



Nominee Information:

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Nominee's Name: Mr. Marius Pienaar

Nominee's Title: Physician specialist: Obstetrician Gynecologist

Nominee's Organization: Northern Health, Northwest Cluster

Nominee's Project / Group
Name (If Applicable):

Nominee's Address: 1305 Summit Ave , Prince Rupert, British Columbia, V8J2A6

Nominee's Email: elaine.jackson@northernhealth.ca Nominee's Phone: 250.622.6295

Nominator Information:

Nominator's Name: Ms. Sheila Gordon-Payne (on behalf of team)

Nominator's Title: Health Service Administrator

Nominator's Organization: Administration, NH Northwest Cluster

Nominator's Address: sheila.gordon-payne@northernhealth.ca, Prince Rupert, British Columbia, V8J2A6

Nominator's Email: sheila.gordon-payne@northernhealth.c Nominator's Phone: 250.622.6298

Health Care Hero Awards:

1) Provide a brief biography and/or background for this individual.

Marius Pienaar attended the University Pretoria in South Africa, graduating in 1983 with his M.B., Ch. B. He continued his studies at the University of Stellenbosch graduating in 1992 with a degree M. Med (Obs/Gyne)

In Prince Rupert, recruitment for specialists is often difficult and in 1992 there was an upcoming vacancy for an Obstetrician/Gynecologist for Prince Rupert and area.

Dr. Pienaar had been offered 2 positions in Saskatchewan prior to his decision to choose Prince Rupert. Dr. Pienaar chose Prince Rupert based on information he received from a friend who was visiting Prince Rupert. The friend had informed him that Prince Rupert would be a good fit for Dr Pienaar, his wife and three young sons. On June 14, 1992 Dr. Pienaar accepted the offer as Obstetrician/Gynaecologist at Prince Rupert Regional Hospital and the immigration process was then underway to get him here as quickly as possible.

Dr. Pienaar and his family arrived in Vancouver from South Africa between Christmas and the New Year 1992, arriving in Prince Rupert to commence in the position as Obs/Gyne on January 1, 1993.

He quickly settled in. Families and professionals in our area have benefited ever since.

2) Describe why this individual should receive a Health Care Hero Award. What has the nominee done that is heroic? Relate either a specific incident or a pattern of contributions.

Marius is heroic. This is demonstrated each day through a consistent pattern of contribution. These contributions fall into 7 easily identifiable themes:

- Innovator (of creative solutions such as the maternity clinic, and establishment of the Prince Rupert Obstetrical Society Team (PROST))
- Supporter (early supporter of the Northern Health Options for Sexual Health (NH/OPT) clinic)
- Educator (PROST, and work with students etc)



- Advocate (for women's health in practice and communities)
- Collaborator (willing to work with all team members, and multi-disciplinary focus)
- Continuous Quality Improvement (best practice focused)
- Leader (Chief of Staff, and unofficial recruiter)

Examples of many

Innovator: The North Coast Maternity Clinic was championed by Dr. Pienaar as both a solution to address physician shortages and to also improve prenatal care based on a model of multi-disciplinary collaboration including; a nurse practitioner, community health workers, a dietician, diabetic nurses, an aboriginal liaison and a receptionist all co-located in one central location at our Prince Rupert Regional Hospital. There are several things that make this clinic, the brainchild of Dr. Pienaar unique; firstly it was the only model in Northern B.C. at its inception that supported low risk patients from the community of Prince Rupert as well as the surrounding First Nations communities with a coordinated pre natal service and secondly it provided easy access to services to support the best possible outcomes for pre natal health; lab, ultra sound, diabetic care, parenting support, tobacco screening, high risk obstetrical care, access to mental health & addictions.

Supporter: Recognizing the need for a safe place for youth in Prince Rupert to access sexual health services, Marius was an early supporter of the Northern Health/Options for Sexual Health partnership through Public Health Nursing. At the outset of the partnership, Marius helped to engage the local physician team to build enthusiasm for the NH/OPT program. He skilfully brought key stakeholders together and helped to build a shared vision for comprehensive and high quality sexual health services in the community. In addition to this, he offered education and training to local PHNs in order to help nurses offer full scope services. Often, this work was done on his own time and without formal recognition for the role he played. Over the years, he has become a trusted advisor and a referral source for nurses and clients in need of specialist support. No matter how busy his schedule gets, he is always willing to take a phone call from a Public Health Nurse or schedule a last minute appointment with a client in need. As we continue to plan for expanded services for youth and sexual health programming in the community, it helps us all to know that Marius is a part of the team.

Educator: The Haida Gwaii Maternity Network group notes that he is always available, and generous with his time and knowledge. He has also come over every year to Queen Charlotte Island General Hospital (QCIGH) to participate in the annual Maternity workshop since 2006

Advocate: Marius is seen as a staunch advocate for women's health in Prince Rupert. He is a physician that looks beyond the immediate medical needs of a woman to the larger social context impacting women's health. He is passionate about improving health outcomes and has the knowledge and expertise to make him a respected voice in the field. This makes him a valuable leader in improving women's health care. Those involved say it is a pleasure to work with him in the development of a Post Partum clinic, as well as the continual growth of the maternity clinic.

Collaborator: A midwife new to the community gives the following remarks: Marius has been a true ally and champion of nurse practitioners. From my first meeting, he has been warm, accessible, and so supportive. He has made himself available to me for questions, for additional training, and has been open to any changes I have suggested for the maternity clinic. I have felt like a valued and equal part of the health care team when working with him.

Continuous Quality Improvement: Those who have worked with Marius observe that he wants the very best possible evidence- based and quality care for women and patients. He enjoys being a leader in his field and advocates for this in all practices. There is a focus on continuously keeping up excellent practice and continuing to find ways to improve. Most recently Marius was instrumental in re-establishing the Northwest Medical Quality Improvement Committee for Prince Rupert. In the past this was the Medical Audit Committee, which had not met in 7 years.

Leader: in recent years, the Prince Rupert area for Northern Health had not had a Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) or Chief of staff for 4 years. Under Marius's interest, understanding of our system and leadership, he took on the role of Chief of Staff, and reinstated MAC meetings. His credibility and contagious commitment is so strong that there is near perfect attendance at the MAC meetings. In this role he works steadily in his role for physicians, communities and the health authority.

He also plays a role as ambassador for recruitment and retention. Supporting those already here and opening



doors for those who may wish to come to rural practice. This includes the recruitment of our present general surgeon and many of our GPs.

3) Describe how this person goes "above and beyond" the scope of their job. What sets them apart from other dedicated health care workers?

The examples are many. From the exciting, like scaling 8 foot fences from a ferry dock in the night to attend an obstetrical emergency on Haida Gwai, Or, to taking questions from providers even when he is not on call! The midwife on Haida Gwaii described it like this: "I've called him by mistake thinking he was on call while he was out on the water sailing and he still took the call graciously. Other times I have left a message and even after I have realized he was away and consulted with someone else , he has still returned calls to give support or listen to a case. Always with interest and without complaint. No matter the time nor the crazy situation, Marius is always professional, pleasant and in good humour."

For the programs this 'above and beyond' includes his efforts to help move sexual health programming forward. Marius has also been involved in various community education initiatives. When the province moved ahead with HPV vaccination, Marius spoke publicly to parent groups and interested community members about vaccine safety and the benefits of HPV vaccination. He wrote an article for the local paper and even went as far as allowing his face to be photo-shopped onto the body of a mermaid for a HPV/Cancer prevention poster

For patients, 'above and beyond' can be his push to go out of his way to do an extra service for them. This may mean seeing them at the last moment while they are in Prince Rupert , finding resources for a family member in need, helping someone through a difficult situation, or just being open or forthcoming with positivity and humour.

4) How has this person inspired or effected change in others?

In practice, in the Operating Room, the contributions are many. For example as an innovator, he was one of the first gynecologists in BC to train in and offer the less invasive and better tolerated incontinence procedure known as trans-vaginal tape, or TVT. He served the local area and had patients travelling up to see him from Vancouver for this procedure. As a seasoned physician he reaches out to take students and at the same time, teaches and supports the professional team.

In a clinic setting, The North Coast Maternity Clinic was championed by Dr. Pienaar as both a solution to address physician shortages and to also improve prenatal care based on a model of multi-disciplinary collaboration including; a nurse practitioner, community health workers, a dietician, diabetic nurses, an aboriginal liaison and a receptionist all co-located in one central location at our Prince Rupert Regional Hospital. There are several things that make this clinic, the brainchild of Dr. Pienaar unique; firstly it was the only model in Northern B.C. at its inception that supported low risk patients from the community of Prince Rupert as well as the surrounding First Nations communities with a coordinated pre natal service and secondly it provided easy access to services to support the best possible outcomes for pre natal health; lab, ultra sound, diabetic care, parenting support, tobacco screening, high risk obstetrical care, access to mental health & addictions.

The impact of this clinic has been multi-faceted; for expecting mothers who now have access to regular scheduled pre natal care that includes an assessment of risk and health status, the community has a centralized clinic supported by a diverse range of Physician's keen to ensure the best possible outcomes for their patients, the individuals who participate in this clinic as team members have developed new skills & relationships and truly believe the work they are doing is contributing to the present and future wellness of our community. As an employer, Northern Health has recognized the great strength of Dr. Pienaar in bringing together a vision of care that has been used to model other rural & remote pre-natal services in our region.

5) How has this person's efforts had a positive impact on their patients, coworkers, employer and/or community?

Long before it was a buzz-word in health care, Marius recognized the value of the 'multi-disciplinary team' and took steps to help build this approach into perinatal care in Prince Rupert. He helped establish the local PROST (Prince Rupert Obstetrical Society Team) committee which acts as an important venue for care providers from GPs, Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, Maternity Nurses and Public Health Nurses to come together and receive shared education, discuss local concerns and ideas for improvement. In the early years, Marius hosted these meetings from his living room and while the venue has since changed; his leadership and support of this group continue to be a key contributor to its success.



A Canadian Nurse Practitioner coming from outside of British Columbia notes that Marius is unique in his approach to women's health. She states "He is heavily invested in the provision of maternal care in a way that surpasses traditional biomedical models. He is not content with the status quo in care but rather looks beyond his local context to tap into what is happening in maternal and reproductive health on a national level. Due to his leadership, Prince Rupert is on the cutting edge of providing collaborative, comprehensive maternal care. The maternity clinic under his guidance has become a model for other centres provincially. It is his goal to develop and build upon a pre and post -partum continuum of care and support that results not only in better health outcomes for women but for their families as well."

It is no surprise that Marius recognizes the need for teamwork, collaboration and working in the larger system. As a last example, when the local Medical Advisory group disbanded and a Chief of Staff had been elusive for over 4 years, he worked hard at rebuilding relationships and understanding within the physician group and NH. Marius stepped forward to be the first new Chief of Staff. He felt that this it was important to model the role and positive impact this could have for our system and staff.

6) OPTIONAL - Additional brief testimonials or endorsements from others.

In recounting a personal story, a midwife shares the following:

"My own story with Marius happened before I was a midwife, as his patient...Marius was called in and he came and gave me my first informed choice discussion and we came to a compromise which was still safe, but worked for all. I had an excellent experience and a healthy kid.

Fourteen years later I'm writing an email in support him receiving this award. I have a lot of admiration for this man, and truly he inspires me to continue to strive high in my work and in my person."

(Celina Laursen, Registered Midwife, Haida Gwaii)

"After many years of working together, our roles are now intertwined as leaders, his as Chief of Staff and mine as Health Service Administrator. My appreciation for the never-ending leadership, effort and sensitivity to our often challenging world of healthcare and dilemmas is immense"

(Sheila Gordon-Payne, Health Service Administrator)

"This is a wonderful idea, thank you for spearheading it...Above all he has remained through my 15 years working here a constant positive force for quality patient care. He advocates tirelessly, and argues with great cogency and clarity, for improved care for the population he serves, while somehow maintaining a great sense of humor and humility. He is a constant inspiration and I can't think of a more deserving recipient for such an award."

(Dr Gordon Horner, Physician colleague and Chief of Staff Haida Gwaii.)

"Marius is totally committed to providing timely, quality and sensitive care to women in the Prince Rupert catchment area. His passion, innovation and ability to identify opportunities for system improvement provide an excellent perinatal service. Marius leads his fellow colleagues, often stepping up to the plate to identify new best practice. He isn't afraid to debate and challenge the status quo. "

(Rose Perrin, Executive Lead Perinatal Program)

"I have worked with Marius over the past 16 years and admire his passion and dedication for obstetrical and gynecological care for his patients here in Prince Rupert. He is an advocate for our patients in our small area trying to ensure that women can stay here in our community while receiving the best care possible. As well he is and advocate for the hospital, bring education and resources to our staff and facility. He brings forth new ideas and strategies to improve on our ever changing health care system such as our maternity clinic and is a team builder, not only in house but with the community as well."

(Roxanne Fitzsimmons RN, Infection Prevention Practitioner)

"He recognizes that by working with women in the context of their lives, significant potential exists to impact women to reduce chronic disease and improve health outcomes beyond that of just maternal care. It is this viewpoint that makes him extraordinarily unique in my opinion. It also means that he is committed to a level of collaboration with other health professionals that puts the patient at the centre of the health care system. He understands that each profession brings valuable expertise to the table and provides the space for everyone to have a voice. And even more important, it means that he always shares his chocolate!"

(Michelle Wolsky Nurse Practitioner)

"I have worked with Marius for 20 years. He has been a force for steady improvement of reproductive health



services for women on the North Coast for that whole time"
(Jane Wilde, Director of Care NH)

"The question of how Dr. Pienaar has inspired or affected change in others is easy to answer. As front line staff, clinicians and leaders we have seen the outcome of greatness that occurs when a recognized gap in service is addressed by a committed champion like Dr. Pienaar. We need not look any further for future opportunities but around us to hear the stories of our patients that inspire us to build upon our current North Coast Maternity Clinic through the visionary work of Dr. Pienaar who is already leading us into the next frontier of rural maternal care. "
(Angela Szabo Manager Home and Community Care and Health Promotion programs)

"Our people want the opportunity to deliver on island, surrounded by family and friends. Without the support Dr. Pienaar, a committed, community minded, and caring health professional, this maternity program could not exist."
(Mayor Carol Kulesha
Village of Queen Charlotte)