

MEMBERS' VOICES: April 2012– October, 2012

Speaking out for Health: Speaking out for Nursing

Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group (OHNIG)

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Another year draws to a close for the Occupational Health Nurse Interest Group OHNIG. The goal for the past year has been achieved, i.e., education sessions to benefit OHNIG members, other nursing colleagues in RNAO, and for the public community. ... [OHNIG End Goals](#)

POLICY/POLITICAL ACTIVITY

OHNIG posted on their web site a "**public thank you**" letter to Canadian Nurse Association CNA, for highlighting in their April 2012 CNA Nursing Journal an article, "Is Your Workplace Safe". The article highlighted an investigative analysis of a workplace needing occupational health and safety. The article detailed the many ways Occupational Health Nurses implement prevention strategies, health promotion and protection from injury while all the time caring for the health, safety and well being of their workers in the workplace. Several individual OHNIG members sent a personal "thank you" to CNA.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

OHNIG sponsored a public *Safety Awareness Campaign* on the OHNIG web site. In a series of 3 video clips, all nurses province wide can witness unsafe acts and unsafe conditions that cause harm to nurses in their workplace. By using graphic depiction the worker, the workplace and the public learn what to do!
"Nurses Take Care - Be Aware"

MEMBER SERVICES

OHNIG achieved the following for their members:

- Promotion of Occupational Health Nurse Professional Profile and Scope Practice by posting on the [OHNIG web site \(click here to read the Occupational Health Nurses profile\)](#)
- Promotion Occupational Health Nurses as a specialized nursing career. See RNAO website - [Careers in Nursing! A World of Opportunities!](#)
- Communication notices [4] to OHNIG members by using E-blasts to alert members to "[OHNIG Newsletters](#)", upcoming events and OHNIG executive attendee reports on RNAO Queens Park Assembly, RNAO Communication Assembly /AGM and RNAO Membership Assembly
- Collaboration with another Interest Groups to co-sponsor membership nursing career enhancement education workshops.
- Hosting a *Members Communication Breakfast* to get member's input on ways to promote recognition of Occupational Health Nurses and how to fit into the coming "New Health Care"
- Participating in the RNAO Nursing Career Fair in an exhibitor booth - explaining to nurse's enquiries "How can I become an Occupational Health Nurse"? "What studying do I need"? "Where can I get this type of work"?
- Facilitation (4) OHNIG strategy meetings through out the year, using call conferencing thus allowing executive participation province wide from the convenience of their home.
- Announcing to OHNIG members that CNA Nursing Certification is recognized for University credit. [University Credit for Certification](#)

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

OHNIG Membership of registered nurses working in Occupational Health and Safety remains constant. Each year in September and October we send an e-blast to recruit new members. Note many other RNs from other interest groups join OHNIG to become aware of occupational health nursing prior to making a transition to Occupational Health Nursing work. Several of the nursing students join to "[see what preventative nursing is all about](#)"!

INVOLVEMENT WITHIN LOCAL CHAPTER/INTEREST GROUP

By co-sharing the education workshop costs with another interest group and a local chapter, the money saved allowed the members to attend the education **for free**. The education sessions presented to their members addressed how to "*Accelerate your Career*" using self-assessment, how to recognize the "Perils and Pearls" of independent practice, and how to understand the "*Nuts and Bolts*" of business operation.

EMERGING ISSUES

All Occupational Health Nurses are asked to join a growing number of nurses with specialty practices that impact community health of people where they live, work and play! *From the Declaration of Alma-Ata, World Health Organization, 1978*

OHNIG upcoming newsletter features [A Nursing Call to Action](#), a report from the CNA's National Expert Commission, suggests a fundamental shift in how health and health care is funded, managed and delivered in Canada. [Click here to see all the CNA surveys](#) ...excerpt below (page 25)

We are more inclined to agree with Canadians who called for the roles of health professionals (including nurses, midwives, pharmacists and paramedics) to be expanded, to make better use of their abilities and make the system more efficient, and with those who spoke of the need to promote multi-disciplinary, team-based care to make better use of the resources we have. Suggestions for how nurses could contribute to better care included extending the ability of registered nurses to prescribe medication, and making more use of nurse practitioners and registered nurses in primary, community, long-term and acute care.

Occupational Health Nurse members need to tell the communities how for hundreds of years, i.e., since the Crimean War, nurses in workplaces have provided specialized professional nursing health care, that is easily accessible, with early intervention to treat a host of primary health care issues and injuries to workers in the work place. Occupational Health Nurses have decades of nursing experience in prevention, early treatment and early resolution, including helping worker's family members!. The Canadian Occupational Health Nurse Certification COHN(C) is the oldest nursing certification [1984].

[Occupational Health Nurses can you hear opportunity knocking at the door?](#)

OTHER

In June, three of your OHNIG executive attended the Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association OOHNA annual conference at Niagara on the Lake. OHNIG executive approached OOHNA to put our "heads together" for communication strategy and initiate working together to promote the specialty field of Occupational Health Nursing in anticipation of the "*new norm*" in nursing health care per the report **A Nursing Call to Action**.