

Valerie J. Rzepka, NP-PHC, BScN, MSc, DLSHTM

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 nearly 15 years of responding to disasters, Valerie has coordinated, supervised and deployed to medical projects in Thailand, Pakistan, China, Haiti, Chile, Japan, and the Philippines. Most recently, she oversaw CMAT's immediate rapid assessment and coordinated the overall response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. As a result of her collaboration in United Nations-led emergency responses, Valerie has consulted for the Pan American Health Organization in Washington, DC, and World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland as a subject-matter expert in Emergency Medical Response in the Emergency Medical Teams initiative.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Ryerson University in Toronto, and her Master of Science in Health Policy jointly from the London School of Economics and a diploma from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom. She completed the Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner program at Laurentian University in 2013.

Valerie has spent many of the last years working in remote First Nations and Inuit communities in the Canadian Arctic and Sub-arctic and presently works as a Clinical Educator teaching outpost nurses the advanced practice skills necessary for working in remote communities. She also works casually as a Critical Care Flight Nurse, transporting patients internationally, and as a Medical Officer with Holland America and Princess Cruise Lines.

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, affecting nursing and health care in Ontario, Canada and around the world.

Valerie is a sought-after guest lecturer, having presented at conferences such as the World Conference on Disaster Management in Toronto (2015), and at universities and colleges across Canada and around the world. She contributed to a textbook entitled *Disaster and Development: An Occupational Perspective* and conducted a literary review of a textbook entitled *Disaster Preparedness for Health Care Facilities* (2013). Her scholarly contributions have also appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine*, the *Registered Nurse Journal*, among others.