

NURSING IN THE

Nurses rally for refugees

The federal government's plan to cut health-care benefits available to refugees and refugee claimants has prompted an outcry from Ontario's health-care community. On June 18, nurses and other health professionals rallied in over a dozen Canadian cities, calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to halt the proposed roll-back of the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), which allows refugees to access health benefits. Changes to the IFHP occurred July 1, leaving many refugees only able to access emergency care and care for chronic conditions that are considered a risk to public safety. Before the changes took effect, however, an amendment was made, shielding government-assisted refugees from the cuts. Although welcome, many other refugees will be denied access to critical health services.

Grace Rosete-Lasala, a nurse practitioner at the Multicultural Council in Windsor, said her organization will work with clients to determine if they qualify for drug coverage under other benefit plans, but admits the cuts "will definitely affect their health."

Lynda Monik, CEO of the Windsor Essex Community Health Centre, said provincially funded hospitals will end up taking care of sicker patients who go to the ER when something is wrong. Private health coverage is not an option for many refugees, she added.

Federal Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says the changes will save the government about \$100 million over five years, and will deter abuse of the system. Nurses say the changes will end up costing the health-care system more in the long run. (*The Windsor Star*, June 19)



RNAO research assistant Grace Suva (right) joins an unknown protester at the Toronto rally (June 18) to oppose cuts to Canada's Interim Federal Health Program.

Bill ignores citizens' right to a voice

On June 4, RNAO joined the *Black Out Speak Out* campaign, darkening its website in a symbolic protest of the federal government's Bill C-38. President **Rhonda Seidman-Carlson** offered her view and RNAO's judgment on the bill's proposed changes to Wingham, Ontario radio host Bill Townsend.

"We are looking at prevention," she said. "RNAO's concern is people don't know what's being proposed. This bill has more than 70 federal laws and regulations and a lack of debate

means things can be seriously changed without people being aware of it."

The *Black Out Speak Out* campaign, endorsed by over 300 organizations, "...is a symbol of being denied access to information. People don't have a voice," Seidman-Carlson said. (*The Talkshow CKNX/AM920*, June 4)

Call for expansion of nurses' duties

On June 28, a nursing task force, launched by RNAO in the fall of 2011 (see *Policy at Work*, pg 23, for more detailed

information), issued its groundbreaking report with recommendations for expanding the duties and influence of primary care RNs and RPNs so they are working to their full capacity. RNAO CEO and co-chair of the task force, **Doris Grinspun**, spoke to Hamilton, Ontario radio host Bill Kelly.

"What we want is for RNs and RPNs to be used to their absolute full scope of practice so that Ontarians can get same-day access to primary care," she said. "We can achieve same-day access for the public within six months if the recommendations

of this report are put to use by government and employers." (*The Bill Kelly Show, AM 900*, June 29)

Hospital reduces error through technology

Linda Bisonette, Vice President, Patient Care Services, and Chief Nursing Executive at Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital, said the recent purchase of 45 new intravenous pumps, or so-called 'smart pumps,' will lead to an overall reduction in medication errors. The pumps, which have a dose error reduction system, warn users of inaccurate

medication orders and calculate errors or incorrect programming that compromises patient safety. "This new technology will go a long way in assisting the nurse in the administration of medication," Bisonette told *Smiths Falls EMC* (June 21). "This type of system is essential for a hospital to deter medication errors," Nancy Massie, a patient care manager on the medical/surgical unit, added. "Initial feedback from the clinical and medical staff is quite positive."

Three Oaks Shelter aims to expand

Pat Culhane, a registered nurse for 46 years, a city councilor for five years, and the victim of violence at the hands of her partner when she was in her 20s, offered a supportive voice to Quinte's Three Oaks Shelter as it campaigned this past June for Second Stage Housing in Belleville. The shelter is trying to raise \$1.3 million for a building project for abused women and their children. Second Stage Housing will include onsite supports and eight apartment-style units. The ultimate goal is to help victimized women achieve independence. "I'm living proof, that with the right help, and a lot of strength, you can live a healthy, independent life free from violence and control," Culhane told the crowd that gathered for the campaign launch. "The situation has not improved – it has deteriorated. Finding affordable housing is a desperate, desperate undertaking," she



RN and Belleville city councilor Pat Culhane supports the need for housing to help abused women and children achieve independence.

said, but with a note of hope: "This is a war that can be won." (*Quinte EMC*, June 7)

Nurses teach 'Preparation for Breastfeeding' class

Family health nurse and RNAO member, Cindy Hutchinson, helped to facilitate a 'Preparation for Breastfeeding' class at her local health unit on June 18. New or expecting moms and their partners attending the class at Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit were offered tips on breastfeeding, and information about support and resources available to new mothers in the area. "We talk about getting off to a good start and show (moms) ways to prevent and overcome difficulties. Being in a class with other parents who are planning to breastfeed also lets (moms) share advice and experiences that can make the adjustment easier for everyone," said Hutchinson. Studies have shown that babies who are breastfed have a reduced risk

of developing diabetes, asthma, ear and upper respiratory infections. Breastfeeding has also been found to help mothers protect against breast and ovarian cancer, as well as weak bones. (*Kawartha Lakes This Week*, June 7)

Caring in Kenya

Kristie Soder, a nursing student at Queen's University in Kingston, said she owes her two-week adventure in Kenya,

"an absolutely beautiful country," to a newspaper article about a group called Canadian Nurses for Africa (CNFA). The group is made up of nurses from the Burlington-Hamilton area who have travelled to Africa to work in rural clinics. Soder travelled to Kakamega, Kenya, on April 27 to help set up a clinic. For two weeks, 12 nurses, with Soder as the lone nursing student, saw many patients who walked for hours to receive care. One lone traveler was four years old, she recalled. "We saw a lot of people who had malaria, and quite a few who had typhoid," Soder said. "Cases that you would never in a million years see in Canada because we have methods that can prevent things of that sort." Although it was "...heartbreaking" and "...hard to see," Soder said she'll go back to Africa the first chance she gets. (*Kingston Whig-Standard*, June 8)



Queen's University nursing student Kristie Soder travelled to Kenya in April to help set up clinics for the people in and around Kakamega.

NURSING IN THE NEWS

OUT AND ABOUT



ESSEX CHAPTER CELEBRATES GRADS

More than 200 nursing students writing their CRNE exams on June 6 in Windsor were met afterward by RNAO Essex chapter secretary Pat McKay (right) and her fellow University of Windsor faculty member Kathy Pfaff, who handed out congratulatory tags and chocolate syringes in recognition of reaching a milestone moment on the journey to becoming an RN.



ART WALK IN SARNIA

In early June, RNAO's Lambton chapter set up a booth at Sarnia's Art Walk 2012, connecting with community members and offering information about nursing. The group labelled jars with pressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, mental health and the environment, asking passersby to drop a donation in the jar that they felt was most pressing. Given an increase in teen suicide in Sarnia, the mental health jar contained the most donations, which were then presented to a representative of a suicide awareness group by chapter president Sonja Gould (left).

MINISTER OF STATE COMES TO RNAO

Alice Wong, Canada's Minister of State for Seniors (right), visited RNAO home office June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, to announce funding to create a BPG on elder abuse. The federal government also funded the association's Prevention of Elder Abuse Centres of Excellence (PEACE) project in 2011. In March 2012, the federal government introduced amendments to the Criminal Code that impose stricter sentencing for individuals convicted of elder abuse.



Nurse saves limb with larvae

An unorthodox suggestion made by RN **Rose Raizman**, a wound specialist at Scarborough's Rouge Valley Centenary Hospital, was the principal reason 59-year-old Polish immigrant Waclaw Tyszkiewicz's infected right foot was not amputated. Tyszkiewicz, a diabetic, cut a callus off his foot with a knife, which triggered an infection. "We were pretty concerned about his leg," Raizman said, noting she had seen flesh

wounds like this before, but his was severe. She suggested placing live maggots into the wound, leaving them to feast on the dead flesh. Specially-bred blowfly maggots were flown in from California. The treatment lasted three weeks, with 800 maggots feasting on the dead flesh for up to 36 hours, once each week. "It's beautiful," Tyszkiewicz said. "Every time I see Rose I say thanks, thanks, thanks, a million times thanks...she saved my (foot)." (*Toronto Star*, July 9) **RN**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

RNAO member **Anne MacPhail**, public health chair of the Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation, wrote an editorial for *The Kingston Whig-Standard* on June 23. She thanked and congratulated residents for participating in Active Commute to Work Week. Following is an edited excerpt:

Trading keys for kudos

Active Commute to Work Week helped promote the national *Commuter Challenge*, encouraging people to leave their vehicles at home and walk, cycle, take transit, carpool or telecommute. Kingston had 29 organizations and 333 registered commuters logging their data. This helped us come in first place in Canada amongst other cities with comparable populations. Residents who left their cars at home traveled 29,000 kilometres, saved 4,430 kilograms in greenhouse gas emissions, and saved 1,740 litres of fuel in one week.

As one of the organizers, I am very proud of Kingstonsians and many of our neighbours who live outside the city and work in Kingston who really stepped up and contributed to healthier and more sustainable transportation. One commuter and her six-year-old son rode their bicycles, and she pulled her four-year-old in a chariot behind her. She and her kids had a great time together. Another avid cyclist approached a number of fellow cyclists at work, and organized a company-wide ride that invited anyone interested in joining to meet en route.

Anne MacPhail
Kingston, Ontario