

Newsletter

April 2025

President's Message

Opening words from
Andrew Marlow, the new
Chair of MHNIG.

MHSU Summit

Learn what amazing
programs RNAO has set in
motion to improve mental
health care and nursing
practice.

Upcoming Events & RNFOO AWARDS

Look out for these special
opportunities coming up!

Dear MHNIG members,

For those of you I haven't met (and with almost 700 members across the province that is likely most of you) my name is Andrew Marlowe. **After serving as the Finance ENO for the MHNIG since 2021, I have recently moved into the role of Chair, taking over from Shauna Graf.** Shauna put immense work into the MHNIG over her time in the role, even extending her term to keep the MHNIG running when there wasn't anyone to replace her. **She leaves big shoes to fill, but I'll be doing my best!**

Just a little bit about myself,

almost my entire nursing career has been spent in mental health settings. I started my nursing journey in 2013 with the mental health program at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton; first in an acute mental health unit, then a Schizophrenia focused program, before finally settling in Forensics (working with Hoodo Ibrahim; another past Chair). Over that time I was also able to start teaching RN students, as both a preceptor, clinical instructor, and later lecturer. I then moved to St. Joseph's Healthcare London to progress my career into an educator role, where (continued on the next page...)



Pictured Andrew encouraging people to join MHNIG at the MHSU

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I covered a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient programs. I'm still in London; now working casually both as an after hours leader with St Joe's, but also at London Health Sciences Centre as a practice consultant focused on workplace violence prevention and staff safety- two of my biggest passions I developed from my time spent in mental health nursing. I'm excited to bring this experience into the MHNIG Chair role, helping the group to promote the role of the Registered Nurses & Nurse Practitioners in diverse mental health settings.

For my term as chair, my goal is that I want to increase the value that you as members see from the MHNIG, and your executive team is already hard at work for that...

The first way we're looking to accomplish that is to get back to **hosting regular events**. Part of the MHNIG mission is to provide a forum for communication and the exchange of ideas; and that's exactly what we want to do with our upcoming harm reduction & mental health nurses' drop-in event (more on page 5). We also plan to continue with our **educational webinars** on topics like substance use and RN psychotherapy, as well as hopefully hosting some in-person events again.

Another change you'll notice for the MHNIG is how we handle the newsletter. Traditionally, this has been a twice-yearly that can get quite lengthy. We're going to be experimenting with **more frequent, but much shorter - newsletters throughout the year**.



**Looking forward to a wonderful year,
Andrew Marlowe, RN, MN, MBA
Current Chair, MHNIG**

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RNAO's Mental
Health & Substance
Use Program
Driven by evidence
Guided by compassion

STRONGER TOGETHER:

RNAO MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE SUMMIT



MHSU Summit

MHNIG was thrilled to attend RNAO's first-ever Mental Health & Substance Use (MHSU) Summit this March! The two-day event was packed with motivating presentations, innovative ideas, and a clear message: we're stronger together. This theme echoed throughout the summit, highlighting RNAO's strong commitment to advancing mental health care and nursing across Ontario.

The first day was dedicated to learning about the RNAO's **Youth Wellness Champions (YWC)** program—an amazing peer-based **initiative** bringing mental health and substance use education into schools and public health settings. With a strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the program creates safe, supportive spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ and racialized youth. It was so encouraging to see RNAO's commitment to youth mental health in action.

Learn more about the program here:
<https://rnao.ca/bpg/youth-wellness-champions>



Youth Wellness Champions



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Another major highlight was the focus on Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs) and the **Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO)** program. RNAO's dedication to evidence-based care goes far beyond development—it's about **real-world impact**. On day two, we heard how BPSOs are transforming mental health care by improving outcomes, supporting staff, and building partnerships with mental health and academic institutions across Ontario.

BPSO

Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO)

Transforming Nursing Through Knowledge

Social movement of science

Learn more about the program here:
<https://rnao.ca/bpg/bpsso>

The summit also gave us the chance to connect with others, share what MHNIG has been working on, and dream big about the future of mental health nursing.



The event ended with an activity where participants wrote down what they want to see happen in mental health care by the next MHSU Summit—we're looking forward to being a part of how these hopes will become reality.

**By Tiffany Cheng RN,
Communications ENO**

Taken at the MHSU Summit MHNIG booth, pictured from left to right: Shauna, Andrew, and Tiffany

A raffle was held to give away a free MHNIG membership
Congratulations to Rosie Yoon, who was our winner!

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Upcoming Events:

**Harm Reduction & Mental
Health Nurses' Virtual
Support Drop-in**
April 15 @ 6pm-8pm

Sign up **HERE**
[https://chapters-
igs.rnao.ca/events/205](https://chapters-igs.rnao.ca/events/205)

Both events open to both RNAO
members and non-members!



**HARM REDUCTION &
MENTAL HEALTH
NURSES' VIRTUAL
SUPPORT DROP-IN**

Holding space for nurses impacted by the
closure of harm reduction services. An
opportunity for nurses to come together, build
community, share resources and experiences.

15 April 2025 | Drop-in anytime 6pm-8pm | Hosted by RNAO

MINISTRY MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

HOSTED BY



Inviting mental health
professionals and ministry
leaders at the
**2025 National Ministry Mental
Health Summit**
at Tyndale University
May 20-22

Register HERE
[https://www.churchmental
healthsummit.com/canada](https://www.churchmentalhealthsummit.com/canada)

(Outside of RNAO event)

MHNIG and RNFOO Awards and Grants

Each year, the **MHNIG funds three awards for nurses pursuing graduate education or research in mental health related topics.** The winner of this year's Dr. Hildegard E. Peplau Award is Caitlin Cosgrove; and the winners of this year's Research in Mental Health Nursing Award were Tina Ranta and Kristina Tsvygun. We look forward to sharing more about their exciting research soon!

The MHNIG is also happy to announce the addition of two new awards through the RNFOO's new Nurses in Action awards stream, which focuses on nurses currently practicing.

The **MHNIG Special Project Awards** provides funding for an RN practicing in a mental health setting looking to complete a special project in their workplace. This could include a quality improvement initiative, addressing a gap in service, or overcoming a barrier where it's hard to obtain institutional funding. Examples may involve purchasing supplies for new or enhanced client-related interventions, a piece of equipment or resource to streamline care delivery, or materials for a new therapeutic group program.

How to apply?

link and more on the next page...



MHNIG Special Project Awards Application Criteria



Applicants must:

- submit a project proposal, including budget and evaluation plan
- be currently practicing in an inpatient or outpatient mental health setting
- identify leadership support for the project in their setting
- be a member of the RNAO Mental Health Nursing Interest Group for at least one year
- be willing to share the results of their project in a presentation to MHNIG members

Applicants who have received a previous award from MHNIG are not eligible for this award (does not include scholarships).

Two awards offered: one prioritizing inpatient areas and one for outpatient areas.

The value of each award is \$500.



Applications for these awards will open April 14th, and the deadline for submitting these applications is 4:00 PM on Monday, June 2, 2025. **Please visit the RNFOO website to apply: <https://www.rnfoo.org/nurses-in-practice-awards/>**

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or through our website contact page

We look forward to connecting with you!

