

Message from the NSWOCC National Office • Message du Bureau national de l'ISPSCC



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The past six months have been an extraordinary period of celebration, transition, and reflection for NSWOCC®, beginning with the WCET®-NSWOCC® Joint Congress in Vancouver. We were privileged to welcome colleagues from across Canada and around the world to learn, exchange ideas, showcase research and innovation, and celebrate our tri-specialty. Among the many highlights was the induction of our 2026 NSWOCC Fellows: Britney Butt, Karen E. Campbell, Shannon Handfield, Debra Johnston, and Anna Tumchewics. NSWOCC also presented an Honorary NSWOCC Fellowship to Cathy Harley, a fitting recognition as she prepared to retire on May 1 following 22 years of leadership and service to NSWOCC. Cathy played an extraordinary role in building the organization we know today, and we remain deeply grateful for her contributions.

Congress also marked a new chapter in our leadership. At the Annual Members Meeting on April 25, we welcomed Bev Smith as President, Joshua Moralejo as President-Elect, and our newly elected and returning Board Directors. We thank our outgoing and continuing leaders for volunteering their time in service to our members and profession.

Since Vancouver, our work has continued. NSWOCC and the International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP™), with support from Indigenous Services Canada, launched the Evidence-Based Skin Tear Assessment and Classification Toolkit for Indigenous Skin Tones. We sincerely thank expert panel members, along with validation participants and everyone who contributed their knowledge and lived experiences. A webinar series is now sharing these resources and their development with healthcare professionals. This work comes as we also proudly celebrate 10 years of partnership between NSWOCC and ISTAP.

This September, we also celebrated SWAN® Week 2026 under the theme “Quality Improvement SOARS with SWANs!” With more than 500 active SWANs and SWAN students, we are proud to recognize their integral role in advancing quality improvement in wound, ostomy and continence care.

As an NSWOCC family, however, we share not only our accomplishments but also our losses. In August, we were deeply saddened by the passing of Norena Gonzales, RN, BScN, NSWOC, WOCC(C). Norena demonstrated extraordinary perseverance in becoming an NSWOC while undergoing treatment for advanced cancer and continued supporting people living with an ostomy even when her health no longer allowed her to work. Norena worked extraordinarily hard to become an NSWOC, but more importantly, she showed us what it meant to be one.

Through celebration, transition, innovation, and loss, these past months have reinforced that the strength of NSWOCC comes from its people. As we look toward the future, we are excited to bring our community together again for the NSWOCC 46th National Conference, May 12–16, 2027, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, under the theme “Catch the Wave in Halifax! Navigating the Future of Wound, Ostomy and Continence Care.”

Thank you to our members, volunteers, Board, WOC Institute faculty and students, partners, and friends for everything you contribute to our community. After an extraordinary six months, we look forward to continuing this journey together and to seeing many of you in Halifax. •