined contributions as the two registered dietitians specializing in pediatric diabetes in our Region. Both have been described as “true leaders” at the Diabetes Education Resource for Children and Adolescents (DER-CA).

They have continued to provide leadership and consistency for the families in the program, amidst staffing changes, as well as offer guidance and training to other incoming health care professionals. Their abilities step far beyond basic nutritional counseling - both becoming Certified Pump Trainers, a role once held only by nurses. They have mastered insulin adjustment and the teaching of insulin therapy, in true collaborative practice.

Independently, Norma has been essential in improving the life of

young adults living with type 1 diabetes through her Masters Thesis work which focuses on the Maestro Transition Program. She is also the lead coordinator of the Annual Teachers Workshop through DER-CA, which helps children with type 1 adjust to a safe classroom life.

Nicole, too, has vastly contributed to the quality of life for those living with diabetes. She has championed the DER-CA's Family Research Day, a networking event for families affected by type 1 diabetes.

Nicole is a member of the National Nutritional Committee and a member of the expert committee for the 2008 CDA Clinical Practice Guidelines.

Both Norma and Nicole have been contributors to the Diabetes Educator

Section and Clinical and Scientific Section of the CDA. They have both also been an instrumental part of the Association's Camp Briardale, a camp for kids living with type 1 diabetes, attending first as students in counselor roles and now as members of the Medical team.

Norma and Nicole's individual contributions to advancing the care of individuals with diabetes have been strengthened by their combined efforts and partnership. Individually and collectively, their contributions to the DER-CA team, their profession, the community, and families living with diabetes is remarkable.

On behalf of CDA, Linda Berg was pleased to present the 2010 Outstanding Health Professional Award to Nicole Aylward and Norma Van Welleghem.



L to R: Kelly Lambkin, Public Programs & Services Coordinator, CDA; Norma Van Welleghem, MSc, RD, CDE; Linda Berg, Regional Director Manitoba & Nunavut Region, CDA; and Nicole Aylward, RD, CDE

Registered Dietitians are acknowledged professionals uniquely trained to advise on diet, food and nutrition. They can separate fact from fiction, healthy eating plans from unsafe diets and translate the science of nutrition into healthy food choices. Dietitians play a major role in health care, industry, government and education. Dietitians influence policy development; direct nutrition programs; manage quality food services; and provide information and counsel that allows clients, including the consumer, to make informed decisions about their nutrition and food choices. Dietitians are essential members of the health care teams and practice in a wide range of diverse workplaces (health care facilities, the community, foodservice management, private practice, industry, government, education and research). The first step to becoming a dietitian is a four year Bachelor's degree with major credits in Foods and Nutrition from a university offering a Dietitians of Canada accredited dietetic education program. Step 2 is successful completion of a one year internship program of supervised practical experience accredited by Dietitians of Canada. The final step in becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD) is registration with the provincial regulatory body. A further 800 hours of training is required to become a diabetes educator.

Diabetes educators partner with patients and their families to teach diabetes self-management. They



MAHCP Members Norma Van Welleggham MSc, RD, CDE and Nicole Aylward, RD, CDE

are skilled at assessing the particular needs of the individual living with diabetes and provide practical solutions about medication, testing, diet and exercise to help them achieve as healthy a lifestyle as possible and gain control of their disease. In Canada the requirements to become a certified diabetes educator are; being registered with a regulatory body in Canada as a health professional and a minimum of 800 hours of practice in diabetes education. Recertification is required every 5 years either by writing the qualifying exam or maintaining continuing education points.