



May 6, 2015

The Value of a Nursing Association

In 2005, the introduction of the Health Professions Act mandated the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia (RNABC) to change from an association, to the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC). The CRNBC was given the mandate to protect the public and no longer speak for nurses across the province. This left a significant gap for both registered nurses and nurse practitioners in the province. The British Columbia Nurse Practitioner Association (BCNPA) was created to lead and advocate for Nurse Practitioners in British Columbia and the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC) was developed a few years later to ensure an advocacy voice for nursing. As a result, all nursing groups and associations are now working together and speaking as one, a historic first in the province. We are supportive of the work of the ARNBC and believe it is essential to a strong nursing profession in the province.

The value of a Nursing Association cannot be under estimated. The BCNPA knows this all too well. The Health Professions Act also allowed for the introduction of the Nurse Practitioner role in British Columbia. At that time, the role faced significant challenges including a lack of awareness and recognition of the role as well as barriers to implementation and sustainability of Nurse Practitioners in the provincial health care system. The work of the BCNPA has ensured the sustainability of the NP role and a strong voice for ongoing issues that Nurse Practitioners continue to face in the province.

The BCNPA was highly disappointed to learn that the viability of the Association of Registered Nurses of BC (ARNBC) is threatened by legal action from the BC Nurses Union. We have to ask how does this help the profession? Why would one nursing group seek to try and overtake another? These questions deserve answers. An association, not a union, provides professional advocacy and there is a need for both. This legal action is costing both nurses and nurse practitioners and should come to a stop. The nurses and nurse practitioners of BC deserve better. This threatens the very foundation of the nursing profession in the province of BC and needs to stop.

This legal action has significant impact for the profession of nursing and in the opinion of the BCNPA is counterproductive to building a strong united nursing voice. United we stand with our nursing association colleagues (LPNs, RNs, RPNs) to advance the profession to provide professional development and education, and to influence healthy public policy now and for the future of British Columbians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Marchuk', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stan Marchuk, BSN, MN, NP(F), CNeph(c)
President