



Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

Anne Coghlan, RN, MScN
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
College of Nurses of Ontario
101 Davenport Road
Toronto, ON M5R 3P1

May 23, 2017

RE: RNAO feedback on practice support services

Dear Anne,

I am writing in response to the letter from Nancy Peroff-Johnston, Manager of Practice Standards, regarding our concerns over the changes to the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) practice support services. Ms. Peroff-Johnston's letter was vague and did not provide any assurance that nurses will receive adequate practice support in the near future. For RNAO, this is a critical issue that cannot be taken lightly and must be addressed as soon as possible.

Since the closure of the CNO practice support line, RNAO has received a large volume of practice-related calls from members and non-members. While we take pride in supporting nurses, we are not the regulatory body that creates – and as such must assist in interpreting – practice standards.

The inquiries we have received from nurses regarding their practice are often quite serious and time sensitive. For example, a nurse phoned recently seeking information on the RN role in medical assistance in dying (MAID). The nurse, having read the CNO document “Guidance on nurses’ roles in MAID”, was seeking more information and clarification on her role in assisting a nurse practitioner with the procedure. She could not wait for CNO’s three business day timeline to respond. The member was in need of immediate answers to help support her practice, as she was seeing the client within the next 2 days over the weekend. As you know, nurses most often receive patient care plans the day of their scheduled shift. A three day wait period for answers to a practice related question is, in RNAO’s view, an unacceptable timeframe that will have an impact on safe nursing practice and patient health outcomes.

In addition, practice support needs to include meaningful two-way dialogue in order to assist nurses in interpreting practice standards in the interest of public safety. Practice standards can be complex, and nurses often require explanation and clarification.

Your attention to these service gaps is urgently required. In the meantime, as you continue to review your practice support program, I would urge you to reintroduce the practice support line until a new plan has been put in place.

Anne, we would very much appreciate if you could let us know what the anticipated timelines are for your review of the Practice Support program. This will allow us to know how long we may continue to receive an increased volume in calls, and how long nurses in Ontario will have to wait for appropriate practice support from its regulatory body.

RNAO urges the CNO to seriously consider our feedback and reconsider continuing to provide this very important service to nurses and the public we serve.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Doris Grinspun", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT
Chief Executive Officer, RNAO

CC: CNO Council
RNAO Board of Directors