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## **Network Update #9 - August 6, 2010**

Hello again to all of our valued network members. We hope you are managing to get some time to enjoy the wonderful summer weather we have had, and to re-energize yourselves. In keeping with our pledge to keep you informed we are sending you a Network Update with a report on our progress toward the creation of the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC).

### **Updates re CRNBC's actions toward withdrawal from CNA:**

As you are aware, at its AGM on June 25, 2010 the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC) tabled a resolution requesting approval for the Board's decision to give notice to the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) of its intent to withdraw from its role as the jurisdictional member of the CNA Board for BC. Although this resolution was defeated, the CRNBC Board determined that this vote was not binding on them and subsequently served notice to CNA of its intent to proceed with a measured withdrawal. Details of this decision with rationale can be found on the CRNBC website. (See <https://www.crnbc.ca>). The College has invited CNA to participate in discussions about the process for effecting a measured withdrawal. CNA agrees that it is important to work toward a satisfactory resolution of this issue and has responded to this invitation by proposing some dates for later this summer. Because these discussions will no doubt impact on its planning, the Interim Board of ARNBC has asked to be involved in these discussions where appropriate.

### **Progress on building the Association:**

The members of the Interim Board of ARNBC have been busy working on the details necessary to create a new organization. The Incorporation process has been completed so we officially have an Association of Registered Nurses for British Columbia. Now it is in the process of building the foundation for an ongoing communications strategy to involve as many nurses as possible in the development phase, including a web site for the new Association that it hopes to launch in mid-September.

Meanwhile, the RN Network remains the communications hub for this evolving process. We continue to hear from nurses about the importance of communication and consultation with registered nurses about the purposes for creating an Association. From our recent consultation (the survey monkey in Update #8), we know that close to 300 of you responded with a wealth of insight about your priorities and recommendations for this process. We know that you are concerned about how this new Association will work with CRNBC, the CNA, the BCNU, and with other nursing groups, associations and nurses in practice. We know that you are puzzling over many questions, as we are, such as what the specific role of another nursing body in BC might be, about possible membership models, and about the implications of membership models for fee structures – all extremely important questions. You told us that collaboration with

other nursing bodies and groups is essential and that the new Association needs to understand the importance of this approach. As well, you advised that we must utilize existing systems and institutional structures to the greatest extent possible in order to be cost effective and avoid creating yet another bureaucracy. You also told us that you think it is important to involve nurses from across all practice domains - and nursing students - in the planning of this new Association. From you, we learned how strong the interest is for re-building a Chapter structure (such as the RNABC used to have), aligning with interest groups, and sustaining a work-place rep program.

The need for these approaches was also voiced in the July issue of BCNU Update editorial written by Debra McPherson, although she and her Council appear to have concluded that the issues about how a new organization could fit within and enhance the participation of registered nurses in health care policy and decisions cannot be resolved. Therefore, *“the BCNU Council discussed these issues, and has agreed that at this time we cannot support this initiative. We do not believe another organization is required as BCNU has been carrying out the professional advocacy role for some time, and has involved itself successfully in nursing education, research, policy and administration.”* (The current issue of the BCNU Update can be found on the BCNU Website: [www.bcnu.org](http://www.bcnu.org)). We recognize that the union may feel that the creation of a new Association designed to articulate the perspectives of nursing and advance the profession is an encroachment on its aim to serve as the primary voice for nursing in BC and therefore not be keen to support its development. Nevertheless, the ARNBC Interim Board members are committed to working closely with BCNU and all of the other nursing organizations groups throughout the fall of 2010 to seek their help as it charts a way forward that will serve the best interests of all BC nurses.

Meanwhile, the new Association is already being approached to become involved in a myriad of complex health policy reviews that nurses have an interest, and ought to be engaged in. Although it does not yet have the resources to become involved in many of these issues (ARNBC is still an almost entirely volunteer organization), the Interim Board of ARNBC is seeking to quickly create the mechanisms whereby BC nurses can be fully engaged in the nursing policy conversations that are being held across the country, and working out which specific policy matters we can and should be engaging in directly at this very early stage of our development. As well, the Association Board has also agreed that it does need to begin to act on some of the larger issues to ensure that these opportunities are not lost to nurses in BC. For this reason it has decided to join the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, (RNAO) the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and others and apply for intervenor status in the Federal Government’s Appeal with regard to the legality of Insite's Safe Injection Site in Vancouver when it proceeds to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2011. As well, this joint effort offers ARNBC an opportunity to work closely, and build relationships with RNAO, CNA, CFNU and other groups of nurses to showcase nursing work and bring forward the knowledge and perspectives of BC nurses who work directly with people struggling with addiction and know the health benefits this facility provides.

As it considers how to move forward with creating the new Association and engaging in policy work, the Association views the group of nurses who have joined the RN Network as an excellent starting point to seek advice. So in exploring ideas about how it can and ought to communicate widely with nurses in all areas of practice across BC, the Board will be asking you for your ideas about and help with both the planning and the process.

Again, we want to thank all of you for your ongoing interest and support. With our combined wisdom and willingness to help out as we work to build bridges between the nursing organizations provincially and nationally, we cannot help but be successful in creating a seamless network of organizations that will benefit our profession and the public we serve.

And finally, until the new ARNBC website is up and operational, the Network membership list and website remain a primary way for us to reach out to you all, so please continue to encourage your colleagues to get involved and add their email address to our growing contact list. To join the Network, send an email to [Rebecca.Armstrong@nursing.ubc.ca](mailto:Rebecca.Armstrong@nursing.ubc.ca) with “RN Network” in the subject line.

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