

one member one vote

New provincial legislation for not-for-profit corporations means individual RNAO members get a say on governance issues.

BY KIMBERLEY KEARSEY

Beginning in 2013, RNAO members will be able to play a more integral role in deciding important governance issues that impact the current and future direction of the association. With the introduction of legislation governing the operations of not-for-profit organizations in Ontario, RNAO's bylaws have changed and members ('associates' and 'friends of RNAO' excluded) will now have the opportunity to vote electronically on issues such as the selection of the association's auditors, who gets to sit on the board of directors, fee increases (for more on the proposed fee increase, see pg. 7), and more. Previously, members chose 'voting delegates' to represent their views at the annual general meeting (AGM) in April, and to vote on matters on behalf of their chapter, region without chapters, or interest group.

Bill 65, the *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*, received royal assent in the legislative assembly in October 2010, but Ontario's 46,000 not-for-profit corporations – RNAO among them – were given three years to fully implement changes. The government says the revised legislation is meant to: give more rights to members; enhance corporate governance and accountability; simplify the incorporation process; and better protect directors and officers from personal liability.

"This legislative change is an important one for our members because it means they can have a direct say on any number of issues that impact directly on the work nurses do for Ontarians and the work RNAO does on behalf of nurses," says Sara Lankshar, RNAO's Region 5 representative on the board of directors, and chair of the bylaws committee. "It's a really great opportunity for RNs to influence what happens in our professional association."

So, what exactly does this mean for the average member?

Put simply, the annual meeting will be

structured differently this April, and in the years ahead. It will be broken into two sessions: the 'governance/business' session will take place in the morning, and the 'membership consultation' session will take place in the afternoon. The results of membership voting on the auditors, board of directors, and proposed membership fee increase will be announced during the governance/business session. The president and CEO will also provide their annual reports in the morning. By mid-day, the formal AGM will be declared closed and the membership consultation session will begin.

Those individuals chosen by their chapter, region without chapters,

or interest group to represent the views of their colleagues will participate as 'representatives' (formerly known as voting delegates) during the afternoon session. Representatives will consult with fellow members in advance of the AGM, and will attend the event in anticipation of the opportunity to debate the issues, ensuring their endorsement (or lack thereof) is reflective of the feedback they've received from colleagues in the community. Determination of the number of representatives for each chapter,

region without chapters and interest group remains unchanged, and will be based on the same criteria as that used to determine voting delegates in the past.

"It's far more democratic to allow each one of our individual members to weigh in on matters regarding the governance and direction of the association," says President Rhonda Seidman-Carlson. "What better way to provide nurses with more ownership of their professional association, and more stake in the strategic direction it chooses to pursue."

For more information on the issues that require a vote, and the process for casting a ballot, visit www.RNAO.ca/AGM2013. **RN**

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Cast your ballot and claim your stake in the future of RNAO.

Refer to page 26 for details on the call for representatives and registration for the AGM

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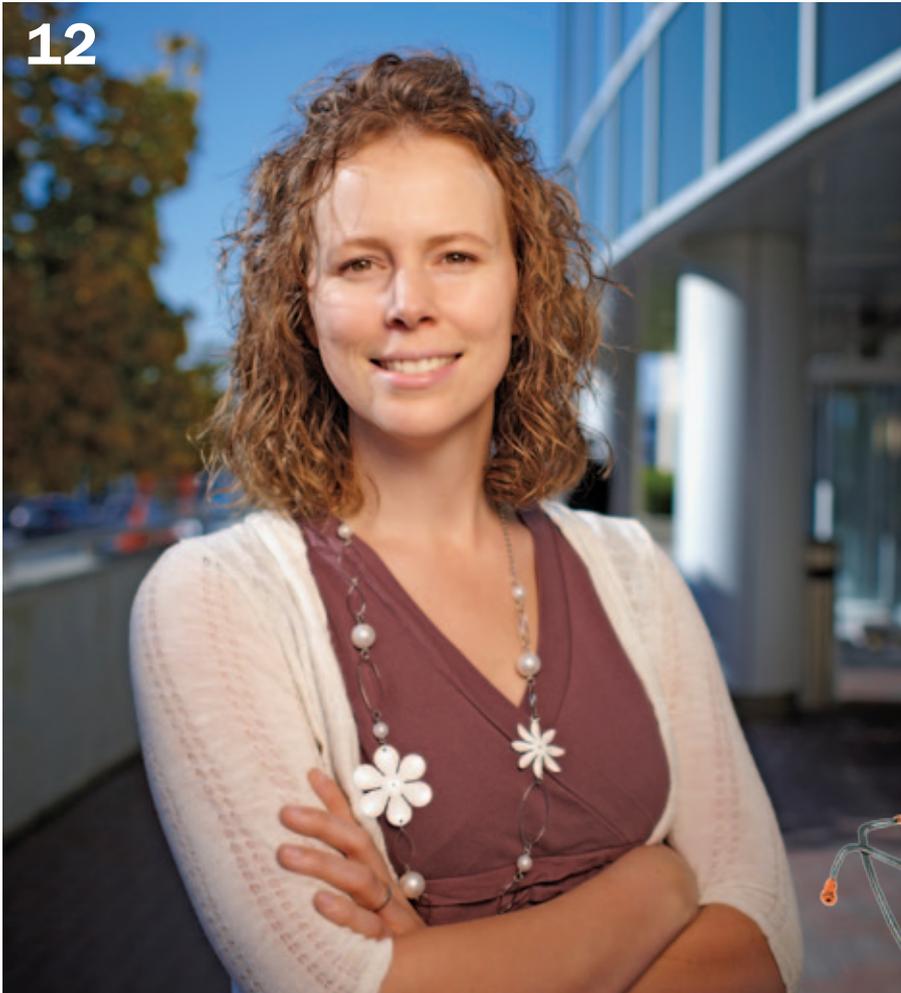


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Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

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