

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Sharon Hollett RN, BN, CPN(C), ORNAC President, works as a staff nurse in the operating room at the Saint John Regional Hospital in New Brunswick. Sharon specializes in cardiac, plastics, and orthopedic surgery. She is a Past-President of NBORN and served as the New Brunswick Board Director on the ORNAC board for three years. Sharon has also held the positions of Secretary and President-Elect for ORNAC.*

[president@ornac.ca](mailto:president@ornac.ca)



**A**s I write this in December 2021 it has been a busy week at the hospital where I work. I have picked up some extra time to help with the growing list of patients who need urgent and emergency surgery. Our two-page long booking list is considered too long in my facility as we have specific targets to meet to ensure that patients receive their needed surgery in a timely manner. This is a benchmark that operating rooms strive to meet across Canada.

Yesterday's case was a polytrauma, eleven hours long, and there are images in my head now that I cannot get rid of. It's been a sleepless night and I am thankful for a day off. Yet, at the same time, I am incredibly proud to have been a part of the team that worked so diligently yesterday to offer this patient a better quality of life by preserving what was left of her limb.

The theme for this year's Perioperative Nurses Week is "Caring for others starts with caring for ourselves: The value of being valued." Congratulations to Lisa Bolton from Saskatchewan for submitting the winning theme!

Caring for ourselves as perioperative nurses is much on my mind. Our cases have been tough. I have watched our team provide care to a COVID-19

positive patient who was a victim of domestic violence, care for a COVID-19 positive patient who is on long-term ECMO, and manage the steady, and never-ending, stream of patients requiring laparoscopic cholecystectomies, fixes for various fractures, and exploratory laparotomies. We have troubleshot equipment and instrument issues after hours when little support is available. Much of my frustration from yesterday came from not having adequate supplies as much of what we needed was on backorder. Improvisation was at the forefront of our case which takes extra effort and some amazing communication skills. If you search "self-care" online you find images of people appreciating a steaming cup of coffee, a glass of wine, a bubble bath, or a day at the spa. But that is not the type of self-care that I am thinking of for perioperative nurses. Exposure to repetitive and traumatic cases is wearing us down over time. We are tired. Caring for ourselves includes access to mental health supports, structured shift schedules, and limited overtime. Appropriate breaks throughout our day and co-workers who are also well supported. A rested and supported team is a productive and resilient team.

The second part of 2022's Perioperative Nurses Week theme is "The value of being valued". I would reason that

there are two parts to this concept. Part one would be value from external sources. Recognition of our knowledge and skills from employers, supervisors, and other perioperative team members. Part two is value from within. Our members are what makes ORNAC valued. We are supported by our members and our volunteers. Crucial elements like our Standards for Perioperative Nursing Practice would not exist without them. They provide discussion and critical review of relevant research to validate our practice. I have had the opportunity in the past few months to see the questions that are coming to the standards committee from our members. These questions help us achieve excellence by reflecting current perioperative practice and stimulating discussion on a national level. They also direct the Standards Committee's focus towards the evolving practice that we are facing right now. They show that perioperative nurses are constantly analyzing issues within our workplaces and are advocating for patient safety. Thank you for valuing what we do as a national group so that we can promote and grow our practice! 🍁

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hollett". The signature is fluid and cursive.