

# Members help to build a better RNAO

RNAO's board of directors takes on the task of revitalizing the association's strategic directions, and looks to members for insight.

BY KIMBERLEY KEARSEY

IN THE SUMMER AND FALL OF 2011, RNAO MEMBERS WERE ASKED TO SHARE their opinions and perspectives on the work of the association. Thousands of nurses completed an online survey, and more than 100 participated in a focus group. The views and interests of nurses have helped to set in motion a new set of priorities for the association.

The reason for the survey can be traced back to the spring of 2011, when RNAO's board of directors and senior leadership team set a five-year goal to revisit and revitalize RNAO's ENDS (strategic directions). The group agreed it was imperative to actively seek member input, especially given the importance

RNAO places on being a member-driven organization.

A focus group, which included representatives from RNAO's chapters, regions and interest groups, met shortly after the survey closed in September. And finally, all-day retreats with RNAO's board of directors and senior leadership team, as well as home office staff, offered a chance to review the results and brainstorm next steps.

Once the results of these exercises were compiled, board members engaged in validation focus groups at the chapter, region and interest groups level. What follows is a snapshot of what you said, and where we're headed in the years to come...



## THE SURVEY

Almost 2,500 nurses responded to RNAO's online survey. The majority (50.3 per cent) were staff nurses. Educators represented 17 per cent of respondents, while administrators made up 14 per cent. More than three-quarters of RNs said they are satisfied or very satisfied with their membership, saying what they value most is the provision of education, access to legal assistance, the energy and insight with which RNAO offers political action, advocacy on behalf of RNs, and best practice guidelines.

Constructive criticism is a part of any survey and is vital for improvement. Members did not shy away from sharing their views on what the association can do better. Most suggestions related to continuing education, specifically the need to reduce the long wait for funding reimbursement, and to offer access to education in areas of the province outside the Greater Toronto Area. Requests were also made to limit the number and nature of action alerts, and to ensure that in addition to advocating on broad health policy and health system issues, the association focus first on the issues affecting RNs.

Respondents were also asked the likelihood that they would continue their membership for the next three years. The vast majority said they will definitely or likely continue. Less than 16 per cent said they were unsure or would not, one third of those citing retirement as the reason.

A surprising revelation of the survey was the lack of involvement or satisfaction at the interest group and chapter level. More than 80 per cent of respondents said they were only slightly or not involved in their interest group, while 65 per cent said they were not involved in their chapter. Dissatisfaction with both was high: 45 per cent for interest groups and just over 40 per cent for chapters.

## THE FOCUS GROUP

Assembly members participating in the focus group last fall were asked to consider eight questions related to membership. What would happen if RNAO ceased to exist? In response to this, they concentrated on the troubling likelihood that the profession would lose its voice without RNAO. Many wondered who would step up to represent nurses. Although there are other nursing organizations, none has the same mandate for advocacy and political action as RNAO.

Do specific groups of nurses need/want more RNAO attention? The assembly felt all

## HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR RNAO MEMBERSHIP?



\*Due to rounding, totals are more than 100%

**2,465**

NUMBER OF MEMBERS WHO COMPLETED THE ONLINE SURVEY

**51**

PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO WORK IN THE HOSPITAL SECTOR

**23**

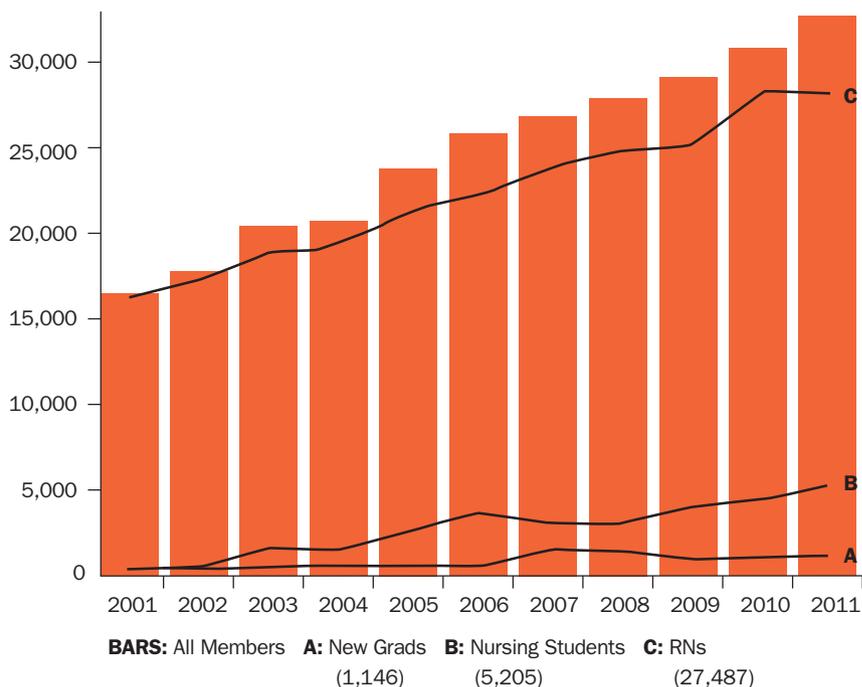
AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN IN PRACTICE

### TOP 10 THINGS MEMBERS SAY THEY VALUE MOST ABOUT RNAO...

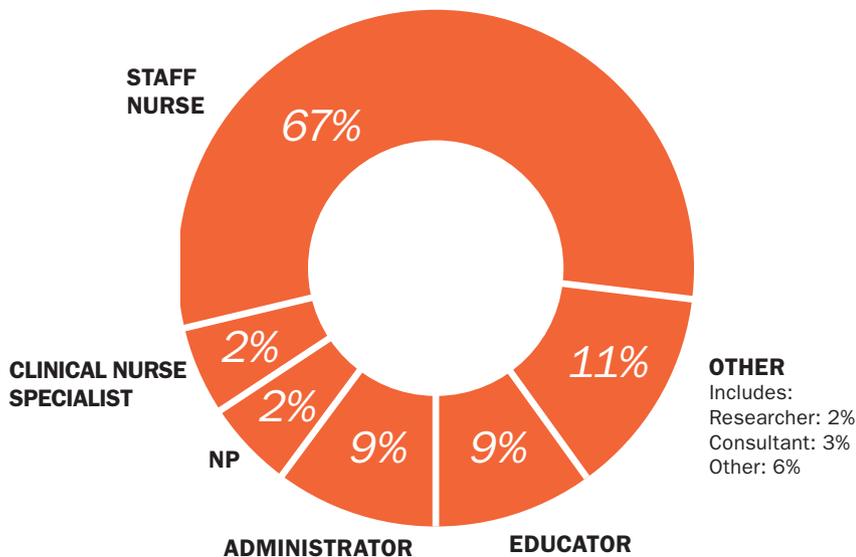
- 1 EDUCATION AND INFORMATION... 2 LEGAL ASSISTANCE...
- 3 POLITICAL ACTION... 4 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES... 5 ADVOCACY...
- 6 PROFESSIONAL/COLLECTIVE VOICE... 7 NETWORKING/SENSE OF BELONGING... 8 ADVOCACY FOR DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH...
- 9 INTEREST GROUPS... 10 ACCESSIBILITY OF HOME OFFICE STAFF

### RNAO MEMBERSHIP 2001-2011

On Oct. 31, 2011, there were 32,692 RNAO members



## RNAO MEMBERSHIP BY ROLE 2012



### TOP 10 ISSUES THAT RNAO SPEAKS OUT ON THAT MEMBERS SAY/AGREE ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM...

- 1 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES (BPG)...
- 2 HOME CARE...
- 3 PRIMARY CARE...
- 4 STAFF/SKILL MIX...
- 5 HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT BPGs...
- 6 POVERTY...
- 7 EDUCATION...
- 8 WAGE PARITY...
- 9 HOUSING...
- 10 STOPPING PRIVATIZATION

**65**

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO ARE **NOT** INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL CHAPTER

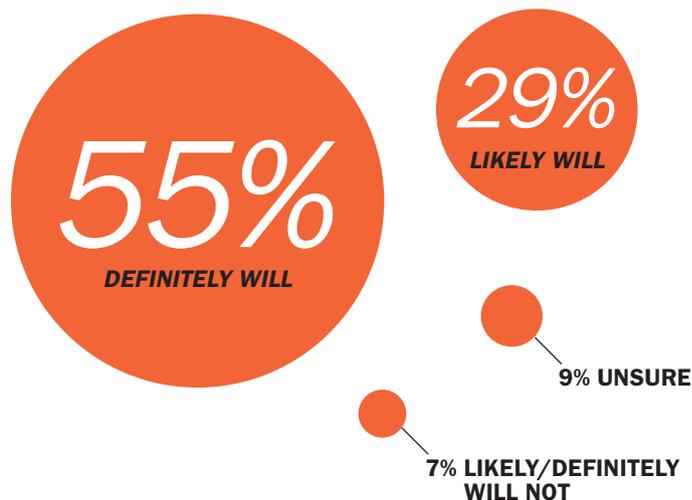
**83**

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO ARE **NOT** INVOLVED IN THEIR INTEREST GROUP

**11**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN RNAO MEMBERS

### WILL YOU CONTINUE YOUR RNAO MEMBERSHIP?



nurses need attention from the association. Students, novice RNs, mid-career nurses, late-career nurses, whether at the bedside or in senior leadership roles, share the desire to feel important. They agreed, however, that devoting attention to public health and long-term care nurses, as well as RNs working in rural and remote settings, Franco-phone nurses, and international graduates would be especially beneficial.

The group was asked to discuss broad health and service issues, as well as nursing issues, that require more action. In terms of broad issues, they agreed more action is needed to enable full utilization of nurses' scope of practice, with specific focus on sectors such as corrections, remote nursing, home care and mental health. They also want to see more action on health promotion, chronic disease management, and health-care system duplication and fragmentation. On nursing issues, there was consensus that more attention be paid to issues such as workload, pay equity, and support for continuing education.

While discussing strategies for recruitment, the group felt strongly about encouraging existing members to wear their RNAO pin, and to approach colleagues about the benefits of membership. Other strategies: better promotion of the legal assistance program, and the difference between it and professional liability insurance; improvements to the website; greater promotion of the role/value of the RN; and more materials that highlight the benefits of membership.

During discussions about some of the challenges that lie ahead, assembly members agreed the public is not likely to know about RNAO. This is problematic and could threaten or limit its work. A second challenge: maintaining student memberships. The group suggested one way to address this is to build relationships with more universities and colleges to include student membership as part of enrollment fees, as some universities already do.

"As an association that represents RNs who join voluntarily, we are accountable to you," CEO Doris Grinspun says. "This survey, in some respects, reaffirms we're headed in the right direction. In other respects, your feedback has reshaped the direction we'll take in the future. That's invaluable to RNAO. As for its value to members overall, it shows the voice of each member is important, and heard." **RN**

# Members to vote on strategic directions at AGM

One of the first and most tangible steps taken by RNAO's board of directors to address member comments in the survey was to strike a committee to review the mission, values, tagline and ENDS (strategic directions) of the association. The following will be discussed by voting delegates at RNAO's annual general meeting this April:



## DRAFT PROPOSED MISSION

Our mission is to foster knowledge-based nursing practice, promote quality work environments, deliver excellence in professional development, and advance healthy public policy to improve health.

We promote the full participation of present and future registered nurses in improving health, and shaping and delivering health-care services.

## DRAFT PROPOSED VALUES

- We believe health is a resource for everyday living and health care is a universal human right.
- We respect human dignity and are committed to diversity, inclusivity, equity, social justice, democracy and voluntarism.
- We value leadership in all nursing roles across all sectors, in order to advance individual and collective health.
  - Through collective leadership, we collaborate with nurses, government, organizations and the public to advance healthy public policy.

## DRAFT PROPOSED TAG LINE

Speaking out for nursing.  
Speaking out for health.

Voting delegates will also have a chance to review the new strategic directions of the association (also known as ENDS). Once approved, all of RNAO's work will be directly linked to one or more of the following goals:

## DRAFT PROPOSED ENDS

- Engage with registered nurses and nursing students to stimulate membership and promote the value of belonging to their professional organization
- Advance the role and image of nurses as members of a vital, knowledge-driven, caring profession, and as significant contributors to health
- Speak out on emerging issues that impact on nurses and the nursing profession, health and health care
- Influence healthy public policy to positively impact the determinants of health, supporting Medicare and strengthening a publicly funded, not-for-profit health-care system.

(L to R) RNAO President-Elect Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, President David McNeil and CEO Doris Grinspun provided instrumental leadership throughout the review of the association's strategic direction.

PHOTO: JEFF MIRK