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CareNow Ontario is an organization representing and supporting the medical conditions of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM) and Environmental Sensitivities



DIRECTORS' REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 12, 2022

CareNow Ontario (formerly The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario (MEAO)) last held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) on September 29, 2021. This report details activities from that meeting to present.

The Covid-19 pandemic started in March, 2020 and from that date to now, CareNow Ontario (formerly MEAO) has held its board meetings, AGM and other connected meetings online via Zoom. This has proven to be a very successful way of holding meetings and getting business completed.

REFRESHING THE ASSOCIATION:

CareNow Ontario (formerly MEAO) was in need of revitalization and updating in many different areas, and the board of directors set about to make several much needed changes.

New By-laws:

The first step in refreshing the association was ratifying MEAO's new by-laws at the AGM of 2018.

Resolution Updating the Objects:

The next step in refreshing the association was updating our very old and out of date Objects, after which new Supplementary Letters Patent were approved on November 13, 2020.

In the course of time, CRA responded via our corporate lawyer, Alan Belaiche, and requested a minor change to the Objects which basically meant removing three words. The three words to be removed were "Advancing education and ". A Resolution was duly passed at the AGM to make the changes to the Corporation's letters patent and the amended Objects are as follows:

To improve care, treatment and support of individuals in Ontario who are living with complex, chronic, environmentally-linked medical conditions, focused on, but not limited to, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia (FM), and environmental sensitivities/multiple chemical sensitivity (ES/MCS), by:

- (i) Providing support to individuals, their families and caregivers, such as, publishing newsletters and maintaining website(s) with current information about the relevant conditions; and*
- (ii) Working with relevant government and public agencies, health and social services agencies and other professionals, the media and the public.*

Resolution re Number of Directors:

BACKGROUND:

1. The Corporation was incorporated under the *Corporations Act* (Ontario) by Letters Patent dated the 24th day of April, 1992 (the "**Letters Patent**");
2. In November, 2020, the Corporation sought supplementary letters patent to amend and update its corporate objects. The Corporation was successful in its application and supplementary letters patent were granted recognizing the Corporation's new corporate objects (the "**2020 Corporate Objects**");
3. In August, 2022, the Corporation sought Articles of Amendment to change the corporate name from The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario ("**MEAO**") to CareNow Ontario. The Corporation was successful in its application and Articles of Amendment were granted recognizing the Corporation's new name;
4. The *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010* (Ontario) allows for the Corporation to have a fixed number of directors or to set a range for a minimum and maximum number of directors. If a Corporation sets a range for a minimum and maximum number of directors, a decrease in the number of directors does not shorten the term of an incumbent director;
5. The Corporation's Bylaw No 2. section 3 states that the "the board of directors is made up of seven directors".
6. According to the Government of Ontario records, the Corporation's number of directors is currently fixed at seven. Changes to the number of directors requires the submission of Articles of Amendment; and
7. Articles of Amendment require a Special Resolution of the Members, meaning at least two-thirds of the Corporation's Members in attendance at a Members' meeting must approve the Special Resolution.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS SPECIAL RESOLUTION:

1. That the Corporation be hereby authorized to prepare and to submit Articles of Amendment changing the number of the Corporation's directors from

being fixed at seven to setting a range for a minimum of three and a maximum of seven directors;

2. That the Members of the Corporation do hereby authorize and empower the directors to fix, by resolution, the number of directors of the Corporation within the approved range of three to seven; and
3. Any two directors or any one director and one officer are authorized to take all such actions and to execute and deliver to the Government of Ontario all such necessary or appropriate documentation, including the Articles of Amendment, with such additions, deletions or other changes as may be necessary or desirable for the implementation of this resolution.

Name Change:

The next step of revitalization of the organization was the name change to better reflect the work the organization does and to make it clear that the organization represents chronic, complex environmentally-linked medical conditions including Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM) and Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS).

- Early in 2022, the board of directors set up a series of consultation meetings via a well-known branding consultant, Jeff Swystun, who undertook the consultations pro bono for which the board of directors is very grateful.
- Towards the end of the consultations, the MEAO board of directors chose the name CareNow Ontario as the name best representing the organization and its work
- Our corporate lawyer had NUANS searches done
- An Informational meeting was held on June 7th, 2022 with invitations and a backgrounder document sent out to our entire contact database. The Information meeting was to explain how the consultations worked and how the new name was arrived at
- Then a Special Members Meeting was held on June 21st, 2022 and a Resolution was passed by the registered membership accepting the new name of CareNow Ontario
- Our corporate lawyer then prepared Articles of Amendment which the Ontario government accepted. There were delays due to a new online registration system which required changes - Changes also must be in accordance with the new Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) which came into force almost a year ago.

REBRANDING/WEBSITE/LOGO/WORKMARK

The former MEAO set out to refresh its website approximately 18 months ago. As we have previously explained, this has not been an easy job as we are doing this work with minimal funds and external support. Then there were technical and software delays.

However, when it became clear the MEAO board was making headway with choosing a new name for the organization, the web designer was asked to put a hold on the work in order to conclude the name change process.

The CareNow Ontario board requested the web designer to proceed with the new website when we received confirmation that not only the Ontario government but also CRA approved of the name change.

We further sought the help of a graphic artist for the Wordmark, also known as a logo, and preparation of a new letterhead.

We are very happy to advise that the website is progressing, and we hope to have it launched in the next few weeks but we cannot give a definite date at this time.

THE ACTION PLAN REGARDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

As you know, the major focus for CareNow Ontario (formerly MEAO) continues to be to have a system of care and social supports created for those living with chronic, complex environmentally-linked medical conditions including Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM) and Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS).

Dr. Brian Schwartz submitted his action plan report for an implementation plan for the recommendations in the final report of the Task Force on Environmental Health to the then Minister of Health, Christine Elliott. Adrianna gave an update on government relations.

May 12th INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAY FOR MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME, FIBROMYALGIA AND ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES/MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY

On May 12th, 2022, MEAO hosted a Zoom meeting to mark International Awareness Day for ME/CFS, FM and ES/MCS.

Dr. Farah Tabassum and Dr. Sarah Selke, who are staff physicians at Women's College Hospital's Environmental Health Clinic (EHC) were our guest speakers. They are two young, knowledgeable physicians with fresh new ideas, who will be carrying on the work of the Environmental Health Clinic. They shared some the latest research on ME/CFS, FM and ES/MCS

France Gelinas who on May 12th was the NDP MPP candidate for the Nickel Belt Riding, and now is the re-elected NDP MPP for that riding, also attended by Zoom. She has

been the NDP health critic for over a decade and once again confirmed her support to MEAO. She continues to advocate to the government for making the Action Plan Report of Dr. Brian Schwartz public and to get action on the recommendations.

SAFE HOUSING for ES/MCS PATIENTS

With the sad recent passing of Dr. Lynn Marshall of the Environmental Health Clinic, who was a tireless worker for patients with environmentally-linked medical conditions and also an advocate for safe housing for patients with ES/MCS, we lost a big champion. However, we reiterated that Dr. Riina Bray, who is the medical director of the Environmental Health Clinic, is continuing the work of Dr. Marshall, and will continue to advocate with the government for safe housing and safe spaces and social care for patients with ES/MCS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- The former MEAO's now CareNow Ontario's financial statements for the year ending 2021 were distributed to all members in the AGM package
- The MEAO Board has once again engaged the firm of Welch LLP, who are proficient in charity and not-for-profit organizations as our chartered accountants.
- The report of Welch LLP concerning MEAO's 2021 financial statements was presented for approval at the AGM

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Keith Deviney and John Doherty were re-elected to the board for a further term of three years.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the board of directors of 2021-2022 for all their hard work, contributions and support: Denise Magi, Keith Deviney, Adrianna Tetley, John Doherty and Laurie Menard.

Also a thank our very efficient administrative assistant, Wafaa Arbaji.

The board of directors of CareNow Ontario would like to say a special thank you to all the members and friends of CareNow Ontario who made many welcome and generous donations to the organization.

CareNow Ontario's website's
<https://carenowontario.org/>

Recognition Inclusion and Equity
<https://recognitioninclusionandequity.org/>

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