

RNAO membership is your key to personal growth



In June, while flying back to Toronto from the Canadian Nurses Association's (CNA) biennial convention in St. John's, a nursing colleague seated next to me was talking about the daunting task of tracking current events and asked how I keep up with trends and issues in the nursing and health-care sectors. Indeed, there is a plethora of news stories, research studies, legislation and practice changes to monitor and inform. And at times, it can be a colossal undertaking.

As your executive director, I take most seriously my responsibility to be an informed representative of the nursing profession. Another equally important responsibility in this role is to help RNAO members become socially aware and politically active ambassadors for our profession.

I've often been asked, 'how does a busy RN, balancing an already awesome and often overwhelming roster of responsibilities, keep up with this steady stream of information?' The answer is quite simple: maintain membership in your professional association and you are guaranteed to be in-the-loop.

At RNAO, August marks the beginning of our annual membership drive during which time we call on members to renew their membership as well as encourage nursing colleagues to join the association. During this time, members are reminded of the many tangible benefits of membership in RNAO: career counselling; Legal Assistance Program (LAP); employee relations; liability protection from the Canadian Nurses Protective Society; automatic membership in the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA); and *Registered Nurse Journal* just to name a few.

What may not be so explicit in these reminders are the intangible yet equally

important benefits of RNAO membership such as personal growth, social awareness and political activity. Simply checking your e-mail or reading the latest issue of *Registered Nurse Journal* will provide you with insight into provincial nursing and health-care issues and introduce you to the wealth of resources available to members. When you join RNAO, you join a diverse group of more than 20,000 RNs as eager as you are to improve health care in Ontario. Just as nurs-

ambassador for the profession and for healthy public policy.

As a member of RNAO you are better prepared to engage your family and friends in discussions about nursing, health and social issues. By reading the journal or RNAO's monthly e-newsletter, *In the Loop*, you can inform the debate about primary health-care reform in your community or convince your MP or MPP that Medicare is the best deal for Canadians.

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es go to school to acquire clinical knowledge to provide exquisite care, **all** RNs should join RNAO to broaden their knowledge of current issues and events in nursing and health policy.

Membership affords you the opportunity to network and participate in educational and leadership activities. Involvement in your local chapter, region or interest group hones your leadership skills, advances your career and connects you with many influential nursing colleagues.

In exchange for your support, RNAO endeavours to influence government, employers and other decision-makers as well as represent the issues, concerns, ideas and aspirations of RNs in all sectors and roles. We also promise to keep you abreast of trends and issues from across the province to ensure you are an engaged and informed

I want to thank my colleague on flight 635 from St. John's to Toronto for bringing this important question to the forefront. As the pace of nursing and health-care reform continues at breakneck speed it is more critical than ever for RNs to be informed ambassadors of the profession and the best interests of Ontarians. And RNAO can – and will – be with you every step of the way.

I would also like to thank RNAO's more than 20,000 members for their ongoing support, and ask that you renew your membership before Oct. 31 and invite colleagues to join the RNAO family. RNAO works tirelessly to ensure the public, politicians, employers, and health-care stakeholders hear the nursing community's voice – whether it be in the media, in front of standing committees of the provincial legislature, or at the Council of the Federation's strategic planning meeting.

As an RNAO member, the potential for mentorship and learning new skills is boundless and will undoubtedly contribute to your personal and professional well-being. At the collective level, the stronger and more influential your professional association, the stronger you become as a professional nurse.

Renew your RNAO membership today to reap the personal and professional rewards of membership in your professional association.

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