RESOLUTION # 2

Submitted by: Christine Kent, RN
On behalf of the Staff Nurses Interest Group (SNIG)

Whereas the Professional Standard of the College of Nurses states, "All nurses continually enhance their knowledge through education, experience and self-assessment"* and to meet the requirements of this standard all registered nurses are expected to be lifelong learners; and

Whereas 63% of the RNAO membership comprises staff nurses, who practice at point of care, and these staff nurses face challenges related to the cost and accessibility of many of the current RNAO educational programs;

Therefore be it resolved, that RNAO examine and transform the content and delivery of current educational program to better suit the needs of staff nurses; and

Be it further resolved that RNAO explore sources of funding for developing future educational programs that would meet the needs of staff nurses related to costs, accessibility and the CNO Professional Standards.

*College of Nurses of Ontario: Practice Standards: Professional Standard, Revised 2002. P. 3

Backgrounder to the Staff Nurse Interest Group Resolution

Staff nurses comprise 63% of RNAO membership. This resolution identifies the need for creative and innovative approaches for staff nurses to access RNAO continuing education programs, and thereby fulfill the Professional Standard of the College of Nurses of Ontario*. The Staff Nurse Interest Group identifies cost and accessibility as barriers to some RNAO education programs. For example, to participate in the RNAO Wound Care Institute a staff nurse must devote 6 days at a venue in a resort area of Ontario, and pay approximately $2655. A staff nurse will likely encounter the following challenges: limited or no funding, no paid educational days, and even the uncertainty of having unpaid time off approved. There are a number of RNAO Institutes that provide access to diverse practice experts, and topics include: wound care, clinical best practices, primary care, healthy work environments and chronic disease management. It is unfortunate that the nurses who could transform practice at point of care should encounter such obstacles.

The Staff Nurse Interest Group conducted an informal poll and confirmed these challenges; funding sources for continuing education for staff nurses has been reduced or eliminated, as has paid or unpaid time off from work. Other barriers for staff nurses include: shift work and workload issues, travel costs within Ontario, family responsibilities, and the diversity of practice settings.

The topics and content of current RNAO educational programs need to be accessible in formats such as webcasts, on-line individualized modules, archived presentations, OTN, and asynchronous learning. As a knowledge organization, RNAO needs to develop innovative strategies that can support staff nurses to attend educational programs and meet the principles of accessibility, relevance, and cost effectiveness. Staff nurses are a valuable resource within our health care system, RNAO is encouraged to build upon its innovative programs to better meet the needs of staff nurses, and to advocate for increased funding to achieve these goals.

The Staff Nurses Interest Group asks for the support of members for this resolution.

*College of Nurses of Ontario: Practice Standards: Professional Standard, Revised 2002