



RNAO in full swing for membership season

IF YOU ARE ACTIVE ON TWITTER OR other social media, I hope you have seen my posts about renewing my membership. RNAO has launched a [social media campaign](#) encouraging members to take selfies wearing an RN, NP or nursing student pin to indicate they have joined for the first time or renewed their membership. I think this is a great way to spread the word about our professional association and share our pride among members and the public.

RNAO's annual membership drive is an important time in the association's calendar. Everyone – from those who work in membership, to those in policy, communications, best practice guidelines, IT, finance, and executive office, including our CEO – plays an important role in ensuring members are signed up and are getting the benefits and services that are integral to membership.

One of the things I admire about RNAO's membership team is the thought they put into the variety of promotions that encourage RNs, NPs and nursing students to be part of our collective. For example, for years now, my membership has automatically rolled over because I signed up for continuous renewal. Thousands of members are on this plan. It offers simplicity and eases my mind because I never have to worry about keeping my professional liability protection (PLP) up to date. This protection is

mandatory to every nurse's practice. And, if you are an RNAO member, PLP is an automatic benefit.

One of the promotions home office is highlighting this fall is the ["Get 5" offer](#). All you have to do is enrol five of your colleagues or nursing friends (who are not yet members or whose

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membership has lapsed for two or more years) to join. If you do, your membership is free. In addition, new grads receive free membership as they launch their careers, and these also apply to the "Get 5" promotion.

And, of course, RNAO has always offered a home to Ontario's nursing students – the leaders of tomorrow. Students have chosen a wonderful profession, and we value their fresh enthusiasm, knowledge and insight. They offer new ways of doing and seeing things, and a perspective for the rest of the membership to consider.

Why am I devoting this column to the topic of membership? And why should every RN, NP and nursing student in this province be part of RNAO? There are many reasons, and I want to focus on three.

First, membership offers the opportunity to get involved

beyond paying an annual fee that ranges from \$256 (maximum) to as low as \$87 (\$20 for students). There are so many chances to be engaged and part of something bigger. Members can join the executive of their local chapter or region without chapters. There are committees and interest groups that offer

opportunities for advancement, or to develop advocacy and leadership skills. And, if professional practice is where your interest lies, the iaBPG centre offers endless opportunities.

Membership is also important because of the collective voice we create. It cultivates an important sense of belonging, as well as a professional identity.

The third reason membership is important has to do with the added clout we have based on the strength of our members. Without a vibrant and engaged membership, we would not have been able to achieve so many of the things we have accomplished for our profession and our health system. We know patients, clients, and long-term care residents count on us. The population at large does as well. Time and time again, we have spoken out on the key issues that

affect all of us, whether the focus is poverty, the environment, or making sure health services are centred around people.

Having a thriving membership also means being vocal about the issues you bring to the forefront. These include RN replacement and the need to deal with the barriers that prevent NPs from

working to their full scope. Many of those barriers have been lifted, but some remain. Our ability to continue to influence health policy is powered by the strength of our membership. This is why we need each and every one of you to continue the great work we have accomplished together.

If you haven't already, be sure to check out my Twitter feed, as well as those of our President-Elect Angela Cooper Brathwaite and CEO Doris Grinspun. And don't forget to post your selfie using #RNAOmember. It's the ultimate way to demonstrate our more than 41,000 members are part of an awesome collection of nursing leaders. **RN**

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