

What is CNO? Elections



COLLEGE OF NURSES
OF ONTARIO
ORDRE DES INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS DE L'ONTARIO

THE STANDARD OF CARE.

Introduction

The nursing profession has been delegated the privilege of self-regulation. Through the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), nurses can set requirements for entry into the profession, establish, promote and enforce standards of practice and conduct, and ensure the quality of nursing practice in the province through the Quality Assurance (QA) Program.

Every nurse in the province is an important contributor to self-regulation. By adhering to standards of practice and conduct in daily practice, and by participating in the QA Program, nurses support self-regulation.

Participating in the election of Council and committee members is another important way nurses can be involved in self-regulation. By taking the time to vote, or even going a step further and running as candidates, nurses help shape the future of self-regulation.

Council and committee roles — Why are they important?

CNO's Council and statutory committees make decisions that are important to nurses. Council members approve changes to entry-to-practice requirements, standards of practice and conduct, and Quality Assurance requirements such as Reflective Practice. These changes can affect nursing practice.

Elected members on Council and committees bring expertise about nursing practice and an understanding of today's realities to their decision-making. They reflect each nurse's commitment to the public's right to safe, effective and ethical nursing care.

Of the 39 members of Council, 21 are nurses (14 RNs and seven RPNs) elected by their peers. The remaining are members of the public appointed by the provincial government. Twenty-eight elected committee members (17 RNs and 11 RPNs) also provide input by participating with Council members in the work of the statutory committees — Client Relations, Complaints, Discipline, Fitness to Practise, Quality Assurance and Registration. (For more information on the mandate of these committees visit CNO's Web site.) Decisions made by these committees impact individual nurses and require nursing expertise. As with Council, all committee decisions are made in the public interest.

Nominations

For elections, the College has divided the province into eight electoral districts, a description of which can be found on CNO's Web site along with the dates of elections. Elections are held in each region every three years. A by-election may occur to replace a member who resigns her/his position before the completion of the term.

With the fall issue of its membership journal, *The Standard*, CNO sends a nomination package to members in the districts where an election is scheduled.

Candidate eligibility

Candidates for election must be registered in either the General (RN or RPN) or Extended [RN(EC)] Class. Candidates must also meet the following requirements:

- be employed in nursing or, if not practising, must reside in the electoral district for which she/he is nominated;
- not be in default of payment of any CNO fees;
- not had her/his Certificate revoked or suspended in the six years preceding the date of the election, other than for non-payment of fees;

- not had a finding of professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity within three years preceding the date of the election;
- not been disqualified by the Council in the past three years;¹ and
- not have a referral currently before the Discipline or Fitness to Practise Committees.

Candidates come from all areas of nursing practice, including long-term care, acute care, telehealth, hospitals and community care. Members of the Retired, Temporary and Transitional classes are not eligible to run for office or vote.

Candidates are eligible to stand for election in only one capacity — as either a Council or committee member. The term of office for elected candidates is three years. Members can serve two consecutive terms in one position, either as a Council or committee member.

Members elected to Council do not represent the interests of the nurses in their region. Members of Council make decisions that are in the public interest and further the College's mandate of public protection.

Expectations of elected members

Having a cross-section of the nursing profession among Council and committee members is crucial. Any RN or RPN who meets the eligibility criteria can serve. As members of the College, they are expected to have an understanding of current nursing practice. There are, however, specific expectations that potential candidates should be prepared to meet, which include:

- making decisions in accordance with CNO's mission and vision (public interest focus);
- arranging schedules to meet time commitments (see the College's Web site for specifics);
- reviewing preparatory materials in advance of meetings;

- participating in discussion and decision making; and
- maintaining confidentiality.

Voting

Voting in elections is an important way that each and every member can participate in self-regulation. It is a nurse's opportunity to support the candidate(s) who best reflect her/his beliefs about quality nursing care and public protection.

To vote, members must hold a current General or Extended Class Certificate of Registration and must not be in default of payment of fees. Voters must also work or reside (if not practising nursing) in the electoral district in which the election is being held.

Elections take place through the mail. To assist nurses in making an informed decision, voters are sent a package that includes a one-page statement from each candidate and a ballot. Each nurse needs to take personal responsibility for exercising her/his right to vote. Nurses should take this opportunity to put themselves in self-regulation.

For more information

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¹ Council can disqualify Council or committee members for specific reasons such as a serious breach of the Conflict of Interest bylaw. For example, it is a conflict of interest to serve on Council and be a member of the Board of Directors of a provincial nursing organization or provincial bargaining unit representing nurses. If Council learned that one of its members was elected to another provincial nursing board, and had not declared the conflict and resigned, Council would disqualify the member.