

Ongoing discussions, consultation regarding **resolution #1**



In my last column, I shared with you details of the passionate debate at RNAO's annual general meeting (AGM) that surrounded resolution #1, which called on RNAO's board of directors to engage with our members in an open, transparent consultation about RNAO's relations with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA).

As we move ahead and strengthen our ability to advocate for nursing issues, as well as for publicly funded, not-for-profit health care and social determinants of health – issues that we know are important to RNs across the country – I want to make sure you continue to receive the most up-to-date information about our ongoing work with resolution #1.

In June, I attended the CNA board of directors meeting where I addressed RNAO's view that it is vital we have a voice and mobilize nurses from coast to coast speaking out for health and nursing issues at the national level.

That's why I tabled, on your behalf, a motion that called on CNA to adopt changes to its strategic directions that would include commitments to take action in mobilizing nurses to promote publicly funded, publicly administered, not-for-profit health care. The motion also called on CNA to advocate for healthy public policies regarding determinants of health, specifically a national childcare program, a national housing strategy, and strengthened regulation of health and environmental safety.

While that motion was not passed, it remains tabled until November. Meanwhile, CNA committed to incorporate the essence of RNAO's motion into the goals of the association.

Another motion – calling on CNA to engage in formal consultations with RNAO to seek a mutually agreeable resolution to our concerns – was defeated because CNA's board of directors conclud-

ed that it cannot have discussions with only one of its jurisdictions. Instead, CNA passed a subsequent motion agreeing to set aside time at both its November 2006 and March 2007 meetings to consider the results of the RNAO consultative process that will take place this summer and into the fall.

In addition to the formal discussions around the board table, informal conversations were also taking place. RNAO's Executive Director Doris Grinspun and I were heartened to hear assurances from CNA's outgoing president Deborah Tamlyn, new president Marlene Smadu and President-Elect Kaaren Neufeld that

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we could work together to find solutions that would be beneficial for both parties. Our provincial colleagues also expressed their support and applauded RNAO for its commitment to Medicare and its efforts to draw more attention to social determinants of health.

All of us should be proud that RNAO is recognized nationwide as a leader in these issues. I hope we will be able to build on that commitment and leadership and infuse it into CNA's goals and actions in the future.

Immediately following the board meeting, six RNAO board members, your executive director, and a number of general members attended CNA's annual general meeting (AGM). As you know, RNAO's

board and members have expressed concern about rising CNA fees over the last several years. I would like to report to you that this sentiment was echoed by voting delegates from other jurisdictions. As a result, CNA's AGM defeated a resolution for a fee increase for 2008 and 2009. CNA's board, instead, established a committee to look at its financial cycle and I have joined this committee as a member.

Meanwhile, RNAO's consultative process will continue over the coming months. RNAO board members look forward to speaking with you and hearing your thoughts as we proceed. Over the summer, we will be working with chapters and interest groups to organize surveys, focus groups, online consultations and special meetings.

In January, these efforts will culminate in a special general meeting so members can vote on recommendations the board of directors will make. That's why it's so important that, before or after you head out for your summer vacation, you give us a bit of your time to share your thoughts and help us design recommendations that will strengthen and solidify the nursing voice at the national level.

I hope all of you will continue to inform yourselves about this important issue by visiting RNAO's website. That's where you will find an online forum for sharing your views with fellow members, as well as updates and correspondence between RNAO and CNA as we continue down this path.

I look forward to hearing the voices of each of our 24,000 members. It is the passion that so many of you have for nursing and public health care that will allow us to continue to advocate for a stronger profession, and to take a stronger role as advocates for public policy changes that we know will make a difference to our colleagues, patients, families and communities.

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