

Valerie Rzepka, NP, BScN, MSc



Valerie Rzepka is a Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner, Executive Director and co-founder of Canadian Medical Assistance Teams (CMAT), a grassroots emergency medical response organization that provides medical aid in the wake of major global disasters.

In more than 10 years of responding to disasters, Valerie has coordinated, supervised and deployed to medical projects in post-Tsunami Thailand (2005), earthquake-affected Kashmir, Pakistan (2005), Sichuan, China (2008), Haiti and Chile (2010) and Japan (2011), cyclone and flood-ravaged Bangladesh (2007) as well as typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines (2013). Most recently, she oversaw CMAT's immediate rapid assessment and coordinated the overall response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Ryerson University in Toronto, Master of Science in Health Policy degree jointly from the London School of Economics and diploma from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom. Her MSc thesis comprised a Critical review on the status of Health Systems in affected regions, 1-2 years post-disaster. She completed the Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner program at Laurentian University in 2013.

Valerie has travelled extensively to all corners of the world, both for work and pleasure. She works casually as a Critical Care Flight Nurse with Angels of Flight Canada, and as a Cruise Ship Nurse with Holland America Line. Prior to returning to clinical practice, Valerie spent several years working as a Health Policy Analyst with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), helping to shape legislation, which affected nursing and health care in Ontario, Canada and around the world.

She has been invited on many occasions to guest lecture, most recently at the World Conference on Disaster Management in Toronto (2015), and at universities and colleges across Canada. She contributed a chapter in a textbook published in 2015 entitled "Disaster and Development: An Occupational Perspective", contributed to the literary review of a textbook entitled "Disaster Preparedness for Health Care Facilities" (2013). Her scholarly contributions have appeared in the Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine, the Registered Nurse Journal among others. Valerie has sat on the Board of Directors of the Centre for Excellence in Emergency Preparedness since 2008.

Valerie has now returned to primary clinical practice, having spent many of the last few years working in remote communities in the Canadian Arctic and Sub-arctic, and shares her time between Northern Outpost nursing stations, and a clinical educator position in downtown Toronto.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

Humanitarian Healthcare Provider Program

