



Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES



ABOUT US

Our Mission: *To make a positive difference in the lives of older people and the nurses who care for them.*

Our Vision: *All older people in the province of Ontario are cared for by nurses whose practice is evidence-informed, relationship-centered and meets gerontological nursing standards.*

Website: <http://gnaontario.org/>

Social Media: Facebook & Twitter

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Greetings GNAO colleagues! With another school year upon us, we decided we would dedicate this issue of the newsletter to students and the impact of mentorship. I invite you now to reflect on your experience as a student nurse. For some of us, it was many years ago yet the memories are still vibrant; we can remember the excitement and the anticipation as if it was yesterday. When you look back, was

gerontological nursing something you always aspired to do? Perhaps a chance clinical interaction or enthusiastic mentor helped to guide your path? However you got here, we are so pleased to have you as a committed healthcare provider and GNAO member.

For me, gerontological nursing was where my path was headed since before I entered nursing school. Fortunately, since I was one of only a handful of nurses who identified this interest, I was afforded many unique and impactful learning experiences that have shaped my career. In each of these learning experiences, I was met with an enthusiastic mentor who was eager to share their passion for care of older adults and impart the wisdom they have amassed over their career. The relationships that I have formed with key mentors over my career have ultimately led me to my current role as GNAO President. I began my career as a student member of GNAO's Greater Hamilton Area chapter. I was kindly given a book award as a student pursuing gerontological nursing followed by a warm invitation to join their professional advocacy committee. I was hooked! Interestingly enough, when I was approached to consider the GNAO president role in 2013, it was that same encouraging, knowledgeable person, GNAO Past President Dr. Lori Schindel Martin, who had given me the book award all those years ago who offered to mentor me in this new role. Lori, I would like to thank you for your ongoing encouragement and support.

I encourage you after reading this edition, to reach out to a student or new graduate to share your story, share a trusted resource or to invite them to join you at an upcoming GNAO event. As you can see from my experience, when a passionate expert reaches out to a willing novice, the impact can be felt for years to come.

Having learned a little more about my story, I encourage you to explore this edition further to learn how GNAO is continuing its work to nurture students during their journey from the educational, social and professional perspectives. Student and New

JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Graduate Liaison Co-Representative Annie Lam highlights how she impacts the student experience and GNAO has built social connections via our social media platforms. Annie and GNAO Membership Co-Chair Sarah Gibbens share the importance mentorship has played in their careers in both clinical and academic settings. We are also featuring unique gerontological education experiences from Ryerson University and Algonquin College. These programs have recognized the need to attract student nurses to the field of gerontology and have created opportunities to be successful. To fulfill our professional advocacy commitments, we have included links to two relevant happenings: 1. the federal election on October 19 for which we have highlighted the platforms of CNA and RAO, and 2. the Supreme Court decision surrounding physician assisted death for which we included links to the federal and provincial consultations that are currently underway. We hope you will take the opportunity to review and share. Lastly, we re-fashion our Gerontological Nurses Read column to Nurses In The Media to highlight a nurse who shares her story and the important impact we can all have on the life of a patient.

We hope you enjoy our fall offering. We wish you all a happy Thanksgiving and look forward to seeing you at GNAO events throughout the province in the coming months.

Yours in Gerontological Nursing,

Julie Rubel,
President GNAO
www.gnaontario.org

PROFESSIONAL ADVOCACY FEDERAL ELECTION

As the 2015 federal election nears, we have an opportunity to make a meaningful difference for Canada's health system specifically in senior care.

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is asking the federal government to commit to better seniors health with: 1) Common standards for home health care; 2) More support to family caregivers; and 3) Improved community- and home-based health promotion. For more information, please visit <http://www.election.cna-aiic.ca/en>

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) wants each federal political party to put health first during the campaign and encourage nurses and all Canadians to actively participate in the electoral process. RNAO highlighted some issues for registered nurses (RN), nurse practitioners (NP) and nursing students in the 2015 election: 1) Protect and strengthen Canada's universally accessible, publicly funded and not-for-profit health system; 2) Improve access to quality, person-centred care; 3) Tackle the social determinants of health; 4) Protect the environment; and 5) Build fiscal capacity. For more information, please visit: http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/Platform_2015_Aug_12_0.pdf

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

[HTTPS://SURVEYS.MCGILL.CA/LIMESURVEY/INDEX.PHP?SID=65346&LANG=EN](https://surveys.mcgill.ca/limesurvey/index.php?sid=65346&lang=en)

NURSES IN THE MEDIA



During the talent portion of the Miss America preliminaries, one contestant stepped outside the norm and stunned everyone with what she did for her talent routine.

Kelley Johnson walked out in scrubs and blew the audience away with what she had to say about nursing. Kelley is Miss Colorado and a registered nurse. She explained her friendship with a patient named Joe who, during his struggle with Alzheimer's, reminded her that even though she couldn't cure his disease, she was still a key influence in his healing process.

"Joe reminded me that day that I'm a lifesaver," she told the crowd. "I'm never going to be just a nurse."

For more information, please visit: <https://youtu.be/nYoCW1DQWQE>



PROFESSIONAL ADVOCACY OPTIONS FOR ASSISTED DYING

In February 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the federal law prohibiting physician-assisted dying. The ruling applies to a competent adult who: 1) Clearly consents to the termination of life; and 2) Has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

The court gave governments one year to consider the development of new laws and practices for physician-assisted dying.

Both the Federal and Provincial governments are currently engaging the public in consultations. As gerontological nurses, we need to part of the conversations in sharing thoughts and perspectives about end-of-life care decisions and making the right choices when the time comes for the ones you care for.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.ontario.ca/page/doctor-assisted-dying-and-end-life-decisions-consultation>

<http://www.ep-ce.ca/home/>

GERONTOLOGICAL EDUCATION RYERSON – DAPHNE COCKWELL SCHOOL OF NURSING



Professors in the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing,

Ryerson University have been working diligently on a plan to enhance student learning in the area of gerontological nursing, part of ongoing curriculum renewal to incorporate evidence-based content and competencies. The Office of Simulation, Student Placements and Advising is continuing to develop and strengthen student placements and partnerships

within clinical practice settings such as long-term care homes for 4th year students. In addition, the school introduced an eLearning version of Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA), a standardized program about dementia care, into the first year curriculum of the Ryerson, Centennial, George Brown Collaborative Nursing Degree Program during the winter term of 2015. The GPA eLearning implementation was evaluated and findings support that students experienced a significant increase in their knowledge about the aging brain, behavior associated with dementia, and communication strategies useful for establishing person-centred relationships. Students also reported a strengthening of confidence when communicating with older people living with dementia.

As one student stated: "I learned the importance of therapeutic communication and validation when dealing with patients with dementia. I feel the modules have definitely provided me with a better understanding of dementia and everything it encompasses, and going through this GPA program has decreased my fears if I ever do have to care for a patient with dementia in the future. I feel well equipped with the knowledge I have gained here to approach and communicate with dementia patients, and now I know what to do if a situation should escalate."

OCTOBER 2, 2015

Centre for Clinical Ethics
Affirming an Ethic of Care: Bridging the Gaps at the End of Life
Toronto, Ontario

OCTOBER 6, 2015

Grey Bruce Geriatric Education Cooperative
Palliative Care: Improving the Quality of Living and Dying
Owen Sound, Ontario

OCTOBER 29-30, 2015

Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPAO)
AGM & Conference
Advancing Excellence in Nursing: Role Clarity-Quality Practice-Leadership
London, Ontario

NOVEMBER 16-20, 2015

Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario
Geriatric Education Series
Ottawa, Ontario

GERONTOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE – SCHOOL OF HEALTH & COMMUNITY STUDIES

Last fall, in collaboration with the Bruyère Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care, Algonquin College piloted a gerontology-intensive placement for 4th year BScN students in their fall semester. Over the course of the semester, students had a group community health nursing placement, a group placement on an acute medicine unit, and a preceptored placement in Long-Term Care (LTC). As part of their participation in the experience, students received a free membership in RNAO, GNAO and CGNA, gerontology-focused workshops as well as a free gerontology nursing textbook.

During their tenure in the LTC setting, students were required to complete an evidence-based practice project, where they summarized evidence for LTC staff relating to an issue of concern for staff or residents. The topics addressed by the students included: transfers from LTC to hospital; skin tear and falls prevention; oral health; urinary tract infection diagnosis and prevention; and person centered care of residents with dementia.

The experience was well received by the students for its learning opportunities, however there were also some unique challenges with the experience. Those challenges included: lack of time for RN preceptors to devote to students; a lack of continuity of LTC RN preceptors available; and a lack of student time to complete required projects. On the academic side, identified constraints include: the prescribed timing and number of hours of clinical placements, and the emphasis on the development of psychomotor skills. Lack of role clarity from the perspective of students, nurses and the faculty liaison was also identified.

Strategies to address these issues have been implemented, and the experience is currently running again this fall. For those interested in learning more, please contact Valerie Fiset fisetv@algonquincollege.com.

A NOTE ON MENTORSHIP



SARAH'S STORY

When I think about mentorship, I can think of a number of amazing individuals who have helped guide and direct me in the direction I wanted to go. These individuals really have no idea how special they are to me and how much their mentorship has impacted my gerontological nursing career. I sought out these individuals in my undergraduate studies, my nursing placements, and early in my nursing career. It is because of my mentors that I have found a career that I love. From time to time, I will connect with them, as there is always a benefit of getting someone else's perspective or advice, especially if they have been down a similar path in gerontology.

I currently reside in Cobourg, working at Northumberland Hills Hospital as a Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse. It is an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) position that deals directly with older adults and their families in the Emergency Department setting. The APN position differs slightly from a RN or RPN position in that along with the direct and specialized gerontological clinical work, the GEM also has a number of capacity building elements - with teaching, change management, and program planning being some examples. I completed my Master of Nursing at the University of Toronto, and did so shortly after starting my nursing career. I felt compelled to go back to school after so much of my nursing was spent caring for older adults, yet little was paid to the specialty of gerontology. I believe strongly in the APN position and how it can be utilized to make differences in the lives of older adults. I would happily connect with anyone who sees parallels in their own gerontological nursing journey, or is interested in understanding more about my own.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gibbens (Membership Co-Chair)

A NOTE ON MENTORSHIP

ANNIE'S STORY

In a nation that is currently rapidly aging, it is inevitable that we will all be providing some form of care for the elderly, whether it is our patients or our own family members and friends. I have always loved working with the older population. There is something very special about being able to share the same space and time with a person who has a plethora of knowledge, wisdom, and life experiences. I continue to work with this population on a day-to-day basis, feeling no sense of regret for entering this field. However, I would not have been able to get where I am today without the help of various peers and mentors throughout my nursing journey.



In the beginning of my journey, I felt alone in my love for geriatrics given that my peers did not share my passion (geriatrics has never really been seen as an "attractive" field of nursing). It was not until I met some wonderful mentors in gerontological nursing that I started to realize that I am not alone in my interests. My mentors and peers have been instrumental to my ability to move forward in gerontological nursing.

Many of my mentors continue to support and inspire me today, as a student, as a nurse, as a novice researcher, and most importantly, as a person. My clinical instructors have provided me with professional support; they have been compassionate, patient and very directive in my development of comprehensive geriatric assessments skills. They continue to provide me with knowledge on best research and practice in geriatric care and on the roles and responsibilities of the advanced practice nurse. My academic mentors have also consistently provided me with amazing opportunities to network with other experts and with the training and skills to conduct research. I became involved with the Gerontological Nurses Association during my undergraduate studies. A very close gerontological mentor of mine told me to reach out and get involved. "Don't be scared!" she told me. Becoming involved with GNA has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. All of the members are amazing leaders in gerontological nursing; many of which I have become close with and continue to inspire me every day.

Although all experiences have been wonderful, I have been most grateful for the immense encouragement and advice related to future career choices, and emotional support during challenging times. I have found that they all genuinely care about my well-being, interests, and success, not only as a nurse, but also as a person. They have always been so willing to share and to give - I definitely would not be here today without their help!

As the student/new-graduate liaison, I feel that it is so important to have a mentor who will stick by your side and support you, both professionally and personally. This is why we want to reach out to you - students, new nurses and seasoned nurses - to provide you with opportunities for mentorship and peer support from other fellow gerontological nurses. Our role is to connect you with your local GNAO chapter and to help you find gerontological experts and leaders in your local area. Further, we want to be able to share continuing education events with you so that you can further your expertise in the field of geriatrics. Feel free to connect with us through social media, or email us personally to get more information. We are here to support you to build a positive experience and to grow together.

Sincerely,

Annie Lam (*Student/New Graduate Liaison Co-Representative*)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Gerontological-Nursing-Association-Ontario-GNAO-811284002323318/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GNAOntario>

**BOARD POSITION
AVAILABLE!**

Looking for

Opportunities to be
Involved in Your Local
Chapter of GNAO?

Want to contribute to the
gerontological nursing
field?

FIND OUT MORE AT:

<http://gnaontario.org>

**OR BY CONTACTING YOUR
LOCAL CHAPTER
PRESIDENTS!**