



Connecting with nurses, creating change

WELCOME TO SUMMER – HOT, HAZY and humid. I hope you are enjoying the weather, keeping well hydrated and, of course, using sunblock.

What an experience it has been representing Ontario RNs as your new president these past few months. In June, I was in Vancouver attending the Canadian Nurses Association's board meeting and annual general meeting. Many issues, ideas and solutions came out of these meetings. I was relieved and pleased to hear how policy, research and practice experts from right across this country agree we must focus on optimizing the role of the registered nurse at the point of care. This aligns 100 per cent with the key focus for my presidency.

You may be aware (see *Policy at Work*, pg 23) that RNAO has released an outstanding report on maximizing and expanding the roles of RNs and RPNs who work in primary care (community health centres, family health teams, NP-led clinics, and physicians' offices). The document provides key directions for ensuring nurses in this sector work to their full scope. As well, the report is a blueprint for other sectors in health care. The Joint Provincial Nursing Committee, of which I am a member alongside our CEO Doris Grinspun, has established a sub-committee on optimization of the RN and RPN roles and it will focus first on the recommendations related to community care. This committee

will have representation from all sectors in health care, education, unions and professional associations. It will apply the RNAO blueprint and process, and recommend clear directions to enhance access to what patients need: the services of a registered nurse.

I'd like to know how your workplace is optimizing the role of the RN. Do you see

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areas for improvement, and ways that RNAO can help you make those improvements? What are the barriers to making this happen? Or what are you doing successfully that others might benefit from? Please share your stories with me at rseidman-carlson@RNAO.ca. It's through open discussion and the sharing of ideas that we all learn from one another.

This notion of sharing brings me to the CNA meetings I attended this summer in Vancouver, where nurses from across the country came together for an annual meeting of the minds. The board of CNA passed a motion based on the federal government's

Bill C-38, the omnibus bill that included nearly 800 other legislative changes cloaked in what they're referring to as a budget bill. At RNAO, and across the country, people are outraged that debate over the legislation, open presentation of proposed changes to the bill – democracy in essence – has been undermined. To that end, the board at CNA unanimously passed a

motion that our national organization actively lobby the nurses and people of Canada to stop this dismantling of our democratic values.

CNA's National Expert Commission report was also released in June. It provides clear direction (beyond recommendation) on how to transform Canada's health-care system. I encourage you to visit www.cna-aiic.ca to read the report, find out about the commission, and provide your suggestions on how to make this vision a reality.

As your president, I have the honour of representing you at CNA meetings by taking a seat at the board table. Twenty resolutions came forward for

discussion this year at the AGM. RNAO submitted eight that focused on: the role of public health nurses in schools; the need to improve access to Suboxone treatment; improving health and health care in correctional facilities; maximizing and expanding the role of the primary care nurse; stopping Prime Minister Harper's cuts to immigrant health programs; advocating for a reduction on the jobs deficit; risk mitigation strategies; and supporting the rural and remote nursing workforce. Each of our resolutions was passed at the AGM.

Representing you nationally through CNA, and provincially through the RNAO board, allows me to connect with members, which is important to me. I also connect with you through this column in the *Journal*. The response to my first column (May/June) was overwhelming. Members across the province wrote to express support, and to provide both encouragement and ideas. Thank you to everyone who took the time to connect with me. Please keep doing that. **RN**

RHONDA SEIDMAN-CARLSON, RN, MN, IS PRESIDENT OF RNAO.

For more detailed information about RNAO's resolutions to CNA, visit www.RNAO.ca/CNAresolutions2012