



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS NURSES

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Attention: ALL IOMSN MEMBERS

Fundamentally, the IOMSN and its members have thrived through collaborative efforts and mutual respect. The statement issued by the board regarding the removal of Aliza Ben-Zacharia as President was limited in that spirit. Since then, approximately half a dozen members have repeatedly urged that more details be provided. It was privately requested that Aliza issue a statement respecting the decision of the board, while disagreeing with it, for the overall good of the organization, and to avoid detailing the problems. Aliza's response last night implied sharing the goal of moving forward. She also stated she's trying to figure out exactly what happened. These additional details are provided as the transparency requested.

Aliza's removal was a necessary decision that the board did not enjoy making. No action like this has been required in the organization's twenty-one year history. There was a pattern of behavior that was threatening the organization's ability to function. It could not continue. The main problem was a destructive management style, completely inconsistent with the collaborative history of the IOMSN, or any well-functioning organization. There were also numerous personal attacks against present and former members, and unsupported allegations of "rigged" systems. The Board found these attacks to be very disturbing. Attempts to have Aliza respect the people and systems that have generally worked well over twenty-one years were summarily dismissed by her.

These concerns were expressed in writing to Aliza, who explained them away without accepting any responsibility for errors in judgment. The Board then took an informal vote of no confidence and shared it directly with Aliza as a sign of the seriousness of the situation to give her "an opportunity to make necessary changes." Specific items were enumerated, and a specific request was made for her behavior to change so the organization could move forward. The Board offered to work with her to move forward toward a collaborative working relationship for the future of IOMSN. It did not work. She dismissed the letter as "invalid" and refused to acknowledge her behavior. Particularly disturbing was her attempt to influence the IOMSN elections by confronting the Nominating Committee and insisting that the ballot be changed.

This series of events, and the knowledge that the organization could not function under that type of leadership, required that the Board exercise its oversight function of removal. The vote was seven in favor of dismissal, with two abstentions. There was no vote in favor of her continuing.

The by-laws provide for the removal of the President as a check against behavior threatening the organization. The Board did not want to openly state all of this information, and regrets that the demands of a few of our 1200 members has necessitated it. The rights to a hearing and appeals of a person being removed from membership referenced by some do not apply to the President. There have been other incorrect statements about the by-laws.

The Board continues to place the well-being of the organization to serve its members and through them the patients above all other concerns. That motivated the issuance of this statement, so that we all may continue with our proper purposes. Finally, the sad, personal attacks which have been made through the Google account, which was created solely for the purpose of advancing knowledge and patient care, are not being addressed on a point by point refutation in this statement. Suffice it to say that they were unwarranted, and all members should strive toward our fundamental base of collaboration and mutual respect.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Pagnotta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia Pagnotta, ARNP-C, MSN, CNRN, MSCN

President IOMSN

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