



Check against delivery

Greetings to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's 2013 AGM, Thursday, April 11th Barb Mildon, President of CNA

Good evening, and what a pleasure to be here with you tonight and to feel the energy and excitement in this room! As a proud member of RNAO and president of CNA, I am here to extend CNA's congratulations and best wishes to RNAO president Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, CEO Doris Grinspun and to each of you — RNAO directors, members and stakeholders — as you open this 88th RNAO annual general meeting.

What an inspiring theme you have chosen for this 2013 AGM: "Visionary Leadership: Charting a Course for the Future of Nursing." RNAO members have a long history of exercising visionary leadership to chart a course for the future of nursing. Indeed, since RNAO began in 1925, 11 RNAO members have proudly served as CNA presidents, and the 12th, Dr. Karima Velji, is in the wings to do so in June 2014 and is here with us tonight.

The invitation you give to CNA to bring greetings at each RNAO AGM signifies the unity and collaboration between CNA and RNAO on key issues for nursing and health in Ontario and Canada. This unity and collaboration between CNA and RNAO enable us to speak with one professional voice and thus (to borrow from this year's national nursing week theme) to be "a leading force for change."

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has also brought greetings tonight. So we are seeing unity and cohesion in the nursing profession at the provincial, national and international levels, because, of course, membership in RNAO automatically means membership in CNA and therefore also in the International Council of Nurses. RNAO had a special milestone this year when it was accredited by the International Council of Nurses as an International Classification for Nursing Practice Research and Development Centre. This international recognition represents a significant achievement and underscores the seamless continuum of the professional voice of nursing at the provincial, national and international levels. Congratulations!

And I could not mention ICN tonight without taking just a moment to remind you that immediate CNA past president and RNAO past president, Dr. Judith Shamian, is a candidate for ICN president at the upcoming May election. Judith, you know you have my vote on behalf of Canada's registered nurses, and I am sure I speak for all here tonight in wishing you success!

Bringing the voice of professional nursing to influence health-system design and policy is fundamental to the work of CNA and RNAO. Let me share a couple of accomplishments this past year.

Many of you are familiar with the Council of the Federation, which is composed of each of our provincial and territorial premiers. CNA was invited by the council to join the health-care innovation working group. In turn, CNA invited RNAO to share its vast experience in developing, implementing and evaluating clinical practice guidelines. The Council of the Federation then featured RNAO's *Assessment and Management of Foot Ulcers for People with Diabetes* guideline as a model of provincial innovation that can be transformed into a national solution. What a perfect illustration of the power of unity and collaboration at the provincial and national levels!

Another illustration of the power of unity and collaboration between CNA and the jurisdictions was CNA's annual Parliament Hill Lobby Day last November, in which CNA's board of directors — including RNAO's

president and CEO — participated. We used the lobby day to advance the recommendations of CNA's National Expert Commission on the health of our nation and the future of our health system, and I want to acknowledge and thank RNAO for its significant contribution to the work of the Commission. In our dialogue with federal politicians we emphasized the far-reaching effects that federal laws, public policies and programs have on the well-being of Canadians — a recommendation of our Commission. From environment and transport to employment and immigration — health is everywhere; therefore, health must be in all policies. We also urged politicians to agree on five key health outcomes and to commit to ensuring that Canada ranks in the top five countries in the world in those outcomes by 2017, which marks Canada's sesquicentennial — our 150th birthday.

As I look out at all of you I see a strong and unified membership. Membership is the fuel that enables nursing to chart a course for its future. Membership provides the leadership, the knowledge, the inspiration, the credibility and the resources to achieve that future. It is the power of membership that brings our politicians and other dignitaries here tonight.

Thank you for making the decision to be a member of RNAO and thus CNA and ICN. That decision in itself makes each of you an inspirational leader. And thank you for your support to CNA. I recall with pride and appreciation the extensive discussions in 2006-2007 that reaffirmed RNAO's commitment to working with CNA to improve the health of our society and the strength of our profession. This unity and collaboration means a louder, stronger, more powerful voice for our profession and makes nursing a leading force for change. Thank you and good night!