



## Moving board decisions to lived realities

RNAO IS – AND ALWAYS WILL BE – membership driven. The association prides itself on its extensive engagement with members, and we rely on you to give voice to nursing in Ontario. Your elected board of directors (BOD) and RNAO staff know that you are the bloodline that makes our association one of the most vibrant in modern times.

Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, our president, explains in her column (page 7) the critical governing role of RNAO's board in setting the association's policy directions. To complement her column, I share here highlights of how BOD decisions evolve from direction to reality under my 'operational responsibility' as your chief executive officer (CEO).

This 'operational responsibility' means that it is up to me and my staff to determine how to best implement BOD directives. This includes developing the necessary programs and services, evidence-based advocacy, strategic communications, and day-to-day logistics to deliver the expected outcomes. This is how, following a BOD directive to advance primary care, we delivered the groundbreaking report, *Primary Solutions for Primary Care: Maximizing and Expanding the Role of the Primary Care Nurse in Ontario*. We received the endorsement of all political parties and major stakeholders on this work, and engaged members

in effective, evidence-based political action. This culminated in an announcement at RNAO's 2013 annual general meeting, where Premier Kathleen Wynne committed to expanding the role of nurses to include RN prescribing. Although we celebrate this critical milestone, for RNAO, the job is not done. Capacity building is, for us, part and parcel of shaping and sustaining

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positive health system transformation. Thus, as I write this dispatch, the first ever *Primary Care Institute* is underway with resounding success.

Key to our collective impact is member engagement, which is central to our ability to transform policy directives into concrete results. This engagement happens through action alerts and through events such as *Day at Queen's Park* (and this year's *Queen's Park on the Road*) or *Take Your MPP to Work*. It also happens when we ask you to speak with the media. Engaging you in the association's policy work makes it real for you and for those we want to influence. It raises awareness and affords RNAO and RNs a

robust voice that is respected, trusted, and heard by politicians, the media and the public. Such a comprehensive and cohesive approach to moving our BOD's governance directions into reality is characteristic of the work RNAO staff delivers day in and day out.

Following the board's recent decision to make membership in the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) optional, home

strategies for successfully promoting membership in both RNAO and CNA.

As reiterated by our president, the dual purpose of the board's decision is to allow RNAO to remain an engaged jurisdictional member of CNA for the long haul, and to provide choice to our members. With your active and positive engagement, we will encourage all RNs in Ontario to join RNAO and all RNAO members to remain proud members of our national nursing organization. RNAO is a powerful professional association, and it's in large part due to our voluntary, not mandatory, nature. Our BOD and staff believe that if we all work together, the same will hold true for CNA.

We all want CNA to succeed, and a sure way for RNAO to help is to continue being CNA's strongest contributor on priority matters related to policy and political advocacy. As an organization, RNAO has contributed to nursing's national voice and influenced many issues. Most recently: expanding RNs' scope of practice to include prescribing; health-care access to refugees in Canada; harm reduction and safe injection sites; Canada's *Health Accord*; and the work of the Council of the Federation. We have every intention of continuing that very strong and active partnership. **RN**

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