



RNAO
ANNUAL
REPORT
2023-
2024

NURSING
celebrating
successes,
solving
challenges.



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RNAO'S MISSION

We are the professional body representing registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students in Ontario. We advocate for healthy public policy, promote excellence in nursing practice, and power nurses to actively influence and shape decisions that affect the profession and the public we serve.

RNAO'S VALUES

We believe health is a resource for everyday living and health care is a universal human right. We respect human dignity and are committed to diversity, inclusivity, equity, social justice and democracy. We believe the leadership of every nurse advances individual and collective health.

A message from the President and the Chief Executive Officer of RNAO



Dr. CLAUDETTE HOLLOWAY

RN, BScN, MSN,
DHA, CHE
RNAO PRESIDENT



Dr. DORIS GRINSPUN

RN, BScN, MSN, PhD,
LLD(hon), Dr(hc), DHC,
DHC, FAAN, FCAN, O.ONT
RNAO CEO

This is the time to be an RNAO member! RNAO has never been stronger, more influential and more successful in our advocacy for the nursing profession, health care and Ontario communities.

As we mark our 99th anniversary at our Annual General Meeting in June, our theme, *Nursing: Celebrating successes, solving challenges*, embodies the essence of who we are and what we stand for.

A record 51,650 RNs, NPs and nursing students have placed their trust in a strong and vibrant association that understands what nurses need to thrive in the profession, how our health system can better serve people's needs, and why we champion the social and environmental determinants of health.

Over the past year, we witnessed transformative changes, for which RNAO was the catalyst. The Ontario government unlocked registered nurses' (RN) potential by granting them authority to prescribe certain medications and announced a substantial increase in nursing program seats. These are RNAO long-fought victories for nursing, the health system, and most importantly, the people of Ontario. RNAO was the first organization in North America to propose RN prescribing. We persisted. We got it. Now, we are working toward its full integration into the BScN program.

Nurse practitioners (NP) also saw significant progress in our province: expansion of NP-led clinics, funding of more NPs in long-term care homes, increased educational seats, and an expanded scope of practice. These gains are the result of RNAO's powerful voice and advocacy for NPs critical role in our health system, especially as two and a half million Ontarians lack access to a regular primary care provider.

With equity-deserving communities front of mind, we amplified our advocacy on core social and environmental imperatives, in collaboration with civil society coalitions. Notable successes include the introduction of a universal-single-payer national pharmacare program, increases to federal health transfer payments, major federal investments in housing, and an emissions cap for the oil and gas sectors sorely needed as a step toward addressing the climate crisis.

While we celebrated successes, we also tackled challenges such as nurse staffing shortages, the expansion of for-profit care, growing homelessness, and the impacts of hate and discrimination

targeted at trans and non-binary people. We remained laser focused on the toxic drug crisis, repeatedly stressing that harm reduction is health care. Almost 3,800 lives were lost in 2023 due to toxic drugs. Communities are mourning. Our voices were heard calling for safe consumption sites (SCS) in all communities in need – through the media, Action Alerts, a petition, a press conference and a march and rally in downtown Toronto. We will persist until people who use substances have access to SCSs and the wrap-around services they need.

As ever, our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to truth and reconciliation, shape RNAO and our work. Our reconciliation process over the past year has led us to enter a relationship agreement with the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council. In response to a member resolution, we also welcomed a Knowledge Keeper to our board of directors. We remain resolute – we will not stop working together until we eliminate all forms of racism and discrimination.

We know that persistence is key for positive changes. This past year alone, RNAO's voice has been heard through 1,670 mainstream media hits and endless social media engagement. Together, we speak out for nursing and speak out for health.

Our world-renowned programs have been vital in cementing evidence-based cultures in health service and academic institutions locally and globally – energizing staff and optimizing outcomes. We take pride in RNAO's Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) program, marking its 25th year, and our Best Practice Spotlight Organization® (BPSO®) program, now in its 21st year with more than 1,500 BPSOs. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of RNAO's LTC Best Practices Program.

And, our members continue to inspire and enrich us through strong collective action. Through our network of over 60 chapters, regions without chapters and interest groups, our 51,650 members drive change to strengthen the nursing profession, our health system and Ontarians' health.

Your membership in RNAO is a testament to your confidence in our collective capacity to do good. Your board of directors, assembly of leaders and staff are humbled and inspired by your support. On their behalf, we thank you deeply for your unwavering commitment to RNAO, the nursing profession, the people of Ontario, and indeed the world.

We invite you to read the report and take pride in RNAO's work over the past year.



MEMBERSHIP

Our members are key to many of the successes we've celebrated over the past year. And, they have been instrumental in raising awareness of priority issues and solving challenges facing the profession and our health system.



Each year, our power and influence as an organization grows thanks to our dedicated and dynamic membership.

51,650 strong and counting, we have members in every corner of our vast province.

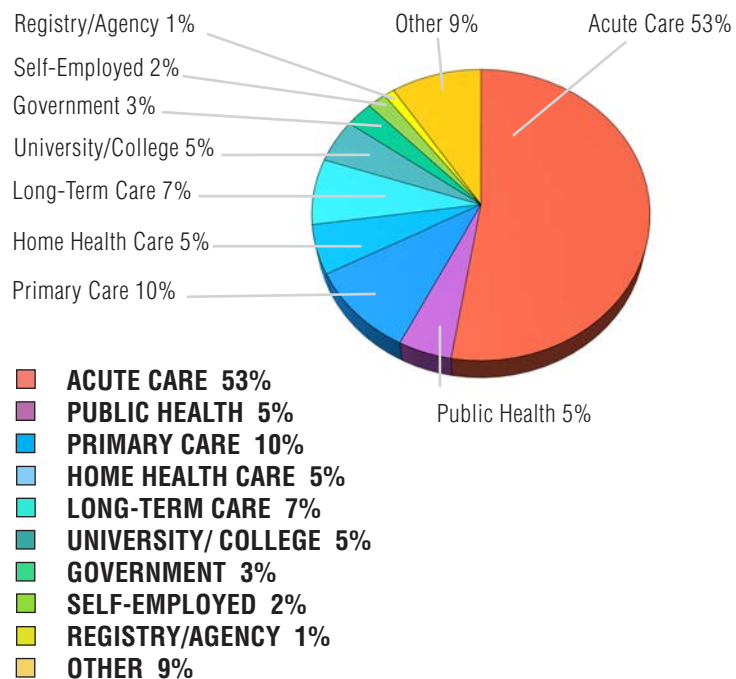
Why does this matter? For one thing, our reach amplifies your voice as an RN, NP, nursing student or internationally educated nurse associate. And, a collective show of force means people stand up and take notice, making our association and profession that much stronger.

From rural and remote communities, to towns and cities east and west, and large urban settings – our members are in tune with the multiple and varied challenges that Ontarians face, and the opportunities RNAO offers.

Our RN and NP members use their knowledge, experience and commitment in the integral roles they play across every health sector.

Our internationally educated nurse associates are working towards registration in Ontario, and are eager to continue their nursing careers in Ontario.

RNAO MEMBERS BY SECTOR: 2023



To recognize members' value RNAO provides tremendous promotions

Win-Win 100

Participate and join us at the 2025 International Council of Nurses Congress in Helsinki

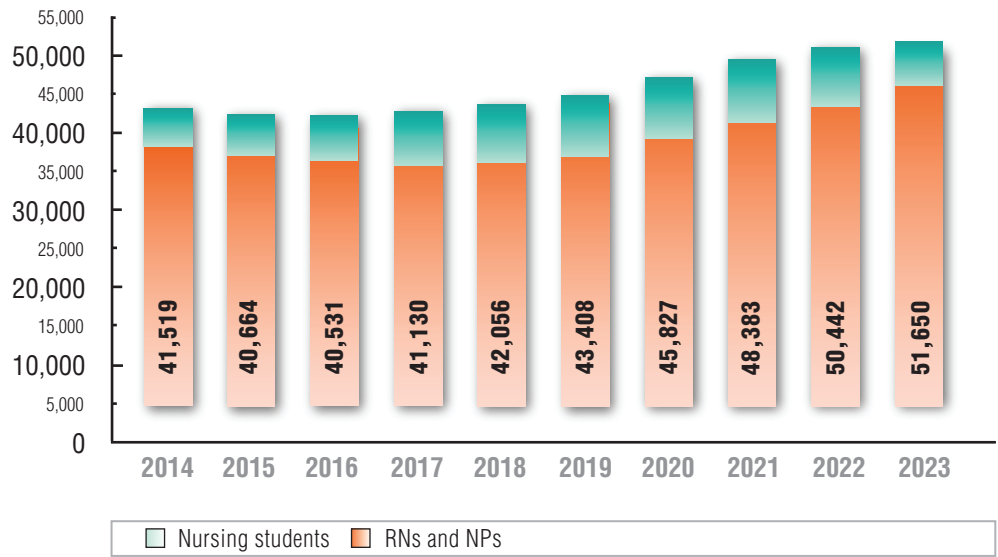
Right: Student ambassadors don RNAO swag during the York University Nursing Student Association's meet and greet in September 2023.



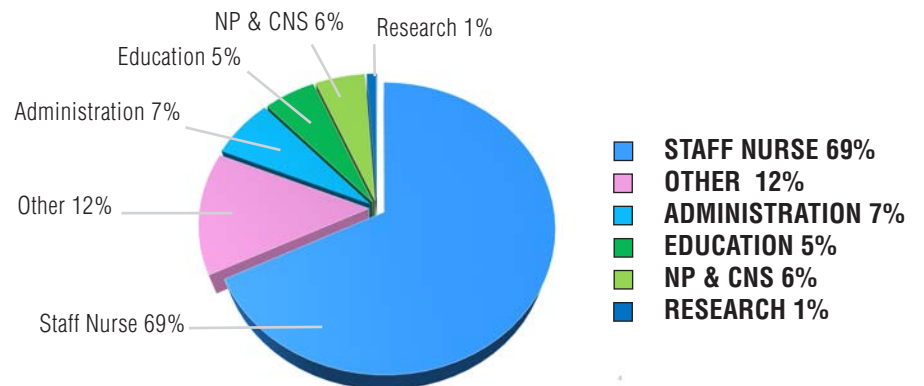
Our enthusiastic nursing students are equally committed, and full of ideas and energy as they shape the profession.

Our members get involved through a network of chapters, regions without chapters and interest groups – driving change to improve nursing, health care and health.

RNAO MEMBERSHIP 2014 – 2023



RNAO MEMBERSHIP BY ROLE 2023



This past year members demonstrated pride in our professional association through the #RNAOProud pin campaign. Running alongside the fall renewal campaign, it raised awareness of RNAO and its members by showcasing how they wear their pin and what it means to them.

Below:

Nursing student Aine Babihuga shows off his NS pin.



Below:

RNs Joan Pett (left), Hoda Mahdi (second from right) and Sarah Hassib (far right) proudly point to Alexandra Lagumbay's (second from left) RN pin at Markham's Oak Valley Health.

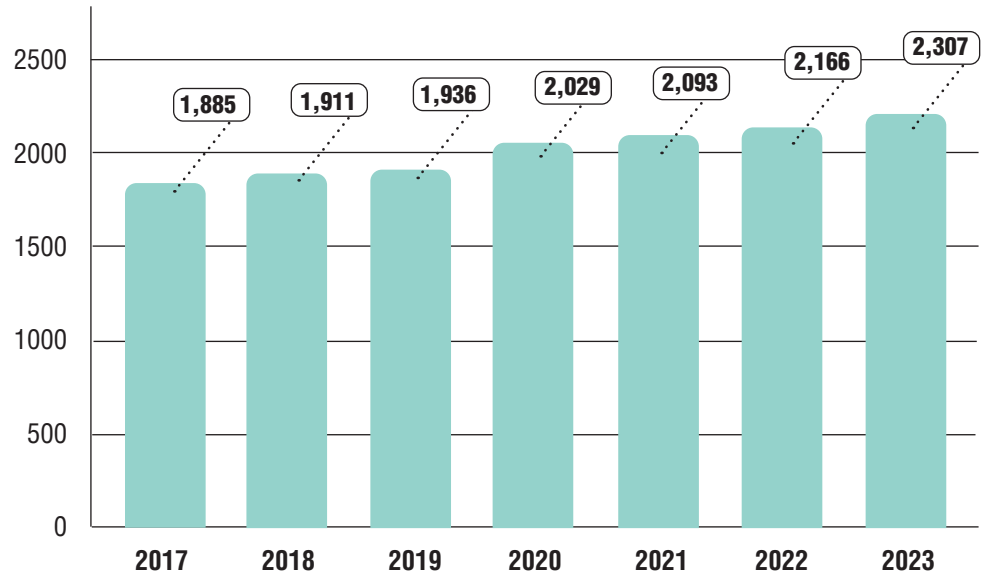


Above: From left to right: Nursing student Aveen Abdoli, board student representative Stephanie Pialis, Region 7 board member Sonia Chin and nursing student Adam Thai show off their NS and RN pins at an RNAO board meeting.



Above: RN Bonnie Kearns displays her RN pin proudly on her Red Cross vest.

NP MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



Last November, we launched #WeAreNPs with our Nurse Practitioner Interest Group (NPIG) so the public better understands the extensive expertise of NPs and their critical role in health system transformation. NPs open up access to care and improve outcomes for all, including vulnerable and equity-deserving populations.



Right: Carly Forooghi, then student liaison executive network officer for the Nurse Practitioner Interest Group (NPIG), holds up a #WeAreNPs campaign sign during RNAO's 10th annual NP Knowledge Exchange Symposium.



Our annual Fall Tour remains a highlight for our members. This past year, President Dr. Claudette Holloway, President-Elect NP Lhamo Dolkar, and CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun criss-crossed the province meeting members where they live and work. The 12 visits reached 18 chapters, regions without chapters and interest groups, engaging discussions on topics ranging from care delivery and the social and environmental determinants of health to strategies to build careers in nursing. Members were passionate when discussing how to retain nurses and attract new people into the profession to meet current and future care needs.

Top right:
RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway (in orange) met with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre staff as part of Lakehead Chapter's Fall Tour event on Oct. 18.



Middle right:
RNAO President-Elect NP Lhamo Dolkar (in navy blue) gave a presentation at the Nursing Students of Ontario's Fall Tour event at Humber River Hospital on Oct. 16.



Bottom right:
RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (fifth from right) greeted the Waterloo Chapter on Oct. 23, hearing from members and staff at Conestoga College's Doon Campus, CarePartners in Waterloo and Nithview Home in New Hamburg.



Top right:
Middlesex-Elgin
Chapter President
Janet Hunt (in
pink) gave tips to
members on how
to engage media
during RNAO's
Assembly meeting
on March 1.



Middle right:
RNAO CEO
Dr. Doris Grinspun
(middle) joined the
Rainbow Nursing
Interest Group and
other members to
celebrate Toronto's
annual Pride
Parade held June
25, 2023.



Bottom right:
Members came
together in Toronto
to ring in RNAO's
98th Annual
General Meeting
(June 22 – 24,
2023), waving flags
of support for the
2SLGBTQIA+
community and
several countries.



Join our collective
voice. Visit
join.RNAO.ca
and enjoy all of
the benefits of
being an RNAO
member



BPGs & BPSOs

We have much to celebrate thanks to the commitment of nurses and the success of our BPG and BPSO programs. Together, we are improving patient care and solving system challenges.

20 years of BPSOs

More than 50 world-renowned best practice guidelines (BPG)

International expansion continues across Ibero-America, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Australia

More than 150,000 engaged champions

More than 1,500 BPSOs around the world



As we reflect on the many achievements of RNAO over the past year, the Best Practice Spotlight Organization® (BPSO®) Program stands out as a pinnacle of success. RNAO marked two decades of growth and widespread adoption by individuals, health organizations, educators and governments who have embraced our social movement of science in Ontario and around the world. The dedicated work of BPSOs has been transformative, with substantial improvements in patient and organizational outcomes.

The number of organizations implementing RNAO's more than 50 world-renowned best practice guidelines (BPG) has grown from seven in Ontario in 2003 to more than 1,500 around the world in 2024. International expansion continues across Ibero-America, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Australia. In March, two organizations from Mexico were the latest to sign BPSO agreements to embark on the program's implementation, evaluation and monitoring work.



Above:

On March 19, RNAO welcomed two Mexican organizations – the University of Monterrey (UDEM) and Christus Muguerza – to the Best Practice Spotlight Organization® program. Pictured (L to R): Mario Páez González, president of UDEM; Dr. Doris Grinspun, RNAO CEO; and Horacio Hugo Garza Ghio, CEO of Christus Muguerza.

Right:
RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (bottom row, third from left) celebrated the final day of training with more than 80 best practice champions from BPSO Red Salud in Santiago, Chile on April 18, 2024.



Below:
During a media conference on May 6, 2024 at Humber River Health, Dr. Doris Forlemu-Kamwa, senior director of primary care at Black Creek Community Health Centre, shared how the North Western Toronto Health Team relies on RNAO's BPGs to improve health outcomes.

Here at home, 17 organizations – nine long-term care homes and eight health-care organizations of which two are Indigenous – attended a formal in-person BPSO orientation launch in April 2024. These institutions have now joined an expansive international network of over 150,000 dedicated champions. In October 2023, these champions were introduced to a new blended learning program based on the Leading Change Toolkit, designed to facilitate immediate application of BPGs in their practices.



Above:
Stan Cho (centre), then-minister of long-term care, attended the BPSO orientation launch on April 25, 2024 in Mississauga.

Left:
RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (fourth from right) visited with members of Archipel BPSO OHT at Ottawa's Hôpital Montfort on May 7, 2024.

RNAO has proudly hosted several events this past year where BPSOs shared their successes and implementation strategies across diverse health system sectors. At this year's annual general meeting, we celebrate 11 newly designated BPSOs now fully integrated into the program. Additionally, a combined 22 pre-designate organizations from Ontario and Ibero-America have signed agreements this past year to join the program.

To learn more about these significant achievements and our milestone anniversary, we invite you to read the special issue of our award winning publication, RNJ, available at RNJ.RNAO.ca.

18th Annual BPSO Knowledge Exchange Symposium: Celebrating our Global Commitment to Evidence-Based Cultures

In September 2023, RNAO hosted its 18th annual BPSO Knowledge Exchange Symposium, a celebratory gathering that honoured the dedication of BPSOs to their vital roles and facilitated moments of reflection to inspire further growth. More than 250 representatives from Ontario and international BPSOs participated in person, with more joining virtually.

Focusing on four main themes (values, evidence, leading change and results), BPSO leaders shared their inspiring stories of success, offered strategies for implementing, evaluating and sustaining BPGs, and strengthened their ties throughout the three-day event. Participants left inspired by the achievements of their colleagues and motivated for even more impactful work in transforming health and health care. Explore the program and watch archived videos of the event at RNAO.ca/events/BPSO-symposium.

Top right:
RNAO staff members attend the 18th annual BPSO Knowledge Exchange Symposium in Toronto (Sept 20 – 22, 2023).



Bottom right:
At the 18th annual BPSO Knowledge Exchange Symposium, members of local, provincial and international BPSOs wave flags in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the RNAO's BPSO program.



ICN 2023: Nurses together: A force for global health

From July 1–5, 2023, RNAO and its BPG and BPSO leaders traveled to Montreal for the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress, held every two years in a different member country. This significant event showcased more than 30 presentations by RNAO and its BPSO partners on a diverse range of topics. These included: impacts of BPG implementation, the opioid overdose crisis, digitized RNAO Clinical Pathways, artificial intelligence, strategies to address anti-Black racism, and integrating Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, being and doing through a two-eyed seeing approach.

Below:

Dovetailing with the ICN Congress, RNAO held a BPSO Special Session in Montreal on July 6, featuring a panel of speakers from local and international BPSOs. From left to right: Dr. Doris Grinspun (RNAO), Esther Gonzalez (Spain), Jesús Bujalance (Spain), Jessica Astudillo Cortes (Chile), Sonia Abad Vasquez (Chile), Dr. Amalia Silva (Chile), Tian Runxi (China), Nicola Williams (Australia), Dania Versailles (Canada) and May Tao (Canada).

Following the formal proceedings of the congress, RNAO hosted a special BPSO session on July 6, 2023 bringing together current and prospective BPSOs to exchange experiences and insights, thereby enhancing the program's reach and impact. The gathering served as a catalyst, invigorating both existing and new organizations to further drive RNAO's social movement of science. To learn more about RNAO's contributions to this international gathering, visit RNAO.ca/events/RNAO-at-ICN.

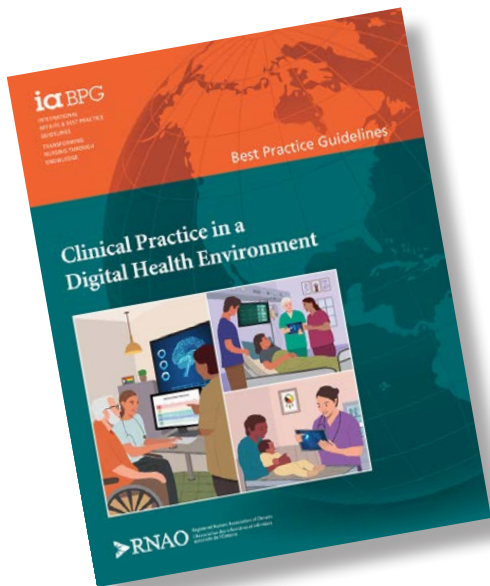


Right:

RNAO staff members are all smiles at our ICN Congress booth in Montreal (July 1 - 5, 2023). Pictured from left to right are RNs Lyndsay Howitt, Christina Medeiros, Morgan Hoffarth, Katherine Wallace and Grace Suva.



New BPG released



In March 2024, RNAO released its latest BPG, [*Clinical Practice in a Digital Health Environment*](#). The guideline was introduced during a soft launch webinar on March 27, followed by a media conference and celebration at the state-of-the-art digital facilities of Humber River Health during Nursing Week 2024. This site has been an RNAO BPSO since 2018, and is also the organization at which the late Dr. Vanessa Burkoski – the BPG’s co-chair and the nurse leader to whom the BPG is dedicated – worked as chief nursing executive and chief of people strategy.

Maureen Charlebois, chief nursing and clinical officer at Bayshore HealthCare, worked alongside Burkoski as co-chair for the new BPG. RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun highlighted that the guideline is a testament to the legacy and vision of Burkoski, who wanted nurses to have all the tools required to deliver the best quality and safest care possible.

Below: RNAO officially released its *Clinical Practice in a Digital Health Environment* BPG in a Nursing Week event held May 6, 2024 at Humber River Health in Toronto. Speakers from the event included (from left to right) Jennifer Yoon, BPG expert panel member; Christine Buchanan, RNAO acting senior manager of guideline development and research; Barb Collins, president and CEO of Humber River Health; and Dr. Doris Grinspun, RNAO CEO.

The BPG offers guidance for nurses and other health providers in various settings and sectors to integrate digital strategies into their clinical practice, empowering them to provide safe, quality care in increasingly digitized health environments. Attendees at these events gained insights into the rigorous BPG development process, led by an interprofessional team of practitioners, administrators, educators, researchers, policymakers and individuals with lived experience.

Exciting things are always happening in RNAO’s guideline development department. Find out more at RNAO.ca/bpg/guidelines



RNAO Clinical Pathways program expands

The growth and expansion of evidence-based care in the long-term care sector has been impressive over the last year. RNAO, in partnership with PointClickCare, welcomed four new cohorts in September 2023, November 2023, January 2024, and May 2024 to its Clinical Pathways program.

Partnership with PointClickCare

Four new cohorts welcomed by the program

RNAO hosted orientations for 83 long-term care homes

A grand total of 188 engaged long-term care homes

The program focuses on advancing evidence-based care for residents and enhancing outcomes across all participating homes using RNAO's Clinical Pathways. This tool not only standardizes care practices but also enables more consistent measurement of health outcomes, benefitting staff, residents and their families.

In welcoming these new cohorts, RNAO hosted orientations for 83 long-term care homes. The program, with the addition of the four new cohorts, now has a grand total of 188 engaged long-term care homes, marking a significant milestone in the program's expansion.

Right:
More than 80 representatives from the 40 LTC homes joining Cohort 4A of RNAO Clinical Pathways attended the orientation launch on Sept. 7, 2023 at PointClickCare's office in Mississauga.



Learning about safer supply programs

Canada's toxic drug supply crisis received considerable attention over the past year. RNAO's Mental Health and Substance Use Program has continued its important efforts to raise awareness and offer evidence-based tools to tackle the crisis. Its safer supply program webinars – two in a series of six virtual events – were particularly successful, attracting more than 1,000 participants. The series overall educated nurses and other health providers on a harm reduction approach aimed at preventing deaths. In the first safer supply webinar on Aug. 15, 2023 attendees learned about emerging evidence on the impact of safer supply programs on clients and health systems. The subsequent webinar on Aug. 22, 2023 provided a comprehensive overview of safer supply programs across Ontario, focusing on the critical roles played by nurses.

RNAO organized the webinar series, which will continue into 2025, in collaboration with its Mental Health Nurses Interest Group and Community Health Nurses' Initiatives Group, alongside the Harm Reduction Nurses Association, Moms Stop the Harm, and the National Safer Supply Community of Practice. Visit the [Mental Health and Substance Use Program](#) online for more information.

International Advisory Council meets



Pictured from left to right are
Dr. David Kaplan,
Dr. John Lavis,
Dr. Janet Squires,
Dr. Niek Klazinga,
Dr. Nancy Santesso,
Dr. Patricia Patrician,
Dr. Doris Grinspun
and Dr. Shanoja Naik.

Members of the International Advisory Council – specialists in health data systems – met at RNAO's home office on June 26-27, 2023. They discussed RNAO's Nursing Quality Indicators for Reporting and Evaluation® (NQuIRE®), a data system that tracks the efficacy of the association's best practice guidelines. NQuIRE collects data from quality indicators based on RNAO's BPG recommendations, aiding BPSOs in monitoring their progress, identifying areas for improvement, and promoting continuous quality advancement.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

RNAO continues to call out and address racism and discrimination within our profession and systemic bias within the health system.

Together with our Health Equity In Focus Consortium, we are charting a course to transform nursing and workplaces so they are welcoming and better serve equity-deserving groups.

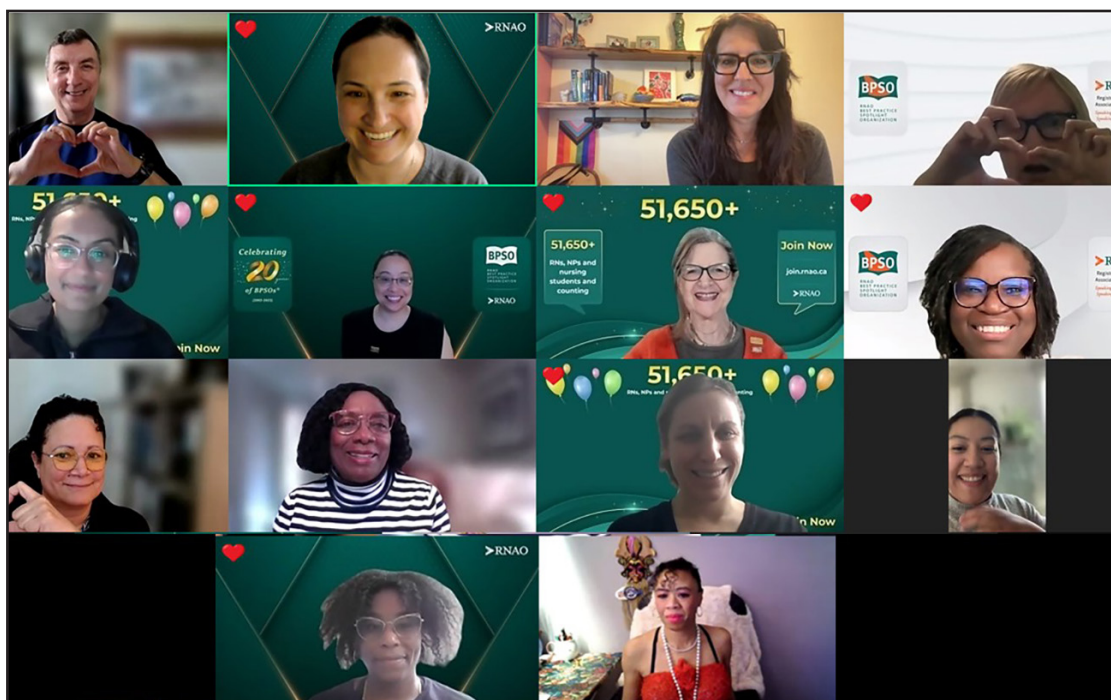
RNAO's Health Equity In Focus Consortium

RNAO has prioritized ending racism and all forms of discrimination in nursing and health care.

A critical recommendation made by RNAO's Black Nurses Task Force in its 2022 report [*Acknowledging, Addressing and Tackling Anti-Black Racism and Discrimination Within the Nursing Profession*](#) was to collaborate with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and other partners to collect race-based data. RNAO was persistent in its advocacy, and in February 2024, CNO initiated a "Workforce Census" and gathered extensive equity-related data from more than 30,000 nurses. This data collection aims to spark significant changes in the profession by informing and enhancing equitable and inclusive policies, crucial for retaining nurses and ensuring they feel safe and respected.

RNAO's Health Equity In Focus Consortium (Equity Consortium) remains dedicated to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the nursing profession and health system. Composed of leaders from the Black Nurses Task Force (BNTF), the Black Nurses Leading Change Interest Group (BNLC), the Indigenous Nurses and Allies Interest Group (INAIG), and the Rainbow Nursing Interest Group (RNIG), and supported by RNAO's CEO and equity-related program staff, the Equity Consortium has met five times since June 2023 to offer ongoing feedback to RNAO's work and to increase awareness about the effects of systemic racism and discrimination on nurses and patients.

The Equity Consortium developed and submitted a manuscript on advancing EDI to a peer-reviewed journal. It also led a [keynote panel](#) at RNAO's 2023 Annual General Meeting titled "Have you ever been discriminated against? A participatory session for reflection and action". Moderated by RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway, panelists discussed their lived experiences with discrimination and the structural and policy changes needed to create safe spaces for people who provide and access health care.



Above: RNAO's Health Equity In Focus consortium brings together members of the Black Nurses Task Force (BNTF), Black Nurses Leading Change Interest Group (BNLC), Indigenous Nurses and Allies Interest Group (INIAG) and the Rainbow Nursing Interest Group (RNIG) to help address inequities in health care. Those pictured include: RNIG past-president Paul-André Gauthier (top row, left), RNIG president Shelley Evans (first row, third from left), BNLC co-chair Lori Zozzolotto, (third row, left), BNTF co-chair Angela Cooper Brathwaite (third row, second from left), INIAG social media ENO Alicia Gonzalez (third row, right), and BNTF co-chair Corsita Garraway (bottom row, right).

Queen’s Park Day

Building on the momentum from the AGM’s keynote panel, this year’s focus for RNAO’s 24th annual Queen’s Park Day (QPD), held Feb. 29 in Toronto, was the nursing crisis and the experiences of Black nurses. QPD brings together RNAO’s board of directors and 150 assembly of leaders – chapter presidents, interest group chairs, policy and political action network officers, and communications executive network officers – to meet with their local members of provincial parliament (MPP).

To help members better understand and discuss issues related to EDI, members of BNLC, INAIG and RNIG shared insights on their lived experiences with racism and discrimination during a [QPD prep dinner panel](#). The panelists provided evidence-based information and questions for members to take to their MPPs, helping raise awareness both within and beyond RNAO.

The afternoon session during QPD featured a follow-up [panel presentation](#), where executive members from BNLC, INAIG and RNIG shared their experiences and strategies for nurses to advance EDI. One example: John Edwards, RNIG’s executive lead, discussed the “Sharing of Stories” project, which highlights the experiences of queer nurses and the strength of giving voice.

QPD concluded with remarks and a Q&A session with Ontario’s political party leaders and critics, who brought remarks and answered members’ questions related to EDI and other priority topics. With support from RNAO, members will continue to engage in important dialogue about EDI to end all forms of racism and discrimination. Read the [thread of posts on X](#) (formerly Twitter) for an overview of the event.

For more information on RNAO’s ongoing initiatives, partnerships, and opportunities to drive meaningful changes in nursing and health care, visit RNAO’s [In Focus equity health webpages](#).



Above: Victoria Guido, INAIG chair (left), Lori Zozzolto, BNLC co-chair (centre) and John Edwards, RNIG secretary spoke during an afternoon session focused on EDI at RNAO’s QPD.

RNAO adds an Indigenous voice to its board of directors

RNAO marked a new chapter in its work with Indigenous partners by signing a relationship agreement with the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (IPHCC) on May 16. The agreement underscores RNAO's commitment to address Canada's colonial past and advance truth and reconciliation within the nursing profession and the broader health system. Notably, the agreement includes appointing a Knowledge Keeper to the board of directors to integrate Indigenous perspectives into RNAO's governance work.

The partnership will include joint efforts to address Indigenous health priorities and mitigate the adverse effects of colonial practices on the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples. RNAO commits to fostering an environment that respects Indigenous wisdom and teachings, thereby ensuring safe spaces for Indigenous voices, including Indigenous nurses.

The relationship agreement is the latest action of RNAO's decade long effort to partner with provincial and national Indigenous groups as outlined in our dedicated [In Focus web page](#). Eleven Indigenous health and academic organizations have joined RNAO's Best Practice Spotlight Organization® (BPSO®) program. And, in 2022, RNAO published its first Indigenous-focused best practice guideline (BPG), titled [Promoting Smoking Reduction and Cessation with Indigenous Peoples of Reproductive Age and Their Communities](#). The BPG, developed by a panel of Indigenous and non-Indigenous nursing and health experts, offers evidence-based guidance on culturally safe and effective ways for nurses and the circle of care to support smoking reduction and cessation among Indigenous Peoples of reproductive age, their support networks and communities to improve health and wellness.

Top right:

RNAO CEO
Dr. Doris Grinspun
and IPHCC CEO
Caroline Lidstone-
Jones sign the
relationship
agreement
between their
organizations.



Bottom right:

Representatives
from RNAO and
IPHCC attended
the relationship
agreement signing.
They included (from
left to right): INAIG
social media ENO
Alicia Gonzalez;
Knowledge Keeper
Ed Connor; NP and
RNAO President-
Elect Lhamo Dolkar;
Knowledge Keeper
Brett Recollet; Elder
Jimmy Dick; Lidstone-
Jones; Grinspun; and
RNAO President
Dr. Claudette
Holloway (on screen).



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On Sept. 27, 2023, RNAO's home office staff participated in the third-annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation [education day](#). This event deepened our understanding of Indigenous Peoples, their connection to the land, and approaches to reconciliation. The association was honoured to have Grandmother Dorothy Peters share traditional teachings and guide reflections throughout the day. Victoria Guido, RN and chair of the Indigenous Nurses and Allies Interest Group (INAIG) also shared insights on her lived experience and led sessions related to Indigenous traditions and ways of knowing, being and doing.

We continue the journey of learning the truth and working towards healing and reconciliation. RNAO remains dedicated to learning from Knowledge Keepers, Healers, Indigenous BPSOs, INAIG, and other Indigenous partners on addressing the lasting effects of colonization and the legacy of residential schools. We will continue to advocate for the full implementation of the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015 report, especially those concerning health and equity.



Above: RNAO staff attended an education day to mark Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



POLICY AND POLITICAL ACTION

There is no better example of our theme for this year's annual report than the successes we have achieved in nursing through our policy and political action work.

This past year, RNAO celebrated unparalleled success with a game-changing announcement on [RN prescribing](#) and a substantial increase in [educational seats](#).

Gov't answers RNAO's call to expand RN scope of practice to prescribe medications

Toronto
Nov. 6, 2023

People in Ontario will have faster access to care now that RNs can prescribe medications independently, as announced by Health Minister Sylvia Jones in November 2023. This role expansion – [a longstanding RNAO demand since 2012](#) – allows qualified RNs [to prescribe a range of medications](#), including vaccines, contraceptives and smoking cessation aids.



Above: Cyril Lee Turley completed the online certification program at Georgian College and became the first RN in Ontario qualified to prescribe. He says that the expanded scope is a great fit for his practice at Northeastern Manitoulin Family Health Team.



Above: During a February 2024 webinar focused on RN prescribing (which attracted 1,365 registrants – an all-time high), participants and panelists discussed what's next and where RNAO will focus its ongoing advocacy regarding the expanded scope. Panelists (clockwise, from top left) included: Dr. Irmajean Bajnok, former RNAO policy analyst; Susan McNeill, associate director, IABPG; Gina Pittman, co-lead for the RN prescribing university consortium program; Dr. Doris Grinspun, RNAO CEO; Dr. Karima Velji, Ontario's chief nurse and deputy minister; and Sylvia Crawford, executive director and CEO for College of Nurses of Ontario.

Training for this new authority began in January 2024, and the first RN to graduate was RNAO member Cyril Lee Turley of the Northeastern Manitoulin Family Health Team. RNAO is now advocating for the integration of prescribing education into the basic four-year baccalaureate program (BScN) to ensure all future nursing students can prescribe upon graduation. Given that more than 5,000 nursing students graduate with their BScN each year, this will further strengthen people's access to care.



Nurse practitioners (NP) play an instrumental role in keeping people healthy and caring for them when ill. NP scope of practice expansion has improved access to care across all sectors, particularly in primary care. NP expertise in addressing health inequities is second to none.

Right: On Feb. 1, 2024, RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (third from left) was at the provincial government's announcement of \$110 million to support primary care interprofessional teams across Ontario, including NP-led clinics. At the meeting (from left): Anthony Dale, president and CEO, Ontario Hospital Association; Kimberly Moran, CEO, Ontario Medical Association (OMA); Sylvia Jones, deputy premier and minister of health; Dave Smith, Peterborough-Kawartha MPP; Duff Sprague, CEO, Peterborough FHT; Dr. Andrew Park, president, OMA; Dr. Jane Philpott, Dean, Queen's Health Sciences; Dr. Mekalai Kumanan, president, Ontario College of Family Physicians and Sarah Hobbs, CEO, Alliance for Healthier Communities.

RNAO welcomed the Ontario government's [February 2024 announcement](#) of \$110 million in additional funding to support 53 new and 25 expanded interprofessional teams in primary care, including funding NP-led clinics (NPLCs) in communities across Ontario. RNAO has been steadfast in advocating that NPs provide a gateway to improved access – especially crucial given that more than two million Ontarians lack a regular primary care provider.



RNAO successfully achieved the scope of practice of NPs to include [expanded authorization](#) to prescribe controlled substances, announced in November 2023. Our success continued with the announcement in funding for an [additional 121 student NP seats](#) in nursing programs. Funding was announced in 2023 for one [new NPLC in Ottawa](#), and for two in 2024 – [one in Owen Sound and one in Innisfil](#). Additional actions in 2023 included the launching of the [#WeAreNPs](#) public awareness campaign, a new fact sheet for our 2021 [Vision for Tomorrow](#) report, and the [Nursing Career Pathways](#) (2023) report. RNAO's action alert, [Fund nurse practitioners in primary care, premier](#), continues to gather signatures.



Above: At RNAO's annual NP Institute held May 28, 2024, President-Elect and NP Lhamo Dolkar and Dr. Eric Staples, then-chair of NPIG, led discussions on practice scope, research, professional liability protection, and more.

RNAO and its NP Interest Group (NPIG) continue to lead robust professional development and networking opportunities for NPs, including our annual [NP Symposium](#), [NP Institute](#), and [NP Insider](#). During Nursing Week, RNAO held a ["Town Hall" session](#) to hear firsthand the experiences of NPs and to outline the many ways the association champions their essential role in our health system. For more information, check out our [NP In Focus web page](#).

Take Your MPP To Work/Queen's Park on the Road

Members give life to RNAO's advocacy. Our ever popular [Take Your MPP To Work](#) and [Queen's Park on the Road](#) events pair RNAO's executive and members with politicians. Meetings with MPPs in their workplaces give RNs and NPs an important platform to discuss key nursing and health issues and provide a window into their day-to-day practice, the nursing profession and the care they provide to patients and residents. The association's president, president-elect and CEO also have regular meetings with the premier, the minister of health, the minister of long-term care, opposition leaders and health critics. All these interactions build relationships that help shape healthy public policy. The results speak for themselves: Improvements in the profession, better patient care and a healthier province for people who call Ontario home.

Top right:

On May 6, to kick off Nursing Week 2024, RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway (second from left) attended her first of several Take Your MPP To Work events. During this visit to Toronto Metropolitan University, she toured the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing's state-of-the-art nursing simulation lab, joined by (left to right) Health Minister Sylvia Jones, Premier Doug Ford, and RN and MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta.



Bottom right:

On May 8, RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway (left) toured Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) alongside (from left) CAMH VP of Clinical Operations and Chief Nursing Executive Dionne Sinclair, CAMH President and CEO Sarah Downey, Ontario Liberal Party Leader Bonnie Crombie, CAMH Director of Nursing Practice Sherida Chambers, and CAMH advanced practice clinical lead Seharish Jindani.





Left: Leader of Ontario's Green Party, Mike Schreiner (left) met with RNAO members Margaret Boyle Class (second from right) and Carol Maxwell during Queen's Park Day.



Above: On May 10, RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (centre) attended a Take Your MPP To Work visit at Thorncliffe Park Youth Hub with NDP leader Marit Stiles (fourth from left). Pictured (from left to right) are Dr. Catherine Yu, Hamza Shahid, Kathleen Foley, Stiles, Margery Konan, Grinspun, James Callahan, Sukhneet Kahlon, Cynthia Marinelli, Chantel Marshall, Marie-Chantal Ethier and Anne Wojtak.



Above: Ashley O'Rourke, Policy and Political Action Executive Network Officer for Hamilton Chapter, attends a federal pre-budget consultation in Hamilton on behalf of RNAO.

Our collective voice also effects change in presentations before legislative committees, through submissions and letters, and our [Action Alerts](#), one of RNAO's most effective tools to mobilize members and master the will of politicians and policy-makers to tackle issues critical to nursing, health care and health.

Advocacy at the federal level: Medicare and social determinants of health

RNAO's advocacy doesn't end at Queen's Park. We also advocate nationally for a sustainable, accessible and publicly-funded and delivered health-care system (Medicare). In March 2024, RNAO celebrated a historic agreement to start a [national pharmacare program](#), for which RNAO has advocated [for years](#). Bill C-64 sets out a path to universal coverage – initially focused on medicines for contraception and diabetes – and a framework for a comprehensive program for all essential medications from coast to coast to coast.



The [April 2024 fiscal budget](#) included major investments in areas of long-standing RNAO advocacy, such as federal health transfer funding. RNAO remains adamant that any money flowing to Ontario be mandated for not-for-profit delivered services to shore up the nursing workforce, improve access to primary care, and include more funding for mental health supports.



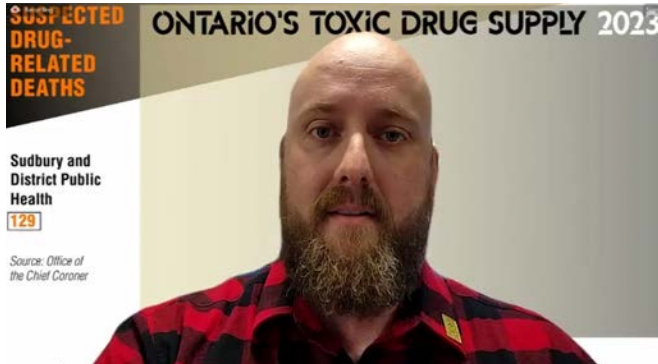
Above:

RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (left) and RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway (right) attended the announcement of the bilateral health agreement between the federal and provincial government on Feb. 9. They are pictured with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The social determinants of health are also central to RNAO's work. Together with our longstanding partners in the housing movement, we [applauded the federal government's housing plan](#) announced in April 2024. We also provided [input to a senate committee](#) on draft legislation intended to address intimate partner violence, with RNAO's CEO addressing the committee in May 2024.

Toxic drug supply

The toxic drug supply is a public health crisis in Ontario that demands the attention of the Ontario government. Each day, an average of 10 people die due to a poisoned drug supply. In 2023, almost 3,800 people died from accidental overdoses. These preventable deaths – and their toll on countless families and communities – have spurred RNAO to even stronger actions to tackle this ongoing crisis. Through [Action Alerts](#), a [media conference held during Nursing Week](#) and a rally on May 28, RNAO has been steadfast in its advocacy for those who need support and compassion, not stigma and disregard. Consistent with RNAO’s approach to healthy public policy, the association implores the government to provide funding for existing supervised consumption services (SCS) sites in Windsor, Sudbury and Timmins, and fund new sites in every other community in Ontario that has expressed a need.



Above: Neil Stephen (left), Sudbury RN and Marie Pollack, a person with lived experience, shared their perspectives on the drug poisoning crisis affecting communities across Ontario during RNAO’s virtual media conference: Toxic Drug Supply: The lived experience of those affected and a call to action.



Above: RNAO members Andrea Keller (left) and Kathy Moreland (centre), RNs and mothers who have both lost their sons to accidental drug overdose, joined RNAO CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun (second from right) and the Friends of SCS Ontario coalition for a rally at Queen’s Park on May 28. The event drew a large crowd of Ontarians with lived experience to call on the provincial government to save lives. Their demands: Provide immediate funding to reopen closed SCS sites in Ontario and expedite approvals for all applications for these services in communities across the province.

Climate

Below:

From left to right:
RNAO President
Dr. Claudette
Holloway, Carolyn
Houlding, Ontario
Climate Emergency
Campaign co-chair,
President-Elect
and NP Lhamo
Dolkar and Josalyn
Radcliffe, co-
chair of Ontario
Nurses for the
Environment
Interest Group
join the march to
end fossil fuels at
Queen's Park on
Sept. 16, 2023.

Spurred to action by Canada's 2023 wildfire season – its most severe ever – RNAO members mobilized calls on the provincial and federal governments to put forth a science-based plan that addresses the climate emergency. Nurses asked everyone to sign [RNAO's Action Alert](#) to demand action. Other advocacy on the climate crisis during the past year has focused on fossil fuels. Although these noxious pollutants are the leading cause of premature mortality in Canada, most Canadians are unaware of their deadly effects. RNAO President Dr. Claudette Holloway and NP and President-Elect Lhamo Dolkar, joined a [march to end fossil fuels](#) at Queen's Park – part of a nationwide action. In one such action, we joined a campaign initiated by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment calling on the prime minister to [ban fossil fuel advertising](#). In October 2023, RNAO urged Prime Minister Trudeau to move ahead with a science-based [emissions cap for the oil and gas sectors](#). RNAO has also worked with a coalition of health and environmental groups calling attention to serious public health harms and unnecessary expensive tax burdens across Ontario posed by [gas-fired electricity expansions](#), when cheaper and cleaner energy sources are available.

And, for the second time, RNAO sent a representative to the global UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) held in Dubai in December 2023.





MEDIA

*When it comes to commenting
on nursing and health issues,
RNAO is a trusted source.*

RNAO's success in giving voice to RNs, NPs and nursing students is evident in the hundreds of media stories over the past year that featured issues important to the profession and to the effective functioning of our health system.

Whether it is our longstanding advocacy for RN prescribing, which became a reality in the fall of 2023, or our persistence in calling for more NPs – especially in primary care – RNAO is an influential change agent for nursing.

RN
prescribing

TORONTO STAR

Ontario's registered nurses are getting new prescribing powers

Nov. 7, 2023



Nov. 8, 2023



On @610CKTB, President @ClaudetteHollow tells host @Steph_Vivier RNAO has been advocating for #RNPrescribing for more than a decade.

"We're also advocating that in nursing curriculms...this (education) will be included going forward."



Primary care team funding



Feb. 1, 2024

And because nurses take a holistic view towards health, we are also champions for the factors that determine overall wellbeing. Our views dot the media landscape on key issues: the need for affordable and accessible housing, strategies to address the drug toxicity crisis, demands for action on the climate emergency, and many more.


These are just a few of the hundreds of stories that made headlines over the past year, featuring members of our executive team and the membership at large.

We amplify our voice through social media channels to connect with larger audiences, spreading our advocacy and reach. Whether addressing policy and political action or creating our evidence-based best practice guidelines (BPG) and promoting our Best Practice Spotlight Organization® Program, RNAO's voice is a force to be reckoned within and beyond Ontario's borders.

NPS



Jan. 18, 2024

 **RNAO**
@RNAO

In a letter to the editor in [@TorontoStar](#), RNAO CEO [@DorisGrinspun](#) says not-for-profit nurse practitioner-led clinics "are ready to open doors to serve Ontarians."

Solutions [@ONgov](#):

- hire more nurses
- fund more [#NP](#)-led clinics

[Full story \(paywalled\): thestar.com/opinion/letter...](#)

Hire more nurses, especially RNs, and green light nurse practitioner-led clinics

'No one wants to spend 20 hours waiting': Canada's doctors say our ERs are in crisis, Jan. 11

Nurses echo what physicians are saying about the state of emergency rooms and the lack of access to primary care. The *Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario* (RNAO) has been vocal about these issues and provided solutions. Faster access to primary care and proper staffing of all health professionals in all sectors will serve Ontarians better and improve satisfaction and health outcomes.

SCS/Harm
reduction

'More lives will be lost' if The Spot closes: RNAO president

The Spot, Sudbury's only sanctioned supervised consumption site, is slated to close at the end of February due to a lack of funding

sudbury.com

Jan. 27, 2024



HUMBER @ NEWS

May 28, 2024

Advocates rally at Queen's Park for safe consumption sites amid the drug crisis

May 28, 2024 | GTA/Local News, Headlines, News

Pharmacare



Feb. 24, 2024



TORONTO'S BREAKING NEWS

Climate action

Claudette Holloway était présente à la marche. Celle-ci a fait un lien entre les réchauffements climatiques et les feux de forêt qui ont affecté la région de Toronto plus tôt cette année. « J'avais des problèmes respiratoires extrêmes, et beaucoup d'autres en ont eu aussi. Et nous avons beaucoup de personnes atteintes de maladies chroniques qui sont encore plus touchées », dit-elle.

Des milliers de personnes marchent pour le climat à Toronto



RADIO-CANADA

Sept. 16, 2023

For-profit care

PROTESTS AGAINST PRIVATIZATION OF HEALTHCARE AT QUEEN'S PARK
Libby Znaimer is now joined by Dr. Claudette Holloway, President of the Registered Nurses Association.
Thousands of protesters made their way to Queen's Park this week to protest against the privatization of healthcare in the province. Dr. Holloway weighs in.



Sept. 26, 2023

Bilateral health agreement



 BRIEFING

Feb. 9, 2024

Feds, Ontario announce \$3.1 billion health care agreement

REPORT ON RESOLUTIONS FROM 2023 AGM

RESOLUTION

EXPAND NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) REGULATORY AUTHORITY UNDER THE VITAL STATISTICS ACT FOR MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH COMPLETION IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Authors: Alanna Coleman and Dr. Eric Staples on behalf of the Nurse Practitioner Interest Group (NPIG)

Conflict of interest: None known

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), in collaboration with NPIG, advocate for expanding NP regulatory authority under the Vital Statistics Act to support medical certificate of death (MCOB) completion.

RESOLUTION

SUPPORT THE INCLUSION OF NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) AUTHORIZATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S "APPLICATION FOR FUNDING HEARING DEVICES" FORM

Authors: Alanna Coleman and Dr. Eric Staples on behalf of the Nurse Practitioner Interest Group (NPIG)

Conflict of interest: None known

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), in collaboration with NPIG, advocate for ministry support for the inclusion of NPs to complete authorization on the "Application for Funding Hearing Devices" form.

RESOLUTION

EXPAND MINISTRY FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE INCLUSION OF ATTENDING NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NP) IN RETIREMENT HOMES AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Authors: Alanna Coleman and Dr. Eric Staples on behalf of the Nurse Practitioner Interest Group (NPIG)

Conflict of interest: None known

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), in collaboration with NPIG, advocate for ministry funding to support the inclusion of attending nurse practitioners in retirement homes and assisted living facilities.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

RNAO continues extensive advocacy of and support for the role of nurse practitioners (NP) across settings and sectors throughout Ontario's health system. This year, RNAO called on the government in the association's [2024 provincial pre-budget submission](#) to:

- increase the number of student-nurse NP seats to yield a total of 7,500 new registrants by 2030
- provide one NP per First Nations community (or more for larger communities)

- double the number of nurse practitioner-led clinics (NPLC) over the next three years
- develop a public funding stream to support the salaries and services of other NP-led models of interprofessional care ensuring no user fees
- fulfil the existing commitment for 75 NP positions in correctional services by providing compensation equivalent, at a minimum, to other sectors of the health system
- continue to fund and deliver one NP per 120 residents until all long-term care (LTC) homes reach this target
- implement and fund NPs as medical directors and most responsible care providers (MRP) in LTC settings
- introduce a public funding stream for NPs to work in independent practice without charging user fees
- introduce a public funding stream to pilot the role of Attending NPs in 15 retirement homes to improve access to care

RNAO also urged the government to expand NP scope of practice to include:

- completion of a Medical Certificate of Death in all circumstances that does not require a Coroner's investigation
- completion of all seven legal forms for mental health services under the Mental Health Act, including Forms 1 and 2
- completion of the Application for Funding Hearing Devices Form under the Ontario Ministry of Health's Adaptive Devices Program
- authorization to order additional forms of energy such as diagnostic tests with contrast such as computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and nuclear imaging such as bone scan and thyroid scans

RESULTS:

RNAO has held robust media engagement to advance funding for NPs. RNAO worked closely with the Council of Ontario Universities to increase seats for RNs and NPs, and celebrated the addition of 150 NP-student seats delivered by the government in November 2023. RNAO's CEO joined Minister Jones to announce \$110 million for 78 new and expanded interprofessional primary care teams, with most including NPs and RNs in their rosters of health professionals. The announcement also included funding for at least three new NPLCs and the expansion of existing ones.

To further advance funding RNAO issued an [Action Alert](#) that has received over 1,800 responses; we also held an NP Town Hall featuring RNAO's executive leaders on May 6, 2024. And, on May 23, RNAO and NPIG hosted its eighth annual [NP Institute](#). [RNAO's NP In Focus web page](#) is a one-stop shop where you can find relevant information profiling RNAO's and NPIG's work with NPs, including policy, media, political action and results.

RESOLUTION

CALL TO ACTION TO “RIGHT-SIZE” CHILDREN’S HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM IN ONTARIO

Authors: Sarah Gallie and Samirah Hussain on behalf of the Pediatric Nurses Interest Group (PedNIG)

Conflict of interest: None known

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO) actively lobby the government to designate funding to scale up and maintain infrastructure and a specialized pediatric workforce in order to right-size the pediatric health-care continuum to meet the ongoing and growing needs of children in Ontario and more broadly across Canada.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

RNAO’s CEO joined forces with pediatric hospital CEOs in advocating at the highest levels of the Ontario government. RNAO’s policy staff met with representatives of the PEDNIG executive to discuss strategies to advance this resolution. The following ask was developed for [RNAO’s 2024 provincial pre-budget submission](#):

Designate sustained funding to right-size pediatric health care in Ontario as follows:

- scale up pediatric-specific infrastructure such as systems, programs, services, equipment, resources and staffing, to increase capacity
- increase integration between pediatric settings across the continuum of care and fostering community partnerships
- build a specialized pediatric workforce through increasing pediatric placement opportunities, sustaining pediatric externship opportunities, and funding pediatric-focused continued learning opportunities

RESULTS:

RNAO celebrated the Ontario government’s 2023 funding increase of \$330 million for pediatric health care. RNAO’s CEO and policy team will continue to work with PEDNIG to further advance this resolution.

RESOLUTION

IMPROVE THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF NURSES AND BUILD NECESSARY CAPACITY TO PREVENT WORKPLACE INJURIES AND PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO THE HEALTH-CARE WORKFORCE

Author: Bahar Karimi on behalf of the Hamilton Chapter

Conflict of interest: None known

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO) advocate to all levels of government for funding for the health sector to improve the working conditions of nurses and create a five-year strategy to require the health sector organizations to build necessary capacity to prevent workplace injuries and provide mental health support to the health-care workforce.

RESOLUTION

GREATER REPRESENTATION OF BLACK NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NP) IN HEALTH-CARE SETTINGS

Author: *Dania Versailles on behalf of the Black Nurses Leading Change Interest Group (BNLC)*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) support the mentoring, recruitment and retention of Black nurse practitioners (NP) to address the persistent inequities and obstacles in accessing culturally safe, inclusive and sensitive health care in Ontario.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that RNAO advocate to set a yearly target of Black registered nurses (RN) admitted into NP programs; and provide funding to attract Black RNs to become NPs and to provide funding for activities to mentor, network and retain them in the profession in collaboration with Ontario's Ministry of Health (MOH), the Council of Ontario University Programs In Nursing (COUPN), and others.

RESOLUTION

ADVOCATE FOR ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION FOR EXISTING HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS

Author: *Dania Versailles on behalf of the Black Nurses Leading Change Interest Group (BNLC)*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) advocate for organizations to incorporate mandatory anti-Black racism curricula – developed by Black Peoples – into continuing education and professional development training for all health professionals in collaboration with Ontario's Ministry of Health (MOH), the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), and others.

RESOLUTION

A CALL TO ACTION TO ADVOCATE FOR THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE FUNDING TO ONTARIO NURSING SCHOOLS FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATING NURSING STUDENTS TO ACQUIRE POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THEIR EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE FOR THEIR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Authors: *Jennifer Waite and Debra Lefebvre*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) advocate to Ontario's Ministry of Health (MOH), to allocate funding to each of the nursing schools approved by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), for the provision of educating nursing students to acquire emotional coping strategies to improve their resilience within their future professional practice.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

In its [2024 provincial pre-budget submission](#), RNAO called on the government to increase funding for expansion of the Best Practice Spotlight Organization® Program. In particular, it called for the development of healthy workplace guidelines and resources for health settings that will improve the health outcomes and the working conditions of nurses.

Additionally, RNAO continues to advocate for the following resources to improve the mental health and wellbeing of nurses:

- implementation of evidence-based recommendations to support and enforce occupational health and safety measures, as well as safe workloads
- implementation of anti-racism, anti-oppression, cultural safety, and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training, orientation and mechanisms for staff at all levels in all workplace and academic settings
- tools and resources to support nurses from marginalized communities as they navigate difficult challenges when dealing with residents, patients or families who display racism or discrimination
- creation of safe spaces for nurses from marginalized communities to open up about the discrimination and oppression they face in professional settings
- EDI committees in all workplaces and academic settings to address racism and discrimination

RESULTS:

RNAO has had robust media engagement on the topic of healthy work environments, EDI, and students' coping strategies and emotional resilience. RNAO events internal and external to the association – including health human resources – include EDI principles and activities. In May 2024 as part of our Nursing Week celebrations, RNAO hosted a healthy workplace webinar.

NSO and RNAO staff work closely on EDI and on students' coping strategies and emotional resilience, with new approaches being launched at AGM. Many organizations are using RNAO's best practice guidelines and EDI resources to promote healthier workplace strategies. A total of 44 [Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowships](#) (ACPF) – aimed at developing leadership for workplace health and safety and deepening EDI policies and practices – were granted to RNs and NPs this past year.

RNAO also renewed our focus on inclusivity, diversity and access issues this year through our political advocacy work, making EDI the main 2024 topic for our longstanding initiative, [OP Day](#) (see our coverage of the day's events in a [related RNJ article](#)). Read additional details in the "Equity, diversion and inclusion" section of this report.

And, the CNO recently started collecting race-based data – a move long-urged by RNAO to better support EDI within Ontario's nursing workforce.

ADVOCATE FOR AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS

Author: *Kathy Moreland*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) advocate to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and its allied partners to create and fund the role of regional trauma informed nurse coordinators to support persons who use substances and to build capacity of all health-care workers, a community of practice and integrated regional networks for those that work with and support persons who use substances.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

RNAO included in its 2024 provincial pre-budget submission, a call – including costing – for the creation and funding of “the role of regional trauma-informed nurse coordinators to support persons who use substances and to build capacity of all health-care workers, including a community of practice and integrated regional networks for those that work with and support persons who use substances.” Other policy and political action in support of harm reduction services include RNAO calls for:

- funding for overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites (SCS) in every community in need across the province
- funding to incorporate drug checking services at all SCS sites
- amendments to the Ontario Drug Formulary to support injectable opioid agonist treatment and safer supply programs
- decriminalization of simple possession of illicit drugs

RESULTS:

RNAO continues to have robust media engagement on the opioid crisis. In November 2023 RNAO issued an [Action Alert](#) that has received over 1,300 responses. In April 2024, we circulated [a petition](#) for funding of supervised consumption service sites. On May 10, 2024, as part of our Nursing Week celebrations, RNAO hosted a [press conference](#) calling on the government to immediately provide funding to re-open the Windsor and Sudbury SCS sites, keep the Timmins SCS site open, expedite approvals for current applications for SCS sites, and fund SCS sites for every community in the province in need. The media conference resulted in numerous media interviews (see our [RNAO in the news web page](#)). RNAO took part in a rally on May 28, 2024, alongside a provincial coalition of organizations seeking funding for SCS sites.

INCREASE NEW NURSE RETENTION AND CAPACITY BY DECREASING BARRIERS THAT EXIST FOR ACCOMMODATED, NORTHERN AND NEW REGISTRANT NURSES

Author: *Megan Kelly*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that because the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is an association for both nurses and nursing students, it is uniquely positioned to lead and support new applications for registration by reviewing the registration process, advocating for change and creating a forum where support and direction can be given to new registrants.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that RNAO champion the issue of building capacity and resilience in accommodated northern and new nursing registrants by lobbying the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) to review current system processes that act as barriers to seamless, accessible, equitable testing and registration.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

This past year, RNAO continued its extensive advocacy for methods to support the retention and recruitment of newly-graduated registered nurses, building on the recommendations in our [2023 *Nursing Career Pathways* report](#). This included actions recommended in our [2024 provincial pre-budget submission](#) to the Ontario ministry of health. RNAO has also engaged with the CNO to investigate and assess their policies and procedures for accommodating newly-graduated nurses (with or without disabilities) to write the NCLEX exam in northern Ontario communities.

RESULTS:

The association continues to advocate for:

- continued fair and equitable pathways for the registration of internationally educated nurses (IEN), while maintaining Canadian standards for a BScN as entry to practice for registered nurses
- increased compensation for nurses working in all roles, domains, and sectors
- expansion and funding of extern programs
- funding and resources for nurses to pursue continuing education, professional development and nursing specialty certifications and time off, flexible work scheduling and compensation when pursuing continuing education
- implementation of evidence-based recommendations to retain and recruit nurses by providing fulltime employment, and mentorship

CALL TO ACTION THAT HEALTH-CARE WORKERS SPECIFICALLY THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH BE AN INDEPENDENT DECISION MAKER

Authors: *Margarita Salvatore, Simon Donato-Woodger, Birgit Uwaila Umaigba, Maria Elisa Maltese and Heidi Bilas*

Conflict of interest: *None known*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) encourage the Ontario Chief Medical Officer to act independently of the government.

2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE

In 2004, the Ontario's Chief Medical of Health (CMOH) position was given greater independence from the government after changes to the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

This means that the CMOH can act and speak freely without government interference, and can report directly to the legislature and public.

The current Chief Medical Office of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, acted independently of the province during the past year: he called on Ontario to decriminalize possession of unregulated drugs for personal use and make available safer supply, and requested that they explore raising the legal drinking age from 19 to 21.

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Advocating for environmental accountability and reporting starts at home. Recognizing this, at the 2022 AGM the membership carried this resolution put forward by the Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group (ONEIG):

BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) commits to ongoing ecological footprint reporting that incorporates environmental sustainability metrics into its publicly available annual report, including an assessment of the organization's waste, carbon footprint, and any applicable social and environmental impacts of its operations and investments.

Here is this year's report.

RNAO ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT REPORT: 2023–24 REPORTING YEAR

Operational efficiencies at home office have led to significant energy savings. The office conserved more than 391,000 kWh between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2023, resulting in a \$15,000 rebate. These savings arise from equipment sensors and monitoring devices installed in 2022.

In our ongoing efforts to reduce waste, RNAO's membership and services department transitioned in 2018 from paper cards and receipts to an electronic version for member registration and renewal.

We continue to implement policies for environmental sustainability. Since 2000, RNAO's CEO banned disposable dishes, bottled water, and milk/cream/coffee capsules from all RNAO events, whether held at home office or at an external venue. RNAO home office maximizes the use of ample natural light from all four directions, thus saving energy. We maintain multiple receptacles for office waste and diverse types of recycling. And, we provide bike racks and electric vehicle chargers onsite.

RNAO's financial policy continues to exclude investments in fossil fuels among the assets in its investment portfolio. Our policies follow the principles of responsible environmental, social and governance investing. The association's CEO and director of finance monitor compliance with the policy by its investment advisors.

Furthermore, RNAO actively promotes the environmental determinants of health through its policy initiatives. In collaboration with ONEIG and several civil society coalitions, we continue to advocate for environmentally sustainable practices as detailed in other sections of this report.

BOARD COMMITTEES 2023-2024

BYLAWS

Sonia Chin, Board Representative and Chair
Stephanie Pialis, Student Representative, ex officio
Marianne Cochrane, Parliamentarian, ex officio
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Resource Staff
Chevonne Cordle, Board Affairs Coordinator, Resource Staff

EDITORIAL ADVISORY

NP Lhamo Dolkar, President-Elect and Chair
Sonia Chin, Board Representative
Katie Hurst, Board Representative
Chad Johnson, RNAO Member
Laryssa Vares, RNAO Member
Emily Camillo, Student Member (ending in March 2024)
Harriet Kim, Student Member (starting in April 2024)
Joanne Laucius, Journalist
Jane Sims, Journalist
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, ex officio
Marion Zych, Director of Communications, Resource Staff
Victoria Alarcon, Communications Officer/Writer, Resource Staff

EXECUTIVE

Dr. Claudette Holloway, President and Chair
NP Lhamo Dolkar, President-Elect
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer
Chevonne Cordle, Board Affairs Coordinator, Resource Staff

INTEREST GROUPS

Edward Cruz, Co-chair
Katie Hurst, Co-chair
Chair of each provincial Interest Group, associated Interest Group, and affiliated Group (or the Chair's designate)
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, ex officio
Morgan Hoffarth, Director, Membership and Services, Resource Staff
Carrie Edwards, Senior Membership and Services Coordinator, Resource Staff

LEGAL ASISTANCE PROGRAM (LAP)

Kathleen Pikaart, Board Representative and Chair
NP Lhamo Dolkar, President-Elect
Maxine Lesage, Board Representative
Julia Bement, RNAO Member
Janet Hunt, RNAO Member
Catherine Olsiak, Nurse Lawyer, non-voting
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, ex officio
Wang Ya, Director, Finance & Administration, Resource Staff
Mara Haase, LAP Administrator, Resource Staff

MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION AWARDS

Rachel Elliott, Board Representative and Chair
Piroska Bata, Board Representative
Louise Gilbert, RNAO Member
Maria Rugg, RNAO Member
Aya Tagami, RNAO Member
Arpita Roy, Student Member
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, ex officio
Morgan Hoffarth, Director, Membership and Services, Resource Staff
Leanne McCartney, Project Coordinator, Membership and Services, Resource Staff

PROVINCIAL NOMINATIONS

Dr. Angela Cooper Brathwaite, Past-President and Chair
Jennifer Flood, Assembly of Leaders Member
Evan Gammon, RNAO Member
Marie Lewis, RNAO Member
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Resource Staff
Chevonne Cordle, Board Affairs Coordinator, Resource Staff

PROVINCIAL RESOLUTIONS

Selasie Ametorwo, Member of the Assembly of Leaders and Chair
Marjan Kasirlou, RNAO Member
Eric Staples, Assembly Member
Marianne Cochrane, Parliamentarian, ex officio
Dr. Claudette Holloway, President, ex officio
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Resource Staff
Chevonne Cordle, Board Affairs Coordinator, Resource Staff

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

RNAO is represented on over 70 committees, boards and working groups, locally, provincially and nationally.

ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE REPORTS

BYLAWS

The bylaws committee, a standing committee of the board of directors (BOD), is tasked annually with reviewing the association's bylaws, considering recommendations for changes, and proposing revisions aligned with RNAO's mission, values and ENDS. This year, the committee concluded their review without proposing any amendments.

I would like to thank the committee members for their participation and home office staff for their support.

*Sonia Chin, RN, BA, BScN, MEd
Chair*

EDITORIAL ADVISORY

The editorial advisory committee includes RNAO BOD members, general nursing members, a nursing student, and two journalists. This committee works in collaboration with the communications team to provide input on the association's award-winning online publication, *RNJ*. This past year, the committee provided insightful feedback on several *RNJ* Issues. Notable topics included the Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship program, #HeyNurse social media campaign, and discussions on nursing mentorship. The winter 2024 issue highlighted RN prescribing and the 24th annual Queen's Park Day, and profiled a politically active nurse. Additionally, a special issue released in fall 2023 celebrated 20 years of Best Practice Spotlight Organizations® (BPSO®), with articles on the program's expansion in Canada and globally, growth of the champions training program, and strength of BPSOs across all sectors and settings – including health systems of care such as Ontario Health Teams.

The committee's feedback has been invaluable, ensuring that the priorities and initiatives of the association are well-reflected in each issue. We thank all committee members and editorial team for their dedication and constructive perspectives.

*Lhamo Dolkar, RN(EC), CCN, MSc,
NP-PHC
President-Elect and chair*

EXECUTIVE

RNAO's BOD executive committee – president, president-elect, and chief executive officer – ensures governance best practices for the association and its committees.

The committee convened 13 times, addressing critical issues such as leadership succession planning, RNAO's financial investments, and various advocacy and outreach efforts. Other areas addressed included equity, diversity, and inclusion, supporting internationally educated nurses, addressing wage inequity between health sectors, and enhancing nursing practice and wellbeing.

The committee is pleased to report another year of robust financial results, with the association's external auditor, KPMG, presenting an unqualified opinion to the board of directors at the fiscal year-end on Oct. 31, 2023.

We thank the BOD, Assembly of Leaders, staff, and members for our collective success.

*Claudette Holloway, RN, BScN, MSN,
DHA, CHE
President and chair*

LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LAP)

The Legal Assistance Program committee meets regularly to consider and approve non-routine requests for assistance under the program. All files are presented anonymously to protect privacy. The committee also monitors trends and makes recommendations to RNAO's BOD. Committee representatives are pleased to speak on matters of interest to chapters, regions without a chapter, and interest groups. We welcome feedback about trends observed in the profession.

Since its inception, LAP has provided support to over 5,400 RNs and NPs facing a professional and/or employment challenge, including complaints and reports to the College of Nurses of Ontario, termination from employment including wrongful and constructive dismissal, employment contract review, and other employment related advice. The program also offers employment relations counselling, educational presentations at local and regional events, webinars, and articles in *RNJ* on legal issues relevant to nursing practice such as documentation, privacy and confidentiality, independent practice and working with unregulated care providers. This year, LAP sponsored nine legal education webinars, attracting more than 1,000 registrants.

We thank committee members and staff for their diligent work and support.

*Kathleen Pikaart, RN, BSc (Hon), BScN
Chair*

INTEREST GROUPS

The Interest Groups committee met twice in the past year and also held a virtual open mic night.

During the Nov. 17, 2023 meeting the committee heard updates from RNAO home office, discussed the availability and access to an Interest Group toolkit, and held presentations from the Retired Nurses' Interest Group, the Diabetes Nurses Interest Group, and a BOD-led discussion on collaboration.

On Feb. 13, 2024, five interest groups participated in an "IG Open Mic" event. Participants shared successes including connections to students and communications work, as well as challenges in succession planning and executive network officer (ENO) recruitment. The ENOs provided updates and shared concerns regarding the recognition of retired members by the College of Nurses of Ontario.

The Feb. 29 in-person meeting began with an ice breaker to acquaint group chairs and facilitate connection. Home office gave updates on IG file storage, tutorials, as well as resources for ENOs to engage members. We heard exciting presentations from the Staff Nurse Interest Group and the International Nursing Interest Group. A lively discussion on potential collaborations between interest groups and RNAO chapters followed an interactive presentation titled "How Do We Lead?"

We are thankful to all committee members and staff for their involvement and collaborative spirit throughout the year.

*Katie Hurst, RN, BScN
Edward Cruz, RN, PhD
Co-chairs*

MEMBER RECOGNITION AWARDS

Each year, RNAO recognizes individuals and groups that make significant contributions to the association's mandate of speaking out for nursing and speaking out for health. This committee provides oversight and support for the RNAO Recognition Award selection process in collaboration with home office.

The committee was excited to oversee nominations for a new award category, "Leadership in Health Equity," developed in collaboration with RNAO's Health Equity In Focus Consortium.

Using a blind nomination method, the committee reviewed 34 nominations across 14 award categories, highlighting excellence in clinical practice, policy, education, research and administration. These prestigious awards will be presented during RNAO's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2024.

I am grateful to the committee members for their dedication and effort in judging the submissions and to the home office staff for streamlining the processes and enhancing the efficiency of the judging process. We are very appreciative of the exceptional support we receive.

*Rachel Elliott, RN, BScN, MScN,
PhD candidate
Chair*

PROVINCIAL RESOLUTIONS

The Provincial Resolutions committee, comprising of general members, the president, CEO, and a parliamentarian, reviewed 13 member resolutions submitted by the Jan. 31, 2024, deadline. The committee convened three times. After reviewing the criteria for assessing and strengthening resolutions, the committee decided to bring forward 12 to the upcoming AGM, with one resolution not being carried forward.

Members are reminded that they can submit resolutions throughout the year up to the deadline, with early submissions allowing the committee more time to provide feedback and help submitters prepare their resolutions more thoroughly. Resolutions submitted as new business items immediately before the start of the AGM will not be accepted per RNAO Policy 6.07(5). The board of directors can submit resolutions up to the date of the AGM.

I thank all members for their well-prepared and thorough resolutions and extend my gratitude to the committee members and home office staff for their hard work and dedication.

*Selasie Ametorwo, RN, BScN, BSc
Chair*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024



Members of RNAO's 2023-2024 board of directors. From left to right: Region 8 representative Kathleen Pikaart, Region 1 representative Rachel Elliott, Region 2 representative Joseph Lawson, Region 6 representative Piroska Bata, Region 5 representative Lori Webel-Edgar, NP and President-Elect Lhamo Dolkar, President Dr. Claudette Holloway, CEO Dr. Doris Grinspun, Region 7 representative Sonia Chin, Region 12 representative Sue LeBeau, Region 4 representative Michelle Heyer, Region 9 representative Debra Lefebvre, Region 11 representative Maxine Lesage and Region 10 representative Ellen Shipman. Not pictured: Interest group representative Katie Hurst and student representative Stephanie Pialis.

President

Dr. Claudette Holloway, RN, BScN, MSN, DHA, CHE

President-Elect

NP Lhamo Dolkar, RN(EC), MN, CCN

Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Doris Grinspun, RN, BScN, MSN, PhD,
LLD(hon), Dr(hc), DHC, DHC, FAAN, FCAN, O.ONT

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Region 1	Rachel Elliott
Region 2	Joseph Lawson
Region 3	Vacant
Region 4	Michelle Heyer
Region 5	Lori Webel-Edgar (until Jan. 30, 2024)
Region 6	Piroska Bata
Region 7	Sonia Chin
Region 8	Kathleen Pikaart
Region 9	Debra Lefebvre
Region 10	Ellen Shipman
Region 11	Maxine Lesage
Region 12	Sue Lebeau

INTEREST GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Katie Hurst
Edward Cruz (as of Nov. 17, 2023)

OTHER MEMBERS

Public
representative Vacant
Student
representative Stephanie Pialis

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June 2024