

# ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION



## **Statement of Beliefs 2011 and 2012**

Including amendments  
Approved at 2010 Biennial Convention

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Statement of Beliefs

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## **Introduction**

This booklet contains both an outline of the goals of this Union and the ONA Constitution.

The goals of the Ontario Nurses' Association are set out as broad, general statements to provide the flexibility to respond to the constantly changing social and political situations. As required, detailed position statements on various areas of concern will be produced and circulated to membership.

## **Philosophy**

Members of the Union are committed to a program, which enhances their social and economic status. As well, the organization's goals include the right to be involved in the determination of policies and legislation concerning nursing practice and the quality of care.

To achieve this goal, it is essential that the organization build positive relationships, and create and maintain harmonious environments within the Union, with employers and other groups to stimulate a free exchange of ideas and information.

## **Vision**

Ontario Nurses' Association: Our Union. Respected. Strong. United.  
Committed to members who care for people.

## **Mission**

ONA is a proactive union committed to improving the economic welfare and quality of work-life for our members, to enable them to provide high-quality healthcare.

## **Objectives**

- The advancement of the social, economic and general welfare of nurses.
- The regulation of employee/employer relations and the negotiation of written contracts that implement progressively better conditions of employment.
- The promotion of effective communication with employers.
- The promotion of knowledge of nurses in all areas related to their social and economic welfare through education and research.
- The promotion of the highest standards of health care.
- The promotion of unity within the nursing profession and other allied fields through co-operation with and support of other organizations that share these objectives.
- To promote an environment where individuals have an opportunity to safely express their differing views and opinions. Conflict does occur and it should be managed constructively encouraging positive relationships, mutual respect and personal satisfaction. Ultimately, conflict management should advance the ability of the leadership to represent the membership.

## **Organization**

Membership in the Union implies rights and responsibilities for each individual member. Members are encouraged to assume an active role in the organization and to assist each other in the development of their full potential within the organization.

- To meet the current needs of members.
- To organize other eligible nurses in the province.
- To facilitate the amalgamation of new groups and Chartered Local Associations to ensure the development of viable Locals.
- To maintain and monitor current regional structures and, when necessary implement a reorganization to ensure the growth and smooth functioning of the regions.
- To combine sectors, wherever possible, to increase the participation of all members in the setting of common bargaining objectives.
- To provide membership with access to the Board of Directors who are responsible and accountable for all decisions made on behalf of the organization. The Board is composed of an elected executive and regional representatives who are accountable to the general membership.
- To encourage membership participation in committee structures to ensure membership wishes are reflected in committees' recommendations.
- To promote membership awareness of all Union meetings and decisions.

## **Funding**

The operation of the Union is funded through the central collection of union dues with rebates to Chartered Local Associations.

- To maintain the solvency of the Union.
- To acquire sufficient funds, through appropriate means, such as the security fund, to finance the goals of the organization.
- To ensure the continuing growth of investment revenue through the sound management of a flexible investment portfolio.
- To actively assist Chartered Local Associations in budgeting expenses.
- To arrange that sufficient dues flow back to Locals to maintain Local services.
- To develop financial self-sufficiency of Locals.

## **Relationships**

The separation of the nurses' union and the professional association was a matter of legal and practical necessity to ensure the effectiveness of both bodies. The Union believes that the separate functions of the union and the professional association contribute to the common goal of the development and maintenance of high quality patient care.

- To foster understanding and trust among ONA, the RNAO, and the College of Nurses through liaison and to continue collaboration with other nurses' unions across Canada and to share in the collection of research and data.

- To continue present ad hoc relationships with other unions and interest groups as circumstances require.

## **Collective Bargaining**

The Ontario Nurses' Association was founded October 13, 1973 to bargain on behalf of nurses. The Union represents registered and graduate nurses employed mainly in three major areas or sectors: hospitals, community health and nursing homes and homes for the aged, whose employers are both public and private and who work in agencies with functions ranging from research to education.

- Members' input identifies aims and priorities to be negotiated.
- To achieve through province-wide negotiations a master collective agreement that standardizes salaries and conditions of work including portability of benefits throughout the province.
- To establish a joint job evaluation process that takes into account the varying work situations of nurses.
- To ensure that nurses are assigned reasonable work assignments which do not jeopardize the quality of health care.
- To encourage, improve and strengthen the desire and the ability of the parties to reach settlement through negotiations.

## **Occupational Health & Safety**

The Ontario Nurses' Association believes that it is the right of all its members to work in a healthy and safe work environment. It further believes in the pursuit of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations. As one of the largest health care unions in the province and in the country, ONA believes it is part of its mandate to exercise a strong leadership role in achieving progressively greater gains in the field of occupational health and safety.

## **Education**

The strength of the Union is directly dependent on the support of an educated, well-informed membership. Only when informed, can members fulfill their responsibility to reflect the Union's purpose, democratic structure and current activities to non-members, employers and the public.

- To provide sufficient educational programs to meet individual member's requirements.
- To develop the skill of membership in lobbying at all political levels outside the Union.
- To develop programs which meet and reflect the changing role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors.
- To provide orientation for committee members so they may knowledgeably perform their respective roles.
- To encourage members to make the public aware of the Union's contributions to the health care system.
- To assist members in their role of patient advocate.

## **The Political Process**

Political process describes the dynamic funnelling of points of view from the public to their accountable elected representatives who make the policy decisions which are then transformed into legislation and programs that are implemented by civil servants.

- The Ontario Nurses' Association considers it vitally important to monitor proposed legislation and be aware of existing laws. Members must be ready to commit time, energy and funds to support the Union's point of view. ONA members must continue to speak out on issues of concern.
- ONA does not support or endorse any political party but may support or oppose a party's position on a particular issue when it coincides or conflicts with the Union's policies and goals.

## **Diversity and Equity**

ONA believes that every member has the right to equal opportunity and full participation in the workplace and in the union. ONA recognizes and values the diversity of its membership and will work to promote equity and diversity in the workplace and in the union. It is the Union's responsibility to see that diversity is reflected in its leadership.

Diversity is about acknowledging differences that can impact on the fair and equitable treatment of people. Diversity can include differences in sex, age, race, ethnicity, language, religion and spiritual beliefs, culture, physical or mental ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, family status, and education.

To achieve its commitment, ONA will strive to:

- Promote awareness of the diversity of our membership and the needs of diverse groups
- Integrate diverse perspectives throughout ONA's educational programs and communications
- Implement initiatives to develop the leadership skills of members from under-represented groups in ONA's leadership
- Identify barriers to equal opportunity and full participation and develop effective policies and procedures to eliminate these barriers
- Provide an inclusive environment that recognizes members' differences
- Ensure that services, organizational structures, activities and policies include and address the needs of diverse members

## **Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Accommodation**

The Ontario Nurses' Association believes that every member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

ONA is committed to working toward the elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment in the workplace and in the union. This includes discrimination and harassment based on grounds prohibited in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* which are race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, age, record of offences,

marital status, family status and disability. ONA will also work to eliminate personal harassment and workplace bullying (*Code and non-Code* harassment).

Accommodation may be required when dealing with members' needs related to disability, religion, family status, pregnancy or other grounds in the *Human Rights Code*. ONA is committed to pursuing accommodation in the workplace and providing accommodation at union functions.

To achieve its commitment, ONA will strive to:

- Provide educational programs and communications addressing discrimination, bullying, *Code and non-Code* harassment and accommodation issues
- Conduct strategic collective bargaining on discrimination, bullying, *Code and non-Code* harassment and accommodation issues
- Address breaches of members' rights through the grievance and arbitration procedure
- Advocate for effective workplace policies and complaint investigation procedures
- Provide policies and procedures for the investigation and resolution of membership complaints
- Provide support mechanisms for members experiencing discrimination, bullying and *Code and non-Code* harassment
- Provide a supportive and welcoming environment for members requiring accommodation
- Provide services, organizational structures, activities and policies concerning human rights and equity issues

## Glossary

**Board of Directors** are elected to represent the opinions and concerns of their respective regions during the decision-making process and to conduct the affairs of the Union.

**Job Evaluation** is the method of determining the value of an individual job in relation to other jobs within an organization. This evaluation assists in establishing minimum and maximum salaries for each job.

**Negotiation Process** is the formalized direct discussions between the union and employer to arrive at an agreement on wages, hours of work and other conditions of employment. The result of this process is a written contract called the collective agreement.