

From the Editor-in-Chief

So What Now?

In early February, the national Nursing Leadership Conference was held in Montreal. The title of the conference, “So What? Now What?” provided fodder for opening the dialogue on some of the burning issues in the nursing profession today. By a show of hands from the delegates, there were seemingly a record number of first-time attendees; in my view, a positive harbinger of more leadership to come! Opening remarks by the Canadian Nurses Association president, Dr. Judith Shamian, and chief executive officer, Rachel Bard, effectively set the tone for the ensuing presentations and discussions. Their messages highlighted the need for “transformative leaders” to innovate, inspire and deliver on the significant changes needed in the delivery of healthcare. Their messages were living manifestations of leadership; this is what it is about – inciting and enabling others to act. Together and individually, they do it very well. The face of leadership in nursing, of necessity, is changing and is poised on the brink of influencing some very important changes to Canadian healthcare.

The plenary sessions drew attention to current challenges related to health policy, social justice, evolving technology, shifting demographics and changing consumer expectations. While the concurrent sessions encompassed similar topics, speakers offered perspectives on how some of these challenges are actually being addressed in the field. Overall, the session themes focused on developing leadership capacity, moving inter-professional education into practice and the impact of research programs on patient care and nursing education.

More than 30 papers and posters covered an array of initiatives, from approaches to improving the care of seniors in the midst of an urban emergency room to the use of robotics to support nursing practice in a remote community in Labrador. Either implicitly or explicitly, all presentations underscored the practical reality that good leadership has never been so important, in nursing and healthcare, as it is today. Not just good leadership, but skilled, caring, energetic and confident leadership must be evident in every setting. Just as a good nurse does not automatically make a good manager, neither does a good manager necessarily make a good leader. Ultimately, we need the talents and contributions of all three. Recent discussions with colleagues also suggest that we need the *purposeful development* of all three, and we cannot assume that leaders will simply emerge in the years ahead.

Prior to the conference, an invitational Think Tank focused on the development of a National Nursing Scorecard. The event was sponsored by the Office of Nursing Policy, Health Canada and was co-hosted by ACEN and the Canadian Nurses Association. The session was attended by more than 50 leaders and speakers

from practice, academia and representatives from key organizations such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information. The objectives and outputs of the day are provided in more detail in the ACEN Update found in this issue of *CJNL*.

Beginning with the Think Tank and throughout the following two days, I made many notes and found several consistent messages and themes emerging. I heard a clarion call for the profession to step forward and take advantage of the potential political clout of our collective voice. We need – consistently and clearly – to articulate, profile and raise public awareness of nurses' significant contributions to the well-being of Canadians. While others of the health professions are audaciously campaigning and advancing their importance in the healthcare system, nurses too should be elevating a profile and brand that resonates with the public. It was just one year ago that we were basking in the afterglow of the Olympics, and I wrote about yearning for a “nationalistic sense of our unity as a profession” (Nagle 2010). Throughout this conference, I found myself thinking about the need for a nursing parallel to “Own the Podium.”

Dr. Shamian closed the conference by calling for immediate government action in preparation for the 2014 Canadian federal–provincial Health Accord. Central to her call to action is an urgent need for a reconfiguration of healthcare to enhance chronic disease management and seniors' care, and the provision of appropriate funding for home and community care. “In order to ensure that medicare meets the changing health needs of Canadians, we need to revolutionize where and how care is delivered,” Dr. Shamian said. “We urge our political leaders to take immediate action by providing care where and when it's needed most” (Canada News Wire 2011). In this issue, Mike Villeneuve, our editor for Nursing Innovation and Policy, also picks up on the exigency and possibility of influencing future health policy.

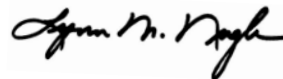
As we contemplate the urgent platform for these changes, it is after all simple: the potential risk of inaction is an uncertain future for Canadian healthcare and, consequently, the well-being of Canadians. As I heard and made note of the following phrases: “you need to listen to hear,” “enable others to act” and “we have a moral imperative,” it struck me that, more than ever before, this is our time, opportunity and responsibility to influence the future of healthcare in this country. Thus, it is with these messages that our intent to raise the dialogue on some of these vital matters will be borne out in subsequent issues of this journal. To this end, we are calling for abstracts for feature articles on the “Emerging Face of Nursing Leadership in Canada.” We are interested in papers that not only offer discourse and evidence related to some of the current issues, but also those that proffer opinions and commentary, strategies, solutions, lessons learned and case illustrations from Canada and elsewhere. On the basis of a review of the abstracts received, authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts for future publication.

I look forward to reading your submissions and striving together to “own the podium”!

References

Canada News Wire. 2011 (February 15). “Canada’s Nurses Speak with One Voice.” Retrieved March 7, 2011. <<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/February2011/15/c3018.html>>.

Nagle, L.M. 2010. “A Time for Renewal and Redirection.” *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership* 23(2): 1–3.



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Call for Abstracts

The Emerging Face of Nursing Leadership in Canada

The Leadership We Need for 2012 and Beyond...

In recent dialogues on the future of nursing in Canada, some of the following topics have been the focus of discussion:

- Developing leadership competencies for the future
- New leadership roles
- Leadership amid the millennial generation
- Inspiring a passion for leadership
- Ensuring nursing leadership at government and health policy tables

The *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership* is interested in papers that offer discourse and evidence related to some of these current issues and challenges facing the nursing profession in Canada today. Additionally, the editors welcome papers that proffer opinion and commentary, strategies, direction or solutions, lessons learned and case illustrations from Canada and elsewhere. On the basis of a review of the abstracts received, authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts for future publication.

Authors are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words, doubled-spaced in 12-point font. Please use the following template as a guide for submissions:

- Title
- Author(s)
- Purpose
- Key discussion points
- Conclusions/Recommendations
- Indicate type of submission:
- Research
- Policy
- Innovation
- Case study
- Opinion paper
- Offer suggestions for invited commentary, if appropriate