

# Trip to India reveals lessons Canadian RNs can learn from their counterparts abroad



In January, I was a delegate of Premier Dalton McGuinty's trade mission to India. It was a tremendous honour and privilege to represent our profession on such a mission, my first to this fascinating country.

One thing I realized while I was meeting health-care professionals in New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Chandigarh was that their anticipation for shared knowledge was similar to the anticipation I felt when I first visited China in 2005. That trip marked the beginning of our exciting partnership in leadership training with the Chinese Nursing Association (CNA) and the Beijing Nightingale Consultation of Culture (BNCC). On page 24 of this issue, you will find details of the China Project to date, and can read about a recent visit of Chinese delegates to RNAO in February. It was clear to me during this visit that their respect for RNAO's work, and our shared goals, is helping us to move from a position of strength to even greater strength.

I was honoured to see that same respect for RNAO when I met with many Indian nurses and health professionals during the trade mission in January. They showed a tremendous eagerness to partner with RNAO, to advance nursing in their own country, and to learn as well as share their own expertise.

The trip to India didn't just highlight for me the things other countries can learn from us. It also reminded me how much knowledge we can bring from abroad and apply to our everyday practice here at home. And there are so many people ready and willing to share that knowledge with Canadian nurses.

During our one-week stay, we visited several health-care facilities, including two of the most impressive institutions in India: the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi and the Post

Graduate Institution of Medical Education and Research in Mumbai. Both were absolutely eager to partner with us. I also had the privilege of a visit with executives from the Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences, including their Vice Chancellor, Dean of Nursing and Chief Financial Officer. These individuals traveled for several hours to meet with me and discuss partnership opportunities.

The discussions at many of these meetings centred around health, health care and nursing priorities. We also discussed India's tremendous challenges with poverty, and I

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shared information about RNAO's focus on the social determinants of health. Our colleagues know all too well that without food in the belly and a roof over our heads, good health is not possible.

All my hosts made it clear to me that they are anxious to host Canadian nurses. They want to learn more about Canada's health-care system, and they want to teach Canadian nurses about their own systems. I can attest to the fact that their knowledge is exquisite and their warmth is delightful.

Opportunities to engage more nurses in international visits can only lead to more stimulation, and a greater understanding that knowledge shared is power gained. I encourage all nurses to embrace

these opportunities to learn, and not just overseas, but right here at home. As we strive to strengthen our own communities and address our own diverse needs, there is much we can learn from one another.

Buy a train ticket or a plane ticket, and visit different communities in Ontario. I will be visiting Manitoulin Island in May. Members should also consider visiting other places that have adopted our guidelines, including Saskatchewan, Miami, Iowa, China, India, Kenya, Italy or Chile. We can help you make the connections and you can reap the benefits and rewards of sharing and learning in a seamless way.

Just take the lead of RNAO's inspiring BPG Champions who are collectively transforming the world of nursing and are inspiring others to become *knowledge ambassadors*, bringing knowledge to colleagues and learning how to strengthen our own nursing worlds and practices.

Across Ontario and the rest of the country, the stage has been set and momentum for widespread BPG implementation has been building since 1999. Internationally, there's no doubt we've also started building positive momentum, especially when you consider the ongoing work that's being done on the China Project.

As we watch this partnership with China grow, and marvel at the fruits of our labour, we will not forget there are so many new partnerships that we can build. RNAO has already signed an agreement with India that will see us partnering nurses from each of our respective professional associations. We will soon begin working on strategies for the exchange of knowledge between nursing colleagues in both countries, and I know that many of you will join in the journey.

Building nursing as a collective at home and across continents and cultures enables us to stand tall as a profession and to remain inspired as individual nurses.

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