

Dena Edwards

Dena Edwards was born and raised in Cape Breton. She graduated from her BScN through Cape Breton University in 2011 and her Master's in Nursing - Nurse Practitioner stream from Dalhousie in 2016. Her background includes Emergency Nursing as well as Primary Care. Dena's areas of interest have always included equitable and accessible health care.

Dena's nursing hat was switched to that of a patient 2.5 years ago when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Through navigating her own experience, she realized the many additional barriers to care that existed for patients diagnosed with a gynecological cancer in Cape Breton, as travel to Halifax was almost always necessary. She founded an event and fund known as Teal to Heal to support gynecological cancer patients with these added costs and to educate her community on the signs and symptoms of these cancers. Teal to Heal has now become the largest free gynecological cancer fundraiser in Canada and has raised over \$500,000 since 2022.

Dena's efforts have been recognized in the Nova Scotia legislature and the House of Commons. She was the recipient of a Queen's Platinum Jubilee medal, Cape Breton University's Alumni Leadership award, The Jack Yazer Community giving award, CBRM Volunteer of the Year and shares her story to educate others whenever given the opportunity.

Dena is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Cape Breton University, and continues to work part-time as a Nurse Practitioner. Dena resides in Sydney River with her husband Mike, 4 year-old daughter, Myka and dog, Blue.