

## Provincial footprints in a national landscape



**We have celebrated** two very special birthdays: CNA's 100th and Canada's 141st since last I had the opportunity to 'speak' with you through this *Journal*.

Birthdays are a cause for celebration and I can confirm that the CNA centennial in Ottawa in June was a very special time for all who attended.

Birthdays are also a time for reflection, on where we have been and where we are going. The many events at the CNA board and annual general meetings this summer were special, but they also provided an opportunity to conduct substantial business. I want to share with you news about where we are headed, and acknowledge the tremendous success you – our membership – has had in bringing our shared agenda to the national level.

First of all, you may recall ongoing discussions at the provincial level about the urgent need for a national voice to speak out in support of Medicare. This is the first of RNAO's strategic directions to "...influence public policy that strengthens Medicare and impacts on the determinants of health."

This direction shapes much of what I – in company with the board and staff of RNAO – do on behalf of the public and nurses. This strategic direction mandates that we speak out on the issue of Medicare, calling to account both the federal role in enforcing the legislation that protects our provincially delivered health-care services, and the provincial government in ensuring the letter and spirit of that legislation is reflected in the funding and delivery of those services.

There's no question that Medicare is under growing threat in many parts of this country. I very strongly believe that there is a critical need to rally people federally, and in all provinces and territories, to speak out for the expansion, not the contraction, of our current Medicare system.

I am glad to share with you that the movement to speak out for Medicare is about to grow in both number and volume. At the CNA board meeting, the motion to establish *Nurses for Medicare* under the CNA umbrella, a motion submitted by RNAO, was passed. I look forward to working with our colleagues on the CNA board to bring this most impor-

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tant vision to life, and create an activist agenda to protect and strengthen publicly funded and not-for-profit health services.

This is a significant step forward, but it isn't the only step. RNAO presented other motions to CNA for discussion and vote at the meetings. I am delighted to tell you that all of those motions passed, and passed easily. Each one spoke directly to our mandate of *Speaking out for health. Speaking out for nursing*. The social and environmental determinants of health – the determinants that profoundly shape the health of our communities – are evident in our submissions to

CNA. The support of our colleagues across the country is evident in the passing of each motion. And your commitment, as RNAO members, to the development of these submissions speaks to the clear recognition you have for our national role. The passage of these is just one more marker of your success on that national stage.

With the passage of the resolutions, CNA must now turn its attention to operationalizing all of the advice given by the membership on the floor of the AGM. The work ahead will address not only the resolutions themselves, but also the substantive discussion related to emerging health-care issues such as the threat to self-regulation of nurses and the increasing reliance, in some parts of our country, on international recruitment to meet health human resource shortfalls. Both of these challenges will require hard work on our part as we advocate for strengthened, not diminished, self regulation, and for sustainable, home-grown solutions for our shortages.

In addition to the 'business' of the national board, there were some pleasant announcements at this year's meeting. The national nursing community elected Judith Shamian, a former RNAO president and a nurse leader well known to all of us in Ontario (and, indeed, across Canada and throughout the world) as CNA's president-elect. She will work with the new president, Kaaren Neufeld, as CNA continues to move forward into its next 100 years.

I hope you have been reading this in a park, on a dock, in your garden or wherever it is that you find the joy of our Ontario summer. This all too fleeting season is one to be treasured, savoured and remembered during those longer, colder nights of winter. If you are now on holiday, enjoy. If you have been on holiday, welcome back, renewed and refreshed. And if you have yet to go, I wish you blue skies and warm weather.

See you in September. **RN**

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PRESIDENT OF RNAO.