

December 22, 2011

Ms. Anne Coghlan
Executive Director
College of Nurses of Ontario
101 Davenport Road
Toronto, Ontario M5R 3P1



Dear Ms. Coghlan,

I am writing on behalf of the Community Health Nurses Initiatives Group (CHNIG) of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) to express concern about the College of Nurses of Ontario's decision to partner in the development of a computer-adaptive Registered Nurse (RN) entry registration exam with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Our concern lies not only in the implications of this decision but also in the lack of consultation.

The decision carries long-term and serious implications for Canadian nursing. While the CNO has outlined their reasons, the failure by the CNO to advise its members that such a decision was being considered or to seek input from stakeholders and members is unacceptable. While the CNO has an obligation to protect the public, informing registrants regarding issues related to the exam in advance of action, is in the public interest. CNO has an obligation to inform and seek feedback from members. As a self-governing body this raises concern about transparency of decision making at CNO.

Our members also have questions about the potential implications of selection of a foreign company with regards to ownership of test data, security of nurses' personal information, and implications for nursing practice and nursing education. Will the US Patriot Act have implications? How can an exam developed outside Canada appropriately reflect Canadian curriculum, research, cultural sensitivities, our health-care system, understanding of the broad social and environmental determinants of health and nursing values such as those in the Canadian Community Health Nursing Professional Standards of Practice? The RN examination is not merely a test of knowledge but also a reflection of a nurses' understanding of the Canadian context of nursing practice.

We strongly urge the CNO to reconsider its decision, involve their membership and consider a truly "Canadian" Registered Nurse Exam.

Warm regards,

Katie Dilworth
President, CHNIG