

MEMBERS' VOICES REPORT: April 1 – September 30, 2011

Speaking out for Health: Speaking out for Nursing

**SUBMITTED BY: OHNIG – Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group
Chairperson- Jill King**

POLICY/POLITICAL ACTIVITY

1. OHNIG chairperson attended Queens Park early in the year. After participated in the planned meetings with the MPPs discussing the issues on environmental toxin control as listed in the RNAO's Vibrant Communities document the information was shared with the OHNIG group. [Refer to appendix A]. OHING continuously advocates for stronger barriers to toxins. All Occupational Health Nurses have nursing standards and learned practice skills from their workplace to prevent exposure to toxins i.e. nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC). This makes OHNIG Occupational Health Nurses ideal leaders to advocate toxic exposure control.

2. As the OHNIG delegate to the RNAO Assembly, I made a public announcement to the attendees. Their attention was drawn to recent December 2010 release of the government Workplace Health and Safety Commission - "Dean Report".(Bill 160). The findings indicated a great need for health and safety training in all Ontario workplaces. Their recommendations included a change in the current handling of workplace health training and a tightening of the authority to apply workplace regulations.

The Bill 160 passed May 2011 and now "*on the spot*" ticketing for health and safety violation is allowed.

The regulations mandate PREVENTION rather than REACTION in workplace Health and Safety!

OHNIG continuously asks all workers, managers and employers to reflect on their own workplace using the following questions:

1. Do your workers, supervisors, and health and safety committees/representatives know their rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act?
2. Have you identified the significant hazards in your workplace and trained your staff so that they can work safely?
3. Do you ensure that your vulnerable workers are trained, well supervised, and feel comfortable coming forward with OHS concerns without fear of reprisal?
4. Do you have a managed safety system in place in your workplace? Consider CSA Z-1000, or ISO-18001.
5. Have you used The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's Work Well Audit? An excellent tool to use.

Full report "Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health and Safety: The Tony Dean Report
See www.ohnig.ca "News You Can Use" or see <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/eap/index.php>

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

OHNIG just produced and released in September, to coincide with the start of the university year, a 30 second **graphic video clip** of a **student nurse getting injured**. The “clip” posted on their *Student Corner* on the OHNIG web site targets nursing students and the potential for injury at a workplace. Please view on OHNIG web site. www.ohnig.ca

This is the first of three planned clips to help prevent injuries to nurses at work. The clips will be adapted to an APP so students can access and “spread the word quickly”! Our student OHNIG executive representative generously helped in this video clip production. OHNIG has plans to distribute this “student nurse “injury clip to media and pertinent audiences to “*get their attention*”.

OHNIG also posted on the OHNIG web site [Student Corner](#) a handy teaching tool on “*what to do*” if injured. The “*Health and Safety Quick Tips*” is a friendly usable power point teaching tool for students, teachers, professors and universities to educate to their responsibilities to train all those students placed in workplaces in health and safety risks, their responsibilities and the regulations. This instruction tool will be placed in an APP for distribution.

MEMBER SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PROMOTION

At RNAO’s request and using their directive guidelines, OHNIG created a *NEW* Occupational Health Nurse Professional Practice Profile. This document describes Occupational Health Nurse qualifications, nursing performance standards, scope of practice and work activity required. RNAO intends to post this Occupational Health Nurse professional practice profile on their RNAO web page. RNAO has future plans to take the individual nurses Professional Practice Profiles and compile a book for public distribution.

OHNIG added another feature to their Professional Practice web site page. To clarify better “what does an Occupational Health Nurses do” several OHNIG members are submitting for posting a description of a “typical workday” in their particular work setting. The first posting was a visit to a busy Occupational Health Nurse in a hospital health care facility.

A third posting on the OHNIG Professional Practice web page is directed to the general public for their use. Please review the Workplace Health and Safety Fact Sheets, a one page of “how to do” information for everybody.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION and WEB CONFERENCING

Book mark the OHNIG web site. This is OHNIG members’ main source of communication. Quarterly web site changes will update the OHNIG Members information. The on line postings will maintain transparency and open dialogue with their members. The web site will have the two yearly OHNIG newsletters. The OHNIG membership receives an email for new content and a link. The newsletters are printable or can just be read on line in the archive. Recently we have added a video clip for “quick” viewing for members, colleagues and general on workplace injury and “what to do”!

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

OHNIG collaborated with a sister interest group to share space at the RNAO Nurse Career Fair. This allowed a chance to talk with new graduate nursing students as well as registered nurses looking for new career opportunities. On May 13, 2011 the booth was very popular for attendees seeking information on Occupational Health Nursing as a career and how to transition their nursing skills. The attendees wanted to work with their chosen nursing profession and were delighted to learn alternate avenues.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION / INVOLVEMENT WITH INTEREST GROUP

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Our student OHNIG executive representative generously helped as an “actor” in the video clip depicting graphically how quickly an injury can happen in the workplace. His enthusiasm continues to help with the next two clips. Our OHNIG student representative is eagerly “spreading the word” thus potentially saving other students from harm. OHNIG motto “*Take Care Be Aware!*” See OHNIG www.ohnig.ca

INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER INTEREST GROUPS

OHNIG members received email notices that they were welcome to attend a free workshop “It’s Your Business” sponsored by IPNIG a sister interest group. The OHNIG members who attended this education workshop earned a certificate for full day of credit hours towards the required accumulative hours for their Canadian Certification as Occupational Health Nurses CCOHN(C).

EMERGING ISSUES

OHNIG End Goals 2010 – 2012 as posted on the OHNIG web site

The End Goals are permanent and used to measure the outcome of OHNIG activity:

OHNIG End Goals

- To be the voice within RNAO for the specialty practice of Occupational Health Nursing
- To raise the awareness of Occupational Health Nursing Scope of Practice and Occupational Health Nurse Standards
- To collaborate with other RNAO nursing interest groups in developing Best Practice Guidelines, based on best available evidence
- To influence the development of the field of occupational health nursing as a career choice for nurses
- To contribute to a high quality of care, based on the primary health care principles, for the people of Ontario
- To support RNAO policy of excellence in nursing
- To recognize, network, lead and participate in political action, and public education

APPENDIX A

Creating Vibrant Communities **RNAO Challenge to Ontario Political Parties** **2011 Provincial Elections**

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Tougher Protection from Toxics

1. Toughen Protection from Toxics by:

- Committing to aggressive targets for reductions in the use, creation and release of toxics;
- Committing to the goal of comprehensive coverage of toxics, not limited to a set number of toxics or industries;
- Including mandatory substitution of safer alternatives for toxic substances in production processes;
- Establishing an independent, academically based institute to build capacity to meet the requirements of toxics reduction, safe substitution and green chemistry. This would include support to businesses, employees and communities.

2) Ensure public right to know about toxics in their environment, workplaces and products by:

- Collecting all necessary toxics data and making it available in a readily searchable format;
- Making data available that is collected under the Toxics Reduction Act and all other environmental legislation;
- Identifying toxic content in products through labeling or by other understandable means.

Strengthen Cosmetic Pesticides Ban

- 1) Commit to supporting full implementation of the *Cosmetic Pesticides Act* and regulations.
- 2) Commit sufficient resources to enforcing the *Cosmetic Pesticides Act* and regulations.
- 3) Phase out the exemption of golf courses from the pesticide ban in the *Cosmetic Pesticides Act*.