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Network Update #11 - Oct 26, 2010

Update on Moving Forward

As is evident in recent articles in the *Canadian Nurse* and dialogue across BC nursing organizations, we are in a time of fast-paced change. So much has happened since our first province-wide meeting in May, and so much remains to be done. We have had the benefit of expert legal advice, as well as historical and organizational consultation, and our Interim Board has become highly conversant with the intricacies of organizational politics during a time of dynamic development. We look forward to continued collaborative discussions with CRNBC and CNA about future organizational relationships and strategic options. Beyond the volunteer time of Board members, this work is being supported in part by the one-time funding commitment made by CRNBC. This funding is intended to support a portion of the organizational development work we are currently doing. Since the terms of that funding are limited by agreement, we continue to do the rest of this work on the basis of volunteer time, in-kind consultations, and some truly generous donations from nurses and nursing groups. For example, some expenses, such as Meeting costs for our Board, are not covered by the CRNBC funding agreement, nor is funding to send representatives to meetings. For example, our Co-Chairs – Rob Calnan and Susan Duncan – have been invited to be observers at CNA Board meetings on our behalf. Because the issue of CRNBC's withdrawal and possible options to address this are being considered at the CNA Board table, it is essential that we have a strong presence there. With this in mind we are now asking for your help. Should any of our generous supporters feel so inclined or able to contribute (e.g. Air Miles come to mind☺) don't hesitate to let us know! The work is important, and we will find ways to continue to do it, despite our embryonic status and limited resources. And the support we have already received speaks volumes to the commitment and enthusiasm with which nurses around BC are helping us move forward in this process.

Policy Work

As you can imagine, despite the eagerness of the Interim Board members to dive into policy work on behalf of nursing (which is what motivated all of us to volunteer for this work), it has been frustrating to have to put most of that on hold while we wrestle with the organizational and legal complexities associated with creating exactly the right platform for an Association that will not only meet our immediate needs but also serve the profession into the future, and ensure democratic engagement of nurses throughout BC. In reality however, this too is policy work, requiring careful analysis, active consultation and advice, and ongoing negotiation to get it right. Despite this constraint, our Board has been able to take on a very limited number of policy projects concurrent with its organizational development activities. An example is our decision to

request intervenor status, along with the RNAO and the CNA, in the Supreme Court case known as *PHS Community Services Society v. Attorney General (Canada)*, Docket 33556 (i.e. the legal challenge to Insight). Many of you will recall that RNABC, in its former policy role, was instrumental in paving the way for harm reduction approaches by nurses working with these high risk patients (see for example a Dec 2002 article in Nursing BC at http://www.drpeter.org/home/images/pdf/nursingbc_dec02.pdf). We chose to take action on this and a few other issues because they were time-sensitive and urgent priorities for RNs in BC. This kind of complex professional policy work exemplifies the kinds of social issues and solutions for which nurses need professional association support that extends upon what either a bargaining unit or a regulatory body can provide. We will continue to monitor the most urgent issues in need of intervention and, where possible, explore options for action. In many instances, for now our best approach will be to align with the specialty professional practice groups that BC nurses have formed, either on their own or in concert with national organizations and with other provincial and national organizations such as RNAO or CNA. So although we can't do everything we would want to just yet, we certainly can try to ensure that we don't let major issues pass without the sound of a professional nursing policy voice!

Although much remains to be done, ARNBC has realised several key structural achievements over recent months. We actually now have office space, tucked in with the new BC Academic Health Council office at 201-1847 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Y6. We hope soon to announce a phone number, and someone to answer it! We are also looking forward to launching the ARNBC website within the next month to significantly strengthen our capacity for ongoing information and interactive dialogue with nurses around the province. As we prepare for that launch, we would appreciate input from RN Network members. You can link to our survey by clicking the link below, and all suggestions are welcome!

“What information would be important to include on the ARNBC web site?”

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QVRFSYN>

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as they affect the health of the population.
BC patients deserve that informed public policy perspective.*

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Rob Calnan, Susan Duncan (ARNBC Interim Board Co-Chairs); Lynette Best, Julie Fraser, Suzanne Johnston, Leanna Loy, Paddy Rodney, Maureen Shaw, Sally Thorne, Jo Wearing. (Interim Board Members)