School of Nursing educator named national Nurse of the Year by Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America

Sally O'Meara, a special lecturer in the Oakland University School of Nursing, has learned she will be honored by the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) with the organization's 2017 Nurse of the Year award.

O'Meara will also present at this year's conference in New Orleans on the topic of "How to Prepare for Myathenia Gravis Medical Emergencies."

"Sally's efforts to support the Myasthenia Gravis community and the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America over the years have been noticed and are greatly appreciated," according to an email from Kathleen Brown, MGFA National Program Director. "We are thrilled to honor her in person at the conference and thank her for being an educator and an example of perseverance."

School of Nursing educator Sally O'Meara explains the workings of her BiPAP machine to sophomore students Adrienne Haruo and Brianna Rudolph.

Sally O'Meara

O'Meara's connection with Myasthenia Gravis goes beyond the classroom education she provides Oakland's nursing students. She was diagnosed with the chronic neuromuscular disorder herself three years ago after spending the prior four years seeking a definitive diagnos

Her own respiratory muscle weakness has caused O'Meara to implement the use of a BiPAP machine at times and she now uses a cane support. Yet, she is always looking at the positives. "Despite my challenges, I remain passionate about the nursing profession and I love watching my students turn into wonderful, caring nurses," she said.

O'Meara also mentioned that her color-coordinated canes have become somewhat of a fashion statement to her students who think it is "cool" as she often matches the color of her cane with her daily attire.

"Fortunately, my condition has not impacted my ability to teach in the skills lab or in the classroom," O'Meara was quick to point out. "I ar grateful for the ability to continue teaching and sharing my first-hand knowledge of neuromuscular disease with my students."

Being an R.N. for 26 years and earning a BSN and MSN from Oakland University gives O'Meara great pride in the university where she ha enjoyed teaching the past 11 years.

Active in the MGFA organization as an advisory board member and through her work with several MG support groups over the years, O'M summarized, "I am very honored to receive this award. Myasthenia Gravis may have robbed me of my bedside nursing practice, but it ga