

Members' Voices: October 1, 2011 – January 31, 2012
Essex Chapter – Region 1

Submitted by: Jennifer Johnston – Chapter President

Policy/Political Activity

-Policy & Political Action Update: Back on April 18th, 2011 Essex Chapter Members Jennifer Johnston & Kelly Mertens-Lawrenson spoke publically at a local Amherstburg Town Council Meeting to support a motion to affect change in regards to decisions being made about nuclear energy. A media release was also issued and statements were given to local radio and newspaper reporters. The motion was passed and a request that it be forwarded to the other members of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, was upheld. We have hence heard that this same motion was also passed in other Ontario communities. Ultimately these actions are credited with influencing federal decisions in disallowing Bruce Power's shipments of nuclear waste to be made on the Great Lakes. In follow-up communications, Brian Masse (MPP for Windsor West) has expressed,

"I want to say that Nurses can lead the way in changing the world toward a better place. We just need to have the vision, the support and the determination to do so. With your support the motion I made to stop the Plutonium Shipment through our waters was not only adopted in our own community but by other councils with the same willingness for a safer waterway both in Ontario and Canada but Internationally. The Essex Chapter of the RNAO helped that happen."

The Essex Chapter is thrilled to have been an influential force in affecting positive changes for community health and is thankful for the support from the RNAO Home Office team.

-The Essex Chapter is also eager to announce that Kim Miller has assumed the role of Policy & Political Executive Officer. She brings with her many talents and experience from her many years in the Community Health Nurses Interest Group where she has held Executive positions.

-On Tuesday October 18th, the Essex Chapter hosted "Protect Your Practice: A Nursing Empowerment & Education Seminar" at Windsor Regional Hospital's Auditorium. Guest Speaker Monica Staley, Patient Representative for WRH, RN, as well as accomplished lawyer – spoke about the CNO Standards and Guidelines: Therapeutic Communication, Documentation, and Confidentiality. We had over 40 interdisciplinary attendees. See www.windsorsexrnao.org for her PowerPoint presentation.

-A number of our members have drafted letters and email responses to action alerts put out by RNAO in order to voice our opinion and exercise our ability to engage in political action.

-Executive members scan the media to watch for pertinent healthcare-related matter and pass this information along to our members through word of mouth and chapter newsletters.

Media Communications

-The Essex Chapter maintains their website www.windsorsexnrao.org which is updated with information from past and upcoming events & initiatives. There are also sections for updates on policy & political action initiatives as well as nomination for Chapter awards such as the Lois A. Fairley Community Service & DAISY awards.

-On Friday January 27th, Essex Chapter sent representatives to the opening ceremonies and official launch of the CARE – Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses in Windsor. www.care4nurses.org We are pleased to support this valuable community resource.

Member Services

-The Essex Chapter is thrilled to announce that we have over 1000 members! We continue to find innovative ways to stay connected with our members and to engage with nurses across our region. We are working as a team to expand our membership even further. Kelly Mertens-Lawrenson, our dedicated Executive Membership Officer, has been busy organizing many events and initiatives to promote RNAO and its efforts. We are supremely proud of the great work she is doing!

-On Friday November 11th, Essex Chapter members Lynda Monik and Kelly Mertens-Lawrenson placed wreaths at local cenotaphs to honour the lives of nurses killed in past and present wars. As well, local RNAO members attended ceremonies and commemorative events on this solemn occasion.

-The Essex Chapter continues to write and circulate our quarterly newsletter filled with updates for members, info on RNAO events & initiatives and useful community news. The latest issue of the newsletter highlights the importance of Action Alerts and encourages members to participate in...

Speaking out for Health

Speaking out for Nursing

Recruitment and Retention

-On Wednesday November 23rd, the Essex Chapter Annual General Meeting was held at Seasons Bistro in LaSalle. We had a great turnout of over 65 members, for a fabulous dinner and conversation regarding chapter events and initiatives. A special thank you to guest speakers Georgina Kelly from the Self Management Project - Erie St. Clair LHIN, Sandi Dennison President of the Diabetic Nurses' Interest Group for her explanation of what they do, and to Crystal Hepburn, 4th year nursing student, for explaining how the RNAO benefits students. Also in attendance was CNO President Kris Voycey.

-In January, RNAO Essex Chapter Member & New RN Grad - Mercedes Phalavong, was asked to speak to 4th year students at the University of Windsor. She spoke about how to prepare for the CRNE and also on the benefits of RNAO student membership & chapter involvement. Thank you Mercedes!

-The Essex Chapter is proud to announce that they have launched their own Facebook Fan Page. This will function to increase our web presence, and create a space to further engage members in discussion and dialogue. If you have a Facebook Profile, please search for “RNAO Windsor Essex Chapter” and “like” us. We look forward to hearing from you!

-The Essex Chapter is also exploring the opportunities to get involved in other social media outlets such as Twitter and LinkedIn. We will be working closely with RNAO Home Office to make the most of these emerging communication channels.

Student Representation

-The Executive committee connected with student representative at the University of Windsor and St. Clair College to develop partnerships and strengthen relationships between nursing leaders in our community and the nursing student population.

-We are pleased to have welcomed Crystal Hepburn – 4th year nursing student at U of W and 1st year St. Clair College RN nursing student Cheryl Kennedy to our monthly Executive Meetings. Crystal and Cheryl bring insight and enthusiasms as to how to connect with nursing students in our community. They are also active voices on their nursing society councils. We are lucky to have them!

Emerging Issues

-Many municipalities in our area have begun discussing the issue of whether drinking water should be fluorinated. For many years, a lot of the public water in Windsor and Essex County has had fluoride added to it. Members of the Essex Chapter are researching this controversial topic and may get politically involved. A poll and discussion thread has been started on our Facebook Fan Page to gauge public opinion and learn more about the topic.