



periOperative Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
Registered Nurse First Assistant

Report to ORNAO Board
MAY 2ND, 2009

Current Executive

Chair, Tom Blunt
Past Chair and MOHLTC Liaison, Grace Groetzsch
Secretary – Jane Radey
Treasurer – Jacquie Jennings
Membership – Chris Downey
Trillium Meeting Coordinator – David Melmer
ORNAO Liaison – Anita Esson
RNAO Liaison – Gabriella Cremonese

After 8 years the Chair of the ORNAO RNFA Interest Group has changed. Grace Groetzsch passed the chair to Tom Blunt, an RNFA currently working at Hamilton Health Sciences. Grace has become the Past Chair and continues as liaison with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care with the objective of ensuring funding for RNFA positions.

There are currently 86 fully educated RNFAs in Ontario of which 80 are available to work. We have had 2 retirements this past year. Due to reduction in MOHLTC funding, 2 positions have been lost in Sault Saint Marie, with several other positions under threat. Two new positions were created at Hamilton Health Sciences. These two new positions will be in cardiac and begin sometime in May of 2009. Currently 39 RNFAs are working either full or part-time.

RNFA funding for Round 1 hospitals finished on March 31, 2009. Funding continues for Round 2 hospitals until March 31, 2010. In January 2009, the Nursing Secretariat's office hired a consultant, Bobbie Carefoote, to evaluate the RNFA funding initiative. The evaluation tool was created in January 2009 and sent to all hospitals involved in the RNFA funding initiative in February 2009. The RNFA Interest Group participated in a focus group with Ms. Carefoote on March 4, 2009 in lieu of a meeting. The report was to be completed by March 31, 2009, but is still pending.

Early in April, word was received that some RNFAs from Round 1 hospitals were losing their RNFA positions and being replaced with Physician Assistants. Emails were sent to a variety of parties, including the Nursing Secretariat's office, RNAO and ONA. Within 24 hours, word was received that funding was to be extended

for Round 1 hospitals (20.9 FTE). Unfortunately that funding has been decreased from 50% of a RNFA's salary to 35%. This has meant that 2 RNFAs for sure have lost their positions as RNFAs, and another 4 – 6 are under threat.

The ORNAO RNFA Interest Group has been working with RNAO to prevent the loss of RNFA positions to Physician Assistants, who are unregulated health care workers. RNAO has agreed to strike a task force, in which our group will participate, order to deal with the introduction of physician assistants.

Mohawk College/McMaster University started an RNFA program in the fall of 2008. Six students should be graduating in 2009.

The ORNAO RNFA website www.rnfa-ontario.ca continues to be an excellent resource for RNFAs and those interested in the role in Ontario, Canada and abroad. It is updated and maintained on a regular basis.

The ORNAO RNFA Interest Group continues to be an associate interest group of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario and had an exhibit displayed at the RNAO AGM in April 2009.

The group continues to communicate predominantly via email with bimonthly meetings held at Trillium Health Centre, Mississauga, Ontario. Teleconferencing (courtesy of Trillium Health Centre) has been available to those not able to physically attend the RNFA Interest Group meetings.

The group continues to sell RNFA pins and lanyards to generate some income to help support the operational costs of the group and website.

Respectfully submitted by
Thomas Blunt RN CPN(C), RNFA