

Building on RNAO's success

Members asked to approve first RNAO fee increase in 14 years.

BY KIMBERLEY KEARSEY

In advance of RNAO's 2013 annual general meeting in April, members will be asked to vote in support of the resolution of the board of directors to implement a membership fee increase of eight per cent. RNAO has not raised its membership fee for 14 years, and the board of directors is asking members to support the much-needed boost. Given the association's tremendous growth in members, influence and impact over the past 15 years, this increase will help the association to maintain the high level of excellence for which it has become well known. It will also ensure 35,012 RNs and nursing students continue to receive bang for their membership buck.

In 1999, there were 14,699 members. By the end of the 2012 membership year, 35,012 nurses and nursing students either joined or renewed. With a membership base that has more than doubled, and with the growing demand for enhanced services and programs, the board of directors is unanimous in its support for the increase.

"RNAO is a tremendously successful organization that has been able to generate sources of revenue and create efficiencies that have offset the need for a fee increase for 14 years," says President Rhonda Seidman-Carlson. What other organization can claim such an accomplishment? "RNAO's ability to diversify and bring revenues through consulting services and centre packages, the RN Careers job board, educational programs such as institutes and workshops, affinity partnerships, and more, is commendable," she says. "Nonetheless, the reality is that we've reached a crossroads, and our costs now exceed the actual fee charged to members. Without the increase, RNAO will not be able to offer the same level of services and programs it has in the past," Seidman-Carlson adds.

One benefit of RNAO membership is automatic membership with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS). Over the past 14 years, and without impact on its members' fees, RNAO has absorbed fee increases of 100 per cent for CNA (from \$27 in 1999 to \$54.95 in 2013) and 120 per cent for CNPS (from \$11.25 in 1999 to \$24.75 in 2013).

"RNAO was a very different organization when it passed the last fee increase in 1999," says CEO Doris Grinspun, who has led the organization since 1996. "Members, the board and staff should be extremely proud of RNAO and its members' influence and impact locally, nationally and internationally. This is thanks to our collective visionary leadership and expert work, anchored in robust values and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of nurses, patients, and our province. We can only advance this type of outstanding work with the active support of members, whether intellectual or monetary."

For more than a decade, RNAO has absorbed increasing fees for CNA and CNPS memberships without impact on RNAO members



"Had membership fees kept pace with inflation, a regular membership today would be \$372 annually instead of the current \$285," Grinspun adds. "We must recognize that there has been an increase in the consumer price index of 30.5 per cent since 1999. And as the salary of an RN has increased, the percentage of the RNAO fee to salary has substantively decreased."

If approved by members, the fee increase would mean a difference of between \$2 and \$23 per year, depending on the membership fee category.* For instance, membership in the regular fee category will increase from \$285 to \$308. Members in the ONA category will pay \$227, up from \$210. And the fee in the undergraduate nursing student (UNS) category will go from \$20 to \$21.60. With all 12 fee categories expected to change in varying degrees, Grinspun says the increase will help deal with the shortfall, and will "ensure RNAO remains a strong and vibrant professional association."

In addition to CNA and CNPS fees, RNAO membership covers the costs of producing *Registered Nurse Journal*, expenses associated with policy, advocacy, media and communications work, membership services and benefits, board, chapter and assembly activities, annual general meeting, and other operational expenses associated with information technology, salaries and benefits. **RN**

To find out more about the board's position on the proposed change, and specifically how much a membership will cost if the increase is approved, visit www.RNAO.ca/feeincrease

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*All fees include HST