

MEMBERS' VOICES: May to September 2013
Speaking out for Nursing: Speaking out for Health

Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group

Submitted by: Chair, Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group (OHNIG)
Jill King RN, BSc (N), COHN(C), COHN-S, ASA
Rehabilitation and Disability Planning Specialist
International Loss Control Accredited Safety Auditor

- 1. RNAO END: Engage with registered nurses and nursing students to stimulate membership and promote the value of belonging to their professional organization.**

OHNIG's membership includes student nurses [600] who join for free. All the members including nursing students receive OHNIG Newsletters and the News E blasts.

All OHNIG members were invited to join the OHNIG annual member's meeting by conference call Nov 24, 2012. At the 2012 AGM we agreed to explore the public, political and health care associations to test their knowledge "What do Occupational Health Nurses do?"

On December 15, 2012 OHNIG met with a social media expert to learn about "Meet ups" using on line registration. The intent is for more networking opportunities allowing members to share professional "work day" profiles and helpful tips.

On Sept 27, 2013 OHNIG have an exhibit booth at the 17th Annual Foot Care Conference hosted by Ruttan and Associates. OHNIG will promote to the attendees that Occupational Health Nurses deliver Primary Health Care. OHNs help worker clients navigate the health care system to get health care services, including referral to foot care nursing specialists..

OHNIG Newsletter May 2013 took the form of an open letter to OHNIG Members, posted on the web. '[RNAO / OHNIG Membership has many Benefits for Occupational Health Nurses!](#)'

OHNIG e-blast September 16, 2013, indicates a membership drive in progress, awareness of membership benefits, AGM notification with agenda and a new branding image for OHNIG All members asked to submit to on line survey with their prevention strategies in their workplace.

The OHNIG web site was refreshed in Aug /Sept 2013. Members can read OHNIG executive 2014 strategic plan, have handy vital information for their nursing practice, i.e., Basic Occupational Health Service (BOHS) and much more. The OHNIG web site is now a permanent '*billboard*' of value added occupational health research, best practice guidelines and resources for all Occupational Health Nurses.

- 2. RNAO END: RNAO advances the role and image of nurses as members of a vital, knowledge-driven, caring profession, and as significant contributors to health.**

The OHNIG current year, November 1, 2012 to October 31 2013 was spent asking questions! OHNIG asked politicians, lobbyists, public organizations, nursing colleagues, and fellow interest groups. *What do people really know of the specialty nursing practice of Occupational Health Nurses providing health care to workers in their workplace?*

OHNIG sent a reminder to celebrate International Certified Nurse Day on March 19th and paid tribute to more than 17,000 Canadian certified Registered Nurse specialists.

March 5, 2013 OHNIG hosted a public forum on the invitation of Canadian Federation Women University CFUW Association and RPNAO. The presentation expanded the knowledge of the attendees on how many registered nurses deliver health care services outside the publically funded health care system. The panel consisted of an insurance nurse rehabilitation specialist, a published author health promotion registered nurse specialist, an enterostomal clinical nurse specialist and an occupational health and environmental safety nurse specialist. The audience posed questions and responded to a survey. On review it was obvious that this group of attendees from the public community had limited knowledge of the many registered nurses working in independent self employed private practice in a variety of diverse nursing health care practices.

3. RNAO END: RNAO speaks out on emerging issues that impact on nurses and the nursing profession, health and health care.

OHNIG Newsletter November 2012 gave a message to their members "*It's Time to Raise the Bar!*" - The expert Commission research report [June 2012] indicated under utilization of full nursing capabilities, i.e., only 10% in Canada as opposed to 80% in other countries

The Ministry of Labour MOL newly created Prevention Officer requested from Ontario stakeholders their comments as part of a public consultation process to solicit views on "An Integrated Occupational Health and Safety Strategy for Ontario" discussion paper. Stakeholders completed a survey of several questions expressing their views on Workplace Prevention Strategies. OHNIG in agreement with RNAO, made a submission to MOL - Prevention Officer May 16th 2013. OHNIG advocated for increasing the currently low level of onsite workplace health services in the 80,000 Ontario companies. Also to create a best practice guideline on Prevention, i.e., zero tolerance risks and exposures that harm a worker's health.

OHNIG had a conference call May 29, 2013 with the Canadian Occupational Health Nurse Association president and a board member. COHNA welcomed the prospect of having OHNIG become a member and represent occupational health nurses in Ontario on the COHNA national board. The COHNA invitation is for consideration at the OHNIG AGM.

4. RNAO END: RNAO influences healthy public policy to positively impact the determinants of health, supporting Medicare and strengthening a publicly funded, not-for-profit health-care system.

Meeting with Lois Brown MP Newmarket /Aurora on Jan. 15, 2013 to discuss *Ways and Means* for better Federal Health Care budgeting for Health Care in Canada.

Meeting with Frank Klees local MPP Newmarket/Aurora February 17, 2013 to discuss Ontario current unsustainable health care debt and the dollars wasted on administration costs. Emphasis placed on modernizing the Canada Health Act including utilization of all registered nurses to full professional capabilities.

OHNIG joined others on April 11, 2013 to learn "political savvy" techniques from a lobbyist and "how to" to promote your most significant key issues to the politicians.