

ONA UPDATE: FALL 2010

The Work of the Union

The following is a summary of ONA's key activities and successes since the last "The Work of the Union" update in Spring 2010.





Student Affiliation

- ▶ Former Canadian Nursing Students' Association President Tyler Kuhk presents his draft toolkit on "Effective Mentorship Tips for Front-line Registered Nurses" after completing a community placement at ONA under the guidance of ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud.
- ▶ A *Recognition Clause for Student Nurses* is reviewed by the ONA Board of Directors and Bargaining Unit strategies are approved to include student nurses where possible.
- ▶ Given the shortage of nurses and our concerns with the clinical component of current university programs, ONA supports a regulatory change to authorize colleges to grant the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, based on the June 2010 document, *Opening Door to Nursing Degrees: Proposal from Ontario Colleges*.

Bargaining/Labour Relations

- ▶ ONA's first Family Health Team at Queen's University in Kingston bargains for its first collective agreement.
- ▶ An arbitrator rules that Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) positions at Shepherd Village Inc. in Scarborough must be included in the ONA Bargaining Unit, a significant award as ONA has several RAI grievances at arbitration.
- ▶ Members in all sectors are given the opportunity to express their bargaining priorities by filling out ONA's



Have a Say questionnaire, offered electronically on our website for the first time.

- ▶ In a significant Workplace Safety and Insurance Board appeal decision, a member who slipped twice while at a nursing home, injuring herself and leading to depression, is paid full loss of earnings benefits until age 65, totalling more than \$120,000.
- ▶ ONA puts out a call for nominations for members in hospital Bargaining Units to serve on the Hospital Central Negotiating Team, and elections are held in the fall.
- ▶ We start preparations for the election process for the Nursing Homes Central Negotiating Team, which we expect to be concluded before the end of the year.
- ▶ ONA wins a precedent-setting arbitration award at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, which highlights the importance of ensuring that benefit levels are not reduced whenever an employer changes insurance carriers.

Government Relations

- ▶ ONA's public awareness campaign, *Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care*, aimed at lobbying the government and employers and educating the public on the serious impact nurse layoffs and reductions in nursing hours are having on patient care, enters its third phase with radio, electronic billboard, transit shelter and French newspaper ads in targeted cities, and by way of social networking sites such as Facebook.



- ▶ ONA speaks out against the government's decision not to restore the moratorium on competitive bidding for home care services, saying it provides a lack of continuity of care for our clients and a lack of job security for our members.
- ▶ Along with our provincial nursing counterparts, ONA continues to call for a transparent, independent and thorough evaluation of the questionable changes to Canadian Blood Services after federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq allows the agency to conduct a pilot project in Manitoba to replace nurses with unskilled workers for initial blood donor screening.
- ▶ ONA prepares a submission on Bill 21, *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, stating that retirement homes should be regulated by the health ministry with limitations set on the appropriate level of care.
- ▶ The Board approves a "new-look" province-wide media campaign for ONA members at a cost of \$750,000 to be taken from the Operating Fund.
- ▶ While ONA agrees with the overall direction of Bill 46, the *Excellent Care for All Act* to create committees and publicly report on quality improvement in hospitals, we state in a submission that the process for doing so requires additional legislative language, not development in regulations.
- ▶ ONA members throughout the province take the opportunity of Labour Day to show union solidarity, put a positive face on our causes and spread important messages about public services.



- ▶ We applaud a new report from Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin that finds a culture of secrecy exists in the province's Local Health Integration Systems – four years after ONA and our allies issued a dire warning about the instigation of the health planning bodies.
- ▶ ONA meets with government representatives and health sector employers over the proposed two-year total compensation freeze for 1-million public sector workers, including ONA members, and states the government should cancel tax cuts for wealthy corporations instead.
- ▶ Board members and Local leaders speak at the Ontario Health Coalition's Regional Summits on hospital fee-for-service funding, held in major centres throughout the province, to discuss changes to the way hospitals are funded, from block grants to a type of fee-for-service.

Local Political Action

- ▶ Thanks to extensive lobbying by Local 100 and its community against London Health Sciences Centre's plan to cut five of its 22 full-time and four of its part-time front-line primary care nurses providing outpatient cancer care, the cuts are rescinded.
- ▶ Members from Peterborough Regional Health Centre fight against a Peer Review's recommendation to eliminate beds and registered nurses to balance its budget by holding rallies outside of their MPP's office and

the hospital, staging an information picket at the city's farmers market, and attending Question Period at Queen's Park.

- ▶ Local 2 members join their brothers and sisters in the labour movement for a solidarity rally in Sudbury, dubbed *Bridging the Gap*, in protest of the eight-month strike of 3,500 workers at Vale Inco, who are fighting for pension and seniority rights, and their share of the company's profits.
- ▶ Local 115 goes door to door in its community on May 1, issuing a *May Day* that Toronto East General Hospital has laid off more than 120 nurses since last summer as part of its initiative to redesign how care is provided.
- ▶ ONA members participate in the Ontario Health Coalition's rally outside the Royal York Hotel in Toronto where Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews gives a speech justifying cutting and closing local hospital services as "quality care."
- ▶ Wearing black ribbons and armbands to symbolize their distress over the elimination of registered nurse positions, ONA members from Local 83 stage a rally and information picket outside the Civic campus of The Ottawa Hospital.
- ▶ Local 83 also joins our allies to protest the government's public sector wage cuts, public service underfunding and corporate tax giveaways at an Ontario Public Service Employees Union information picket during a Liberal Party golf tournament fundraiser in Cumberland.

- ▶ Proving that solidarity gets results, after three days of labour action by ONA and our allies, Engineered Coated Projects Brantford says it is ready to return to the bargaining table with its employees, who have been on strike for two years while the company used scab labour to fill the gap.

Health and Safety



- ▶ ONA members throughout the province honour the thousands of workers who have lost their lives or been injured on the job at Day of Mourning ceremonies.
- ▶ Board members, Local leaders, members and our allies protest the decline of Ontario's workers' compensation system at the annual Injured Workers Day event at Queen's Park.
- ▶ ONA's persistent efforts to end workplace violence come to fruition in the form of significant amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, including domestic violence spillover from home to work and psychological harassment, which came into effect on June 15, 2010.
- ▶ Ontario health care facilities lag decades behind the rest of the work-



force and fail to meet even minimum health and safety standards, ONA tells the Expert Advisory Panel reviewing Ontario's occupational health and safety prevention and enforcement system.

- ▶ Soon after, Expert Advisory Panel Chair Tony Dean and several members of his working group meet with ONA health and safety activists from around Ontario at our provincial office to learn about their realities, what is working and what should be done based on their experiences.

Human Rights and Equity



- ▶ Human rights and equity strategies are approved by the ONA Board, including highlighting education programs in *Front Lines*, the *Human Rights and Equity Bulletin* and other communication vehicles; increasing the profile using the ONA website; and evaluating ongoing strategies regarding the role of the Human Rights and Equity Representative in the Bargaining Unit.
- ▶ In celebration of equality, diversity and human rights, ONA Board members, Local leaders and members

take part in Gay Pride Parades in various parts of the province, including Toronto and London.

Member Education

- ▶ ONA's eLearning platform is launched with a hospital-based Professional Responsibility module to provide members with access to interactive education that can be completed at their own pace and time.
- ▶ ONA's first-ever Leadership Conference, which received rave reviews from participants, provides an opportunity for 25 new Local leaders to learn about their challenging role.
- ▶ The June Provincial Coordinators Meeting includes interesting and informative education sessions on how leaders can influence funding through collective agreement strategies, such as professional responsibility workload complaints; and a review of the successful Cassellholme Independent Assessment Committee hearing in April.
- ▶ ONA holds our first-ever Nurse Practitioner Focus Group to further support and develop strategies for these members.

Organizing Successes

- ▶ Sixty registered nurses at Toronto Grace Health Centre vote to join ONA following a difficult year where the facility was threatened with closure.
- ▶ Nurses and allied health professionals in the following organizations also choose ONA as their union, meaning we welcome 78 new members: Extencicare Scarborough; Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Huntsville; Lady Isabelle Nursing Home, Trout River; Bethesda Services, Thorold; Delhi Long Term Care Centre; Maple View Lodge, Athens; Helen Henderson Care Centre, Amherstview; and VON, North Bay.



- ▶ ONA's Professional Practice Specialists take part in the stakeholder component of the College of Nurses of Ontario's revision to its *Guidelines for Utilization of RNs and RPNs* and the *Utilization of Unregulated Care Providers*.
- ▶ ONA works to ensure that our personal liability coverage, which members have had for almost 20 years, continues well into the future after government changes to the *Regulated Health Professions Act* state that all members covered by the legislation require "personal" liability insurance.
- ▶ Quarterly professional practice teleconnects continue with high ONA member participation and satisfaction.

 *To view "ONA Update: Spring 2010," see the April 2010 issue of *Front Lines* or log onto the ONA website at www.ona.org.

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