

NURSING NOTES

Former RNAO president gets high profile award

Joan Lesmond, RNAO past-president and Executive Director of the St. Elizabeth Healthcare Foundation, will receive a YWCA *Women of Distinction* award for health leadership. Lesmond is one of seven women to receive the prestigious honour this year. For more than 30 years, she has worked to advance the nursing profession, protect and strengthen public health care and empower women and girls. She spearheads several programs to improve access to health care for this population, mentors women of colour and low-income girls, and confronts barriers faced by those from diverse backgrounds. She is considered one of the top 100 nurses in Canada, and is an admired visionary and leader. Lesmond also mentors the team at *Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Clinic*, sits on the Women's College Hospital and Health Force Ontario boards, and serves on Toronto's Regent Park Community Health Centre Community Planning Committee. The YWCA awards gala, which happens May 18 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, raises funds to support programs across Toronto. Tables and tickets are available for purchase. For information, visit www.womenofdistinction.ca.



During her tenure as RNAO president, Joan Lesmond met with Premier Dalton McGuinty many times to discuss health-care priorities from a nursing perspective.



CNA hits the road

The Canadian Nurses Association's cross-country tour, *Meeting Canada's Nurses in Their Communities*, began in March and will travel across the country to meet with nurses, other health-care providers, government decision-makers and the media to discuss strategies for tackling health-care issues that affect nurses and have an impact on the health of Canadians. For 18 months, CNA President Judith Shamian and a CNA team will travel from one site to another, gathering valuable input along the way. Nurses can check in on the team and get updates (in English and French) on tour destinations and events. Simply visit the official travel diary on Twitter (www.twitter.com/canadanurses). Dates for an Ontario visit have not been announced.

Don't get left behind: Read RN's new book on social media

The Nurse's Social Media Advantage, a book by RNAO member Rob Fraser, is now on bookshelves and available at www.nursing-knowledge.org/STTIbooks. Fraser, whose technical savvy was profiled in the Sept/Oct 2010 issue of *Registered Nurse Journal* (*Plugged in*, pg. 11), says social media has reached into every profession, and nursing is no exception. "This fast-paced, ever-changing way of exchanging information will continue to evolve, whether nurses participate or not," he explains. "With the vital role nurses play in health care, they cannot afford to fall behind. Social media provides exciting possibilities for networking, creating content, finding and sharing information and collaborating to create a global nursing network." Fraser says the book will help readers to understand the basics of platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogging. It explores the building blocks of social media, privacy, professional issues, internet access, developing an online

reputation, sharing knowledge, creating content, and building your online network. Fraser is founder of Nursing Ideas (www.nursing-ideas.ca), a website that attracts more than 20,000 visitors from 110 countries. The site connects nurses and nursing students with leaders, innovators and researchers in health care.

Agent for change at Queen's Park says thanks, but not goodbye

Long-standing RNAO member Vanessa Burkoski left her post as Ontario's Provincial Chief Nursing Officer in January 2010. She served two-and-a-half years in the role, and was recognized for her impact and influence during RNAO's 12th Annual Queen's Park Day in February. Humbled by the acknowledgement, Burkoski described the experience as the highlight of her career. She also noted the valuable support she received from RNAO while

at the Ministry of Health. "RNAO was always there to provide support, to provide guidance, to really highlight for me what was happening on the ground," she said. "It was difficult to always get to the front line and that's where the action is and where the solutions are. RNAO was capable of doing that and engaged with me. We were able to produce incredible policy and program initiatives together. I appreciate that I've had not only such wonderful professional opportunities working together with RNAO but also to have developed very personal friendships that will last a lifetime." **RN**



Vanessa Burkoski (left) accepts a token of thanks from RNAO Executive Director Doris Grinspun.