



# RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers  
autorisés de l'Ontario

March 30, 2007

Dear Play at the Park,

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario is the professional association representing registered nurses in Ontario. Since 1925, RNAO has advocated for healthy public policy, promoted excellence in nursing practice, increased nurses' contribution to shaping the health-care system, and influenced decisions that affect nurses and the public they serve. It is in the context of this mandate that we are lending our voice to advocate for safe parks and safe cohabitation between dogs and people in Toronto's parks.

Nurses understand the importance to health of outdoors physical activity, and much of this takes place in parks. The rights of the public and of dog owners must be respected, with special attention to the needs of those most vulnerable to confrontations with dogs – children and the elderly. RNAO supports the advice of the Ontario College of Family Physicians in this regard.

In particular, we urge the City of Toronto to develop policy that facilitates the safe cohabitation of people and dogs in the City. That means enforcing the Toronto Municipal Code with respect to dogs running at large, and creating safe enclosures in those public spaces where dogs are allowed to run at large by City by-law. The City should conduct regular reviews of those enclosures to ensure that they are properly managed and provide secure separation between dogs and the rest of the public.

Parks were created for the enjoyment of all, and we call upon the City to take those steps to limit the possibility of conflict between dogs and humans, so that all Torontonians young and old can feel safe when they go to their local park.

Sincerely,

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD(c), O.ONT.  
Executive Director, RNAO

Mary Ferguson-Paré, RN, PhD, CHE  
President, RNAO