



YOUR CHAPTER

STAY CONNECTED

YOUR PULSE 

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Black History Month Series: Beyond the Bedside - Celebrating Black Nurses in Health Care.
- Dr. Crystal Garvey : "Silent Voices" - Narrative of Black Mental Health.
- 2025 Bursaries Awarded
- Student Mentees are involved in planning and coordinating Chapter initiatives/events.



SPOTLIGHT NURSE/EDUCATOR



Janet Montague (She/Her/Hers) is a Nursing Professor and Program Coordinator in the Collaborative Nursing Degree program at Centennial College, where she has dedicated her career to advancing excellence, equity, and social justice in nursing education. With more than two decades of experience as a nurse, nurse educator and leader, Janet is widely recognized for her commitment to shaping learning environments where students feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

At the provincial and national levels, Janet holds several influential leadership roles that reflect her deep engagement with the nursing profession. She currently serves as President of the Registered Nurses Foundation of Ontario (RNFOO), where she supports initiatives that advance nursing scholarship, leadership, and innovation. She is also Co-Director of Student Engagement for the Pan-Canadian Association of Nurses of African Descent (PCANAD), working to amplify student voices and strengthen pathways for Black nurses across Canada. In addition, Janet is Co-Chair of both the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) Anti-Racism Committee and the CASN Social Justice and Anti-Racism Nurse Educator Interest Group, contributing to national conversations on equity, accountability, and systemic change in nursing education. Janet's expertise is further recognized through her role as a member of the expert panel for the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Best Practice Guideline development on Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Nursing. In this capacity, she helps translate evidence and lived experience into actionable guidance to support nurses, nursing students, educators, and organizations in addressing racism and fostering inclusive nursing environments.

Her leadership and impact have been acknowledged through numerous honours. In 2025, Janet was named one of Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch by the Canadian International Black Women Excellence (CIBWE), received Centennial College's Alumni of Distinction Award, and was awarded the Sigma Theta Tau International, Lambda Pi-At-Large Gail J. Donner Award for Excellence in Nursing Education. She was also nominated by Centennial College for the Premier's Awards in Health Sciences (2024) and Health Care and Community Well-Being (2025).

Building on her professional practice, Janet is a PhD Candidate at Western University, where her Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded doctoral research examines Black nursing students' experiences of belonging in nursing education in Canada through the lens of critical race theory and intersectionality. Through her teaching, scholarship, and leadership, Janet continues to champion anti-racism, belonging, and

SPOTLIGHT ORGANIZATION



ROBOTIC SURGERY - LAKERIDGE HEALTH

From Innovation to Impact: Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Robotic Surgery

Lakeridge Health is transforming surgical care across Durham Region through its innovative robotic surgery program – bringing advanced, patient-centred care closer to home.

Launched in 2023, the program introduced the da Vinci Surgical System—affectionately named Optimus, from the Latin meaning “the best.” The name reflects both the precision of the technology and Lakeridge Health’s commitment to delivering the highest quality care.

“Robotic-assisted surgery enables minimally invasive procedures using enhanced 3D visualization and highly precise instruments,” explains Dr. John Dickie, Chief of Surgery and Medical Director, Surgical Program. “For patients, this means smaller incisions, reduced complications, shorter hospital stays, and faster recovery.”

For many patients, the impact is not only clinical – but also local.

“Prior to the program’s launch, many patients had to travel outside Durham Region for this level of care,” notes Heather Lithgow, Director, Surgical Services. “Today, patients can access leading-edge surgical treatment within their community – supporting more equitable access and a better patient experience.”

At its core, the program reflects a strong commitment to quality and evidence-based practice.

“Innovation like robotic-assisted surgery is about delivering safer, higher-quality care and improving outcomes for our patients,” says Petrina McGrath, Health System Executive, People, Quality and Practice, and Chief Nursing Executive. “It reflects our commitment to evidence-based practice and ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.” Since its launch, the program has had a significant impact, with hundreds of procedures completed across specialties including urology, gynecology, thoracic and colorectal surgery.

This success is driven by strong interprofessional collaboration. Surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists, and allied health professionals work together in highly coordinated teams to deliver safe, precise care. For nursing teams, the program has created new opportunities to expand clinical expertise and strengthen practice in alignment with RNAO best practice guidelines.

“The introduction of a regional, robot-assisted surgical program will transform the way we offer surgery in Durham Region, especially for cancer patients,” adds Dr. Dickie.

Supported by community investment and a shared commitment to innovation, the program is helping Lakeridge Health respond to growing demand for complex and cancer-related care.

Beyond individual patient outcomes, robotic surgery is also contributing to broader system improvements – including reduced surgical waitlists and more efficient use of resources. More information about Lakeridge Health’s Surgery Program is available at lh.ca.

EXECUTIVE SPOTLIGHT - CHIDINMA NWAEZE, STUDENT ENO

I am excited to share that I have officially completed my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Towards the end of my journey, I discovered a true passion for caring for the geriatric population and working within medicine and medial-surgical units. These areas taught me how important compassion, patience, and advocacy are, and how motivated I am to continue doing so in many ways throughout my career.

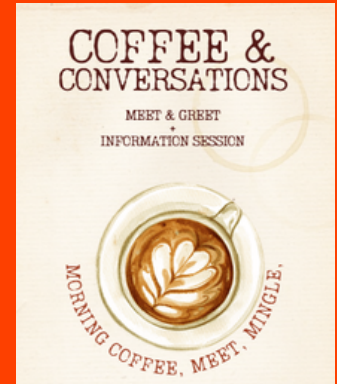
My goal moving forward is to make meaningful change wherever I can! Whether that's providing high-quality bedside care, supporting seniors as well as improving their quality of life while in their homes, and contributing to infection prevention and control initiatives to reduce hospital-acquired infections. I'm very happy to see where life takes me, and I'm very grateful to the support system who also helped me throughout my nursing school journey.



UPCOMING EVENTS

We are thrilled to announce a series of upcoming events designed to engage our members and keep them informed about various initiatives within Durham and the RNAO. Whether you are a new graduate or a seasoned nurse, these events offer the perfect opportunity to advance your career and stay connected

2026 AGM CONSULTATION REPS



NURSING WEEK

MAY 11-17

- Nursing Week Dinner
- Week-Long Activities
- Nominate a Nurse that emulates the 2026 Nursing Week Theme: “Empower Nurses to Save Lives”



RNAO



RNAO's 2026 Annual General Meeting

May 28-29

STUDENT NEWS

- Sponsorship to 2026 AGM
- RNAO Information Booth at Ontario Tech Pinning Ceremony on April 27, 2026
- Look out for information about exclusive RNAO Student events.