



Members propel RNAO forward as a social movement

YOU MAY NOTICE THE NAME OF MY column has changed from *CEO Dispatch* to *Conversations with members*. As you read on, you will begin to understand the thinking behind this change, and hopefully you will become as fond of this new title as I am.

Recent developments at RNAO are behind this title change. When I met with staff and our board of directors to discuss specifics for this year's annual general meeting (AGM), I began to take note of some developments in 2018 that I have not seen in previous years. One example: we had 187 consultation representatives register for this year's event. In the end, despite life's hurdles and less-than-desirable weather, a total of 149 consultation representatives participated on April 20, which marks a 15 per cent increase from last year and an unprecedented number for RNAO. We also had 13 resolutions approved for discussion at the AGM, which is the same number of resolutions as the last two years combined (see page 13 for our AGM coverage).

Our director of membership, Daniel Lau, also shared with me that for the past few months, Carrie Edwards, senior membership and services co-ordinator, and Patricia Hogg, project co-ordinator, have received more requests than ever before to notify members that their interest group and/or chapter is hosting a local or specialty event.

This increased involvement represents a tipping point for RNAO. We have more and more members joining, and more and more members who are actively engaging in activities. Comments like "...it's difficult to move this chapter" or "I don't have an executive," are behind us, and

"I AM INSPIRED BY POWERED MEMBERS WHO ARE IN-TURN POWERING RNAO AS A WHOLE, PROPELLING OUR ASSOCIATION FORWARD LIKE NEVER BEFORE."

this is thanks to an activist board, an energetic assembly, and 41,130 members who own RNAO and propel it forward.

I witness this vibrancy every time I have the privilege of visiting members. In particular, the enthusiasm was palpable during this spring's Nursing Week visits to Humber River Hospital, Trillium Health Care, and SickKids. The positive buzz from clinicians and managers has reinforced for me that we need to write a second book together (our first was released in May, see page 11) that focuses on RNAO as a social movement that powers nurses to improve health for all.

As we continue to move this forward, we must remember there is one caveat with this type of social movement. It needs to be about something

bigger than any of us. It needs to be about members and the people they serve.

RNAO already attracts so much attention from nurses, politicians, the public and the media. This is because we take on difficult issues that others may shy away from: minimum wage and social assistance; care

more power as an association, we need to keep in mind the end goal. This is not about building power at RNAO for the sake of RNAO. This is about building power for the sake of the people we serve. And, with that power comes the opportunity for change that makes a difference for the health of people, the health care Ontarians receive, and the health of nurses.

We are building a social movement that can be overwhelming at times because it can feel like it takes on a life of its own. And that's okay. RNAO members are driven when it comes to tough and sometimes controversial issues. The theme for this year's AGM was Powering nursing to advance health. And I am inspired by powered members who are in-turn powering RNAO as a whole, propelling our association forward like never before.

This brings me back to the name change for my column. To fully power members, we must continue to engage in courageous conversations about policy change and gutsy advocacy that matters. These "conversations" are fuel for our work going forward. Let me know what you think. Email me at dgrinspun@RNAO.ca **RN**

DORIS GRINSPUN, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD (HON), DR(HC), O.ONT, IS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF RNAO.

Follow me on Twitter
[@DorisGrinspun](https://twitter.com/DorisGrinspun)