

one member one vote

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 organiza-

tions in Ontario, RNAO's bylaws have changed and members ('associates' and 'friends of RNAO' excluded) will now have the opportunity to vote by electronic means 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 pages 5 and 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, and it's expected to come into force in the near future. 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 say on any number of issues that impact directly on the work RNAO does on behalf of nurses," says Sara Lankshear, 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." President Rhonda Seidman-Carlson agrees noting "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 and what better way to provide nurses with more ownership of their professional association, and more stake in the strategic direction it chooses to pursue."

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.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTICE OF AGM

The chair of the AGM directs that voting for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be by electronic means online, beginning at 12:00 noon (EST) on March 18, 2013 and closing at 12:00 noon (EST) on April 4, 2013. You can vote at any time during the election period. Technical support will be available during the voting period.

We encourage everyone to vote online, but the current legislation allows voting by proxy. Proxies must be received in proper form 48 hours in advance of the AGM. For details, visit RNAO's website at www.RNAO.ca/AGM2013.

Members who vote by electronic means waive the right to vote by proxy.

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