

# Province-wide consultation about resolution #1 generates positive results



**When I began my** presidency, I committed to listening to members' voices, hearing what's important to nurses, and taking action on those important

issues. I am now making another commitment to you. We will achieve a positive outcome from the process related to resolution #1, and we will build RNAO's relationship with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), strengthening a national voice for nurses.

Already there is evidence that we are on the road to that destination. Over the last few months, many of you participated in consultation sessions and completed RNAO's survey online or by mail. In fact, well over 6,000 members – RNs in all roles and sectors – shared their voices with the Board of Directors. The board heard those voices loud and clear when it met in November to develop recommendations on resolution #1, and the board has taken your message to heart. We are all in agreement that CNA and RNAO must continue to work together to secure a national nursing voice that is stronger than ever.

I'm happy to report the collaboration you are looking for between RNAO and CNA is happening, and it will continue. During September's CNA board meeting, there was healthy discussion and the CNA board passed a motion to adopt RNAO's recommendations for two new strategic directions endorsing advocacy and action on healthy public policy. These strategic directions envision CNA leadership working with provincial and territorial jurisdictions to mobilize nurses to advocate for a quality, publicly funded, publicly administered and not-for-profit health system, and to advance national public policy that addresses the social and environmental determinants of health.

In November, the CNA board approved plans for allocating \$1 million and seven

staff members to make those strategic directions a reality in 2007. This progress was complemented by a positive, productive meeting between myself, Immediate Past President Joan Lesmond, Executive Director Doris Grinspun, CNA President Marlene Smadu, CNA President-Elect Kaaren Neufeld, and CNA Chief Operating Officer Jane Ellis.

The opportunity to meet with thousands of members and hear about issues of importance to your professional work is one of the greatest joys of being an RNAO board member and your president. For the past few months, you have met with us to share your thoughts about

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resolution #1 and its evolution. Individuals and groups have told us about their clear support for our focus to secure a national activist agenda.

The vast majority of RNAO members want to advance a public health-care system and public policy that will support the social and environmental determinants of health. Throughout the consultations, most of you told us you're passionate about the need to address issues related to poverty, the environment, primary health care, and enforcing the *Canada Health Act* provincially and nationally. You shared your concern about the impact of replacing RNs with less qualified nurses, and you told us you want RNAO to be a part of CNA.

Through this process we learned that many of you hadn't heard much about the underlying concerns that resulted in resolution #1, and we became aware that we as a board must improve our communication. The board realizes the issues that

RNAO has been worried about for more than a decade have been percolating for too long without an open discussion with all our members. Immediate Past President Joan Lesmond, and the board she presided over (of which I was a member), mustered the courage to propose open and transparent consultations with you – RNAO's real owners.

At the April 2006 annual general meeting, voting delegates gave the board's proposed resolution a green light for action. We committed to keeping you well informed of our progress on an ongoing basis, and we stand by this commitment. I have reported back to you in my columns, and home office has done so through its regular e-mail newsletter, *In-the-Loop*. We posted all communications between RNAO and CNA in the *members only* section of RNAO's website. You also heard about the resolution at your chapter, regional, and interest group meetings.

Some of you have told us you are concerned that the resolution #1 consultation process and data gathering has been “flawed” and may interfere with our ability to achieve a positive outcome in our discussions with CNA. We appreciate hearing and considering all the differing points of view as we move toward our goal to strengthen the voice of nursing in Canada.

RNAO's board spent two days in November developing recommendations to be presented at the general meeting on Jan. 26, 2007. We hope to see many of you there. The recommendations reflect all of the issues you have told us are close to your hearts. They also reinforce our collective values and goals for a strong national voice in collaboration with CNA. The board, your executive director, and I look forward to continuing to hear your feedback on this and all other issues.

RNAO is your association, and your voices can only make it stronger.

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MARY FERGUSON-PARÉ, RN, PhD, CHE, IS  
PRESIDENT OF RNAO.