

ONEIG Resolution 2021: Annual Environmental Sustainability Reporting

ONEIG Resolution - Annual Environmental Sustainability Reporting

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WHEREAS the RNAO champions healthy and progressive public policies and practices that uphold the values of diversity, inclusivity, equity, and social justice;

WHEREAS the climate emergency and destruction of ecological systems are public health crises that disproportionately and negatively impact marginalized populations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the RNAO commits to ongoing ecological footprint reporting that incorporates environmental sustainability metrics into its publicly available annual report, including an assessment of the organization's waste, carbon footprint, and any applicable social and environmental impacts of its operations and investments.

Background

The climate emergency, the destruction of ecosystems, and increasing environmental pollution, such as plastics pollution, are converging crises that represent urgent health concerns (1-3). As stated by Horton and colleagues, “the harms we continue to inflict on our planetary systems are a threat to our very existence as a species” (4). Furthermore, those already most marginalized will suffer disproportionate health impacts as a result of these effects of these crises, including toxicity, extreme weather, wildfires, heat stress, and forced migration (3). Numerous nurses and nursing organizations have emphasized that our profession has an ethical and social responsibility to both respond to the current and predicted impacts and participate in the necessary steps to mitigate and transform both healthcare and society more broadly (1, 5-7).

RNAO’s mission to protect and promote health aligns with the goals of the Paris climate agreement and United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (8-9). Every member of RNAO has a responsibility to actively provide leadership to achieving these goals so that future generations will be able to thrive in a healthier, just, and sustainable world. Reporting on both social and environmental responsibility is increasingly becoming an expectation across many sectors (10-11) and a number of supports are available to assist with organizational ecological footprint assessments (12-14). As a leader in health care, RNAO has a unique ethical and social responsibility to respond to our current ecological crises and their impacts in a transparent and public manner. Alongside its current reporting on social health impacts, the RNAO must now begin to evaluate and report its own ecological and climate footprint.

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