My First Queen’s Park Experience

By: Alicia Cooper, Policy and Political Action Officer RNAO Kinston Chapter

On Feb 2nd to 4th, I (Alicia Cooper) and our Chapter President, Monica Prudil, attended the RNAO’s 12th Annual Day at Queen’s Park, a 3 day conference in Toronto. It was my first time attending this RNAO conference, and what a great experience! It was very uplifting to hear from the RNAO executives and all of the work the RNAO is doing in support of the nursing profession in Ontario. As a newer nurse it was refreshing to speak with nurses from across the province, hearing their experiences and perspectives on nursing issues occurring in their own regions. I have found it is easy, when working full time in a large hospital, to become focused only on your own working conditions. It was comforting to hear that we are not the only region dealing with huge challenges and that we have support and movement from the RNAO to improve conditions.

I learned about a great document, “Creating Vibrant Communities: RNAO’s Challenge to Ontario Political Parties”, and encourage everyone to take a few minutes to explore it on the RNAO website. It outlines nursing issues in Ontario and policies the RNAO hopes that our Ontario political parties will adopt in their platform for the election later this year.

The three days we spent in Toronto were quite busy! The first evening we dividing into teams of 5 to 6 RNs and discussed the topics we would be focusing on the following day with our MPPs. The second day was spent at Queen’s Park meeting with MPPs to hear and discuss their party’s stance on the issues we brought to the table. Overall, the approximately 150 RNs who attended the conference met with 56 MPPs and their senior staff. That is a huge number and really allowed our nursing voice to be heard! Among the many emerging issues in nursing, several we discussed included: increasing the number of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, bringing the Ontario RN to population ratio in line with the rest of Canada, investment in not-for-profit home care services, and creating rural and northern nursing opportunities.

We also heard speeches and had a Q&A period with several politicians: Mr. Tim Hudak, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party; Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health & Long-Term Care; and Ms. Andrea Horwath, Leader, New Democratic Party. Our last day was spent in an assembly meeting, open discussion with other attendees, as well as, some very interesting presentations on harm reduction models such as supervised injection sites, and a presentation on Nurse Practitioner-Led clinics. It was a really great experience and I would encourage anyone to attend. I will definitely be there next year!
Speakers Panel

On January 26th, 2011 a Speakers Panel was held for nursing students at Queen’s University. A small, but eager crowd came out, despite the wet weather, to listen to our speakers and ask questions. RN’s from Kingston Chapter executive representing different areas in acute care nursing spoke: Alicia Cooper (Emergency); Ashley Storring (Critical Care); Megan Herron (Maternity, Labour and Delivery); Kate Farrell (Medicine); and Monica Prudil (Medicine).

We also had two very special speakers. Angela Tessier, Nurse Continence Advisor for KGH, spoke about her current role and her past roles in the colposcopy clinic and educating gynecology/gyne-oncology patients. Jennifer O’Neil, Nursing Education Coordinator for HDH shared her current role and her past work in pharmaceutical sales and diabetes education. Both speakers gave a sense of an evolving nursing field.

The key messages from the speakers included: that nursing is a broad career choice, to explore your options; to continue learning, that what you start out doing may not be what you love; and to find your niche. Speakers also encouraged the students to find a mentor that they could talk to about their challenges and share their triumphs with after graduation.

Following the speakers, our students were so eager to ask questions that we were there until closing! The questions mostly revolved around consolidation, working options after graduation, and information about furthering their education. Many walked away with phone numbers and email addresses of the speakers so that they could have more questions answered at a later date.

Regional representative needed for The Nursing Leadership Network of Ontario Board (NLN).

- NLN is an interest group of the RNAO
- The NLN.ON today represents more than 1000 leaders in health care
- Two year term beginning April 1st

NLN.ON is working to:
• Advocate for nurse leaders at all levels
• Consult with our colleagues in other health care sectors
• Encourage leadership development
• Profile and celebrate nurse leaders and mentors
• Provide a forum for discussion and debate.

More information about NLN can be found on :http://www.nln.on.ca/

Workplace Liaisons Needed

As nurses, we are a vital part of the health care system. The Workplace Liaison Program is a way to give back to yourself, your profession and connect with colleagues. A Workplace Liaison acts as a representative of the RNAO in their workplace by providing information about chapter activities and membership, and acts as a link in communicating feedback from the workplace to the RNAO. The program is aimed to connect nurses and is meant to be a role that is adaptable and flexible to you individual situation and your unique workplace. Currently we are in need of workplace liaisons for all institutions in our chapter area. If interested please contact Julie at vpresident@rnaokingston.org

A few members enjoying the winter walk held in January.
RNAO is holding its 86th Annual General Meeting in Toronto April 7-9. Speeches will be made from President David McNeil and Executive Director Doris Grinspun. This year's voting delegates for the Kingston Chapter include: Monica Prudil, Patrick Tang, Kate Farrell and Ashley Storring who will vote on resolutions from the floor.

If you wish to attend, please register at www.rnao.org.

The Kingston Chapter Executive is pleased to once again take part in The RNAO’s Annual Take Your MPP To Work Day held each year during National Nursing Week. On Friday May 13, The Honourable John Gerretsen, Member of Provincial Parliament for Kingston and the Islands will be joining members of the Kingston Chapter Executive at Hotel Dieu Hospital. Stop by our RNAO booth during nursing week at Kingston General Hospital.

A Chapter Meeting is scheduled for May 19th, 2011 at 1900. Refreshments and snacks will be provided. If you have any questions, would like to RSVP or any topic you would like to add to the agenda please contact Ashley Storring at communications@rnaokingston.org

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Contact Information

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Celebrate being a nurse during nurses week May 9th to 15th, 2011!

``When I think about all the patients and their loved ones that I have worked with over the years, I know most of them don’t remember me nor I them. But I do know that I gave a little piece of myself to each of them and they to me and those threads make up the beautiful tapestry in my mind that is my career in nursing.`` ~Donna Wilk Cardillo, A Daybook for Beginning Nurses

New Website Launching!

Thanks to some hard work from people at the RNAO office in Toronto, we’ve now got more of a website than we’ve had in the past. We’ll be using this new site to post copies of these newsletters, announce events, and post other links and information we think you’ll find interesting. New features will be added as available. Visit it at http://www.rnaokingston.org and let us know what you think!