Resolution # 4

**Mandatory Standardized Nurses Uniform**

Submitted by: Chantal Backman and Andrea Jewell of Region 10

Disclaimer: no known conflict of interest

**WHEREAS** variances of uniform styles and colour worn by healthcare providers make it difficult for patients, family, visitors as well as team members to identify the nurse; and

**WHEREAS** without an identifying feature nurses look exactly like all the other staff who wear uniforms; and

**WHEREAS** a correlation has been identified between a patient’s satisfaction with their hospital stay and the ability to recognize their nurse;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that RNAO develop guidelines to improve visibility, identification and professional appearance of nurses; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that RNAO work with the Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA) and other nursing unions to entice nurses to wear a standardized uniform in order to help our patients better distinguish who is providing their care.
Mandatory Standardized Nurses Uniform

BACKGROUND

Patients and their families have identified that the confusion of not knowing who their nurse is can add to their distress during a hospital stay, and that contentment with their nursing care has been identified as the main factor influencing patient satisfaction.\(^1\)\(^2\) Patients’ needs are simple: they want to know who is in charge of their care and how to identify this person.\(^1\) If nurses wear a distinct uniform, it is easier and less confusing for patients and their families to know who is a nurse.\(^3\)\(^4\)

In January 2012, Nova Scotia became the first province in Canada to implement a standardized uniform for nurses. A provincial survey showed that 75% of respondents felt that it is important to clearly identify a nurse and other healthcare providers and 84% felt that a standardized uniform will help to do this.\(^5\)

It is interesting that the issue of nursing uniforms has become a contentious one over the years. The history of nursing uniforms dates back to the time of Florence Nightingale, when they were worn with pride and served as a beacon to wounded soldiers letting them know that the person approaching their bedside was someone who would help ease their pain.

The idea of a standardized uniform is not a new one and professions such as the police and the fire service are integrally connected to the wearing of a uniform. In both these services, the wearing of a uniform has served as a point of pride to those brave men and women who have won the right to wear them. The same should hold true of the nursing profession; not everyone has earned the right to call themselves a nurse and those that do should be proud to wear a uniform as a symbol of their qualifications.

Most importantly, patients should not have to question who is approaching their bedside; the wearing of a standardized uniform would symbolize the professionalism of the nursing profession and assure patients that the person approaching their bedside is a nurse.

References