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École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario
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May 7, 2015

Letter of acknowledgement for Ms. Kimberley Wahamaa

This is a letter to acknowledge the contributions of Ms. Kimberley Wahamaa in providing presentations to the undergraduate medical students at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) to promote their understanding of the patient experience during medical treatment(s), in particular the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, and also to recognize Ms. Wahamaa's contributions towards the development of a unique instructional resource which promotes an understanding of the patient experience and which will be included in the undergraduate curriculum (specifically in the instructional module 107).

As a fulltime faculty member in the Division of Medical Sciences at NOSM, I, Dr. Carita Lannér, had the pleasure to interact with Ms. Wahamaa for the first time in September 2013, when I was involved in the delivery of a Breast Cancer Panel discussion, with the purpose of providing insight for medical students, into the patient journey through different stages of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. At the time, Ms. Wahamaa was a newly diagnosed breast cancer patient and presented a very moving description of the fears and uncertainities facing a woman in that situation. One year later, at the panel discussion in 2014, Ms. Wahamaa presented her entire experience going through treatment, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation to the students. Ms. Wahamaa's presentation was deeply engaging and showed how she developed coping strategies for each phase of her treatment.

After the second panel discussion event, I had the opportunity to talk with Ms. Wahamaa about her efforts to bring an awareness of the patient experience to medical students and we decided to develop a resource using Ms. Wahamaa's presentation material, that could be suitable as an addition to the NOSM curriculum. Ms. Wahamaa put her full support into this effort, and the presentation was ready to be introduced as a potential resource to the curriculum development committees at NOSM by January, 2015. The presentation was approved by all the necessary instances and could finally be incorporated into the on-line curriculum delivery system at NOSM in the spring of 2015, for delivery to the students in the fall of 2015. All the faculty and staff at NOSM who have assisted with the development and implementaion of this resource have been both affected and impressed by the frankness and direct discussion of Ms. Wahamaa concerning her experience as a breast cancer patient.

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We expect that our medical students will also recognize the challenges she faced as a patient and the courage it took for Ms. Wahamaa to share her experience and hope that they will be able to extrapolate this to every patient they meet in their future practice.

It has been a pleasure and a priviledge to collaborate with Ms. Wahamaa in developing this meaningful resource to complement the undergraduate curriculum on breast cancer at NOSM.

Sincerely,

Carita Lannér

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