



Ontario Nurses for
the Environment



RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

Speaking out for nursing. Speaking out for health.

Winter Newsletter

ONEIG at Queen's Park Day 2019

Every year RNAO organizes for Policy and Political Action and interest groups to go to Queens Park and talk with Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) about health policy. This year, as president of the ONEIG, I went and represented the group. In previous years, Susan Munro our Policy and Political Action Officer went. The wonderful part of Queen's Park day is that RNAO organises all of the background information, the meetings with MPPs, and the venue, and all we have to do is read the information and show up. This year, Kim Jarvi the senior economist for RNAO, wrote a great [backgrounder](#) on the environment, including Bill 66 with special reference to Section 5 relating to toxic pollution.



ONEIG President Kerrie Pickering and
RNAO Senior Economist Kim Jarvi.

After a tour of Queen's park I met with my MPP along with other nurses who were Niagara or interested in environmental issues and their MPP had not shown. With RNAO having organized the MPPs, transport, venue and party leaders to attend and a briefing for members the night before, I felt very confident in talking to my MPP, Jennifer Stevens who has worked in healthcare. We had a great discussion on mental health and Safe Consumption Sites, with MPP Steven's bringing up the need for retractable needles to be used in the community to reduce the risk to the public when needles are left in playgrounds or on the beach.



From the left RNAO Region 3 Representative Nathan Kelly, Niagara Chapter Policy and Political Action Officer Mahoganie Hines, Niagara Chapter President Holly Rogers, Niagara MPP Jennifer Stevens, Student Representative for the Diabetes Interest Group Laura McBreairty, ONEIG President Kerrie Pickering, Diabetes Interest Group Policy and Political Action Officer Morgan Lincoln former ONEIG Social Media Officer.

REMINDER: RNAO AGM is on April 12, 2019 at the Hilton in Toronto. For more information or to register, please click [here](#).

Join us at **Ryerson University**
on **April 13, 2019** from
1-2:15pm.

ONEIG will be part of a Nursing in Action Panel talking about climate change



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ONEIG at Queen's Park Day (continued)

In the afternoon the Minister of Health and Long-term Care, Christine Elliot, and other party leaders spoke to RNAO with a short period for questions from members. I was able to ask Minister Elliot to use the precautionary principle when Bill 66 was discussed in parliament and outlined how this Bill has the potential to increase pollution of the natural environment and waterways affecting public health, and she agreed to do this. On behalf of ONEIG I also asked Liberal Party Leader John Fraser, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath (via email) and Green Party leader Mike Schreiner to stop Bill 66 and protect our environment, and all of them saw the importance of this and agreed to fight the Bill, part of which was going to be debated the following day so out timing was great!



Meeting with Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner



Meeting with Party Leaders at Queens Park Day 2019.

Interest Group Meeting February 21st

The Interest Group meeting provides an opportunity for all presidents to receive updates on changes RNAO has made to assist interest groups and share challenges and successes. One agenda item was discussing the effectiveness of having an RNAO Board Representative on each interest group executive. We were able respond that having our Board Representative, Beatriz Jackson, join us was a very positive addition helping the executive to move forward more efficiently.

Carrie Edwards, RNAO's Senior Membership & Services Coordinator, also highlighted the new technology RNAO is investing in to help with virtual meetings and webinars.

The purpose is to assist with easier communication with members who are spread over the province. As this rolls out we will be sending out emails to keep you updated.



ONEIG Board Liaison Representative Beatriz Jackson and ONEIG President at Queens Park Day



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News from Assembly February 22nd

This year there was a great deal of discussion around the proposed amendments to RNAO bylaws to include qualification for the president-elect. Every member of RNAO will be able to vote on this issue and you all should have received an email on March 3rd from RNAO stating the voting opens on March 26th and closes April 11. RNAO President Angela Cooper Brathwaite has written an article in the January-February RN Journal so you can better understand why this amendment has been put forward. Any questions or queries should be directed to RNAO (link to RN Journal https://myrnao.ca/system/files/page_private/RNJ-JanFeb2019-web.pdf).

Representing ONEIG at the Assembly meeting, I invited people to join us in Toronto at Sick Kids for Earth Day and to reach out for help on any environmental concern and greening healthcare. I highlighted the areas we continue to be most active on including:

- having KI (potassium iodide) pills available for vulnerable populations living within 50km of the Pickering nuclear energy facility
- securing rural source water
- stopping roadside herbicide spraying
- climate change
- green energy
- greening healthcare

All in all, the two days spent at Queen's Park Day and the Assembly meeting were very interesting and time well spent. I was happy to represent ONEIG and I continue to learn a lot each time I attend. If you are interested in attending next year, please reach out to ONEIG through our [Facebook page](#).

Roadside spraying in Lanark County

Friends of Lanark County reached out to ONEIG to help them stop roadside spraying for wild parsnip by their municipality. Using an evidence-based assessment, the group have shown that the spray being used, ClearView, is ineffective in the long-term and is not being used correctly. Warnings on the Material Safety Data Sheet report for chemicals in ClearView have shown harmful impacts in animal studies. Community members, physicians Canadian Association of Physician for the Environment (CAPE) and ONEIG are advocating for using the precautionary principle and using the less harmful approach to wild parsnip removal including manual removal.

Interested in knowing more? Please watch this short and informative video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBXDnBfdn2w>

As roadside spraying is happening in many communities, ONEIG will be having a webinar with Friends of Lanark County in the up coming months.



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Spring Cleaning for Health

It seems as though spring can never arrive soon enough. For those of use you who have spent a winter of Saturday nights cozied up on the couch watching Marie Kondo on Netflix, the urge to purge may be more acute during this year's spring cleaning. Kondo uses the joy principle: if it doesn't spark joy, get rid of it. However much I appreciate this ethos, I can't help but think how it feeds into the throwaway mentality that contributes to mass consumption and clutter collection in the first place.

Our current political-economic structure is based on high levels of consumer consumption– a level so high that it is argued to be unsustainable for the planet. Estimates suggest that if every person on Earth were to consume at the same level as the average Canadian 3.8 planet Earths would be required! From resource extraction to land use and manufacturing and transportation, consumer goods significantly contribute to water and air pollution, carbon emissions and deforestation. Packaging and disposability of trendy items either fill landfills or further contribute to emissions through energy intensive recycling programs.

Kondo's other guiding principle is to own fewer things in the first place. As a nursing student, I fully support consuming less for the benefits to the health of the planet and health of people.

1. Consuming less puts less strain on the earth and reduces your carbon footprint. Carbon emissions are directly linked to climate change. Alterations in weather patterns have been implicated in disrupted food production, drought, extreme storms that result in traumatic loss of life, injury and contaminated drinking water supplies.
2. Buying less means less financial stress. Stress is widely known to be a contributing factor to heart health, stomach problems, and muscle tension. Furthermore, less stress can improve your mood, relationships, and sleep.
3. Being content with what you have is associated with greater happiness. When less time and energy is spent chasing "the Jones'", more time and energy is available to do meaningful activities that bring joy.



<https://filmsfortheearth.org/storage/app/uploads/public/58c/fbf/05a/58cfbf05af565957484477.png>

Author: Rebecca Zimmerman, Student RN





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Earth Day April 22nd

ONEIG will be at **Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital** with the Paediatric Nurses Interest Group for an Earth Day Sustainability Fair from 11 am to 3 pm. If you are there or near by please come by and say hello.

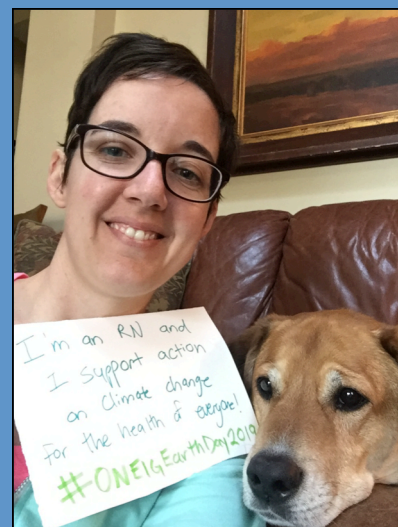
London Health Sciences Centre is asking for ONEIG members working at University Hospital and Victoria Hospital to reach out to them to help out with Earth Day. Taylor Maris the new Environmental Specialist for these sites wants to **start a Green Team** at each location and she wants your help to drum up some excitement and awareness. If you can help Taylor or want to know more, please contact her at email: Taylor.Maris@lhsc.on.ca or call (519) 685-8500 ex52082.

This is a fantastic opportunity for ONEIG members and we will continue to support this in anyway we can.

What are you doing for Earth Day?

Would you consider helping us promote our #ONEIGEarthDay2019 Campaign? Take a selfie, identify yourself as an ONEIG member with the hasthag above, and post it to your Facebook or Instagram (make sure to tag us at @ONEIGrnao)

Let us know what you are doing for Earth Day, or what is important to you regarding the environment and health. Help us spread the word that nurses and nursing students are passionate about environmental health! (And we would love to feature the photos in our next newsletter :)



Andrea Baumann ONEIG
Social Media Officer
supporting Earth 2019



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Is Your Family Emergency Ready?

A flash flood at the Dead Sea. Record-breaking snow falls. Hot and cold temperatures world-wide. Flooding in Florida. A tornado in Gatineau. Extensive wild-fires in B.C. and California. These are all examples of extreme weather events enhanced by climate change. Unusually warm weather immediately followed by extreme cold weather has resulted in flooding or massive ice formations and power outages. One moment we are having rain and then rain turns into ice.

During the massive wildfires in B. C. and California, which were spreading rapidly, residents ran or drove for their lives to escape the encroaching fire immediately behind them.

Emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time. In an emergency situation, families only have a brief window of time when they could safely evacuate their properties and belonging. Are you and your family personally prepared and emergency ready prior to emergency services being able to reach you and your family which may take up to 72 hours? What will you do in the meantime?

1. If family members are separated, have a pre-determined communication plan: who will your children call for help and information? Where is your pre-determined meeting place?
2. Which person will each family member call outside your city to convey that everyone is safe?
3. Check in on vulnerable people, including those living alone or with special needs.
4. If sheltering in place, have a three day supply of drinking water, battery powered radio, a flashlight, a personal alarm, first aid kit, hand sanitizer, prescription drugs, medical supplies and any needed special equipment.
5. If you have to leave, have a "Go Bag" easily accessible if you have to leave quickly" "Go Bag" includes: copies of important documents, copy of your "In Case of Emergency" information, list of all medications, extra set of car and home keys, Credit card and cash in small denominations, bottled water and easy to carry non-perishable food, child and animal care supplies, charged cell phone batteries, flashlight, 3 day supply of non-perishable food, manual can opener

During an emergency, staying current and updated is vital. Emergency information can be obtained through newspapers, Cell phones, e-mails, internet, Twitter and Facebook, local television, radio and members of your community.

Without power, the refrigerator will keep food cool for 4 to 6 hours, a full freezer will keep food frozen for 48 hours and a half freezer will keep food frozen for 24 hours.

Author: Hilda Swirsky RN ONEIG-CANE Liaison





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ONEIG and the “Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment”: Support and Collaboration

Environmental issues concern nurses all across Canada, so we are working to strengthen our relationship with nurses across the country. The following is an update from The Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment (CANE)/ Association d’infirmières et infirmiers pour l’environnement (AIIE) (former Canadian Nurses for Health and the Environment, CNHE).

Thank you ONEIG members for inviting us to contribute to your newsletter and update you on some of the activities AIIE is involved in which we hope will be of interest to you.

In 2017 the Canadian Nurses Association accepted the CANE resolution, “Supporting Ecoliteracy for Current and Future Registered Nurses in Canada”. From this resolutions

- An action items was that the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) revise the 2008 environmental health survey and redistribute the survey to nurses across Canada. The survey has been revised and the survey is set to be distributed in the coming months.
- A dialogue has begun with the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) on the inclusion of a climate change curriculum in undergraduate nursing programs. CASN has secured Public Health Agency of Canada funding for a project with the goal of increasing the knowledge of the effects of climate driven infectious diseases on population health amongst nurse educators, and to foster the integration of this knowledge into Canadian nursing undergraduate education programs. We hope to build off this project in the future and continue to develop reference material to support nurse educators and our future nursing workforce in developing and maintaining their ecoliteracy.
- Currently CANE is preparing curriculum resources and learning activities that can be used by schools of nursing to integrate environmental and ecoliteracy content and theory into nursing curriculum. Nurses can also use these resources to develop their personal ecoliteracy.

To learn about CANE please visit their website at <https://cnhe-iise.ca/curriculum.html>



CANE/AIIE

**Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment
Association d’infirmières et infirmiers pour l’environnement**