



Monday May 16, 2023

Dear Registered Nurses' Foundation of Ontario Members,

I am writing this letter to provide a progress report on the business, Portage Vascular Access Inc., since receiving such generous funding through the Connie Clerici Nurse Entrepreneur Award in November, 2022.

I have been inserting ultrasound guided peripheral intravenous catheters in my local community for patients in the home who have difficult venous access and require more advanced skills and technology. I have created business accounts with Cardinal Health and Surgo Surgical Supply to be able to purchase required supplies. Such supplies have included long length peripheral intravenous catheters, sterile probe covers, sterile gel, sterile gloves, gloves, saline flushes, extension sets, gauze and dressing supplies for the procedures. The amount of these supplies has been approximately \$500.00.

For the intracavitary ECG tip tracking and confirmation technology to insert peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs), I submitted a credit application to be able to purchase the equipment through BD. Unfortunately, it was determined that as an employee of BD, it would be a conflict of interest for me to purchase direct from the company. So, through networking and collaborative communication, I developed a relationship with Silver Linings Healthcare Inc. as they have been looking for an advanced skilled nurse to support PIV and PICC insertions in their alternate care facilities, outside of the acute care environment. They agreed to purchase the capital equipment I require for PICC insertion. They are already set up on a HealthPro

contract so are able to receive the pricing I initially submitted on my budget plan for RNFOO rather than me paying a higher list price direct from the BD. This is the most financially responsible way to go. Silver Linings Inc. recently submitted the application to BD and are waiting to hear of their credit approval so they may proceed with the purchase of the equipment on my behalf. I will then reimburse them with the funding I received. This will include the ultrasound machine with linear probe, PICC tracking sensor, kickstand, mobile supply box, software activation key for ECG technology, printer and printer paper. The sum of this will be approximately \$19,000. The remainder of the funds will be used to purchase all in one maximal sterile barrier PICC insertion kits. This purchase will occur as soon as they receive approval from BD following their application submission. I anticipate this to happen in June, 2023.

\$2,561.57 of the award money was used to pay income tax from receiving the award. Due to this amount being deducted from the 25K total, I decided to forego on my initial plan to purchase an electronic medical documentation application rather, put any additional funds into PICC, midline and ultrasound guided PIV supplies.

Another opportunity I have recently (two weeks ago) explored locally is with the Director of a rural Family Health Team. She has experience working within the LHIN in the past and sees a place for my services as the Ontario Health Teams are piloting a hospital at home program, providing care for patients who are in the home and clinic setting to avoid burdening hospitals. I have another meeting with her this week following her discussion with Bayshore. She said she has the budget to be able to pilot Portage Vascular Access through the local Family Health Team and their connection with Bayshore Home Health. This would open up my

referrals to various Primary Care Providers so that I may offer this service to a broader group of patients, including making the service more equitable to those who do not have private insurance. As well as reducing wait times and transportation risks/costs associated with patients having to travel to hospitals for advanced vascular access. I would operate as a contracted business, supporting patients in the home and clinic.

This business venture has been a learning opportunity full of relationship building and determining what makes the most sense for my service offering in our current publicly funded healthcare system as well as private offerings. With recent news in Ontario, there is support from our government in the private space so I feel it is important to stay abreast on how care is being delivered and where Portage VA may fit in. The need for mobile vascular access continues to grow and I continue to move forward to develop this business in the community. My goal continues to be getting the business running smoothly and to grow to other geographical areas with additional vascular access specialists. I look forward to submitting another report within 24 months from the start of this project to highlight outcomes and additional details on how the funds were used.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smees