



Checking the Pulse: A progress report to members

A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO, WE assured members that we would adopt the same laser-like focus and determination to address the feedback received from RNAO's 2011 *Checking the Pulse* survey, as we do advocating for important nursing and health policy matters.

You told us that you want to see more staff nurses reflected in the work of the association, and we have done so. Last year, in this *Journal*, we featured 47 staff nurses who shared their expertise and perspectives from public health, community care, long-term care, acute care and palliative care. I was particularly moved by Jean Anderson and Brenda Dunkerley, the two staff nurses RNJ writer Melissa Di Costanzo shadowed for our 'day-in-the-life' feature in the March/April issue.

Fifteen per cent of members who responded to the survey said political action was one of the most valued benefits of belonging to RNAO; 10 per cent said advocacy; and another 10 per cent said having a voice. The energy and insight that we put into political action, advocacy and voice remains strong and vibrant. Bringing this together with the survey feedback that you want to see more attention placed on the point-of-care RN, RNAO staff and your board of directors worked hard to release two extremely influential policy reports: *Primary Solutions for Primary Care* and *Enhancing Community Care for Ontarians* (ECCO).

These reports place extraordinary value on the work of point-of-care nurses in all health sectors, and provide the evidence that if all nurses are practising to their full scope, all health professionals can more effectively work together to ensure positive clinical and health outcomes as well as greater system efficiency and cost effectiveness.

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Members who responded to the survey also told us that there were too many action alerts from RNAO. We've listened, and now limit the alerts to only those relevant to you. However, we ask that you continue to be generous with your responses because we know your efforts make a huge difference to nurses and to those we serve. Last year, eight action alerts were circulated, down from 21 in 2011. This decrease has not dampened our ability to mobilize as a collective. In fact, members are as passionate as ever when responding to political issues. This was evident in the 2,145 letters Health Minister Deb Matthews, Premier Dalton McGuinty, your own MPPs and opposition leaders

received to our action alert urging the government not to approve the sale of Ontario's Shuldice Hospital to a U.S. conglomerate. Your voices produced results: the purchaser in the sale, Centric Health, pulled out of the deal altogether.

A year ago, we also promised members that we would expand our reach with regard to educational offerings,

addressing your concern that professional development was too Toronto-centric, and too costly. In 2012, RNAO hosted four free webinars for nurses, focusing on patient safety, fatigue, client-centred learning and woman abuse. Almost 1,000 nurses participated, pointing to a healthy appetite for online educational opportunities.

RNAO's online presence is absolutely vital in this day and age, and we heard your concern in 2011 that the website was difficult to navigate. We responded by launching a completely redesigned site in May 2012, which makes it easier to find what you are looking for. Fewer clicks are required to get to BPGs, policy documents or

membership information. The new site's effectiveness is clear when you compare the numbers captured between May and December 2011 to the same period in 2012. In 2011, 54,002 people accessed RNAO BPGs online. In 2012, that number jumped to 93,254, an increase of 73 per cent. Between May and December 2011, there were 34,722 page views in our BPG section of the website. That increased to 55,509 during the same period in 2012, up by almost 60 per cent.

In addition to these staff-led initiatives, there are other changes that will help us to better hear your voices, and more accurately reflect them in the activities of the association. We are initiating *One member, one vote* this year (see page 2 for full details). Proposed legislation means all members will get a say in governance issues at RNAO. Although this is a provincially mandated change for all not-for-profit organizations, it is a tremendous opportunity for you to shape RNAO.

I hope this small sampling of the initiatives that have resulted from the 2011 survey leave you assured that we are listening to and acting on your needs. And, there is much more. Join us at the annual general meeting in April to witness a full report. **RN**

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