

ON A UPDATE: SPRING 2011

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 fall 2011.



Student Affiliation

- Under the theme, *Empowering Change in a New Decade*, ONA staffs a booth at the Ontario Regional Conference of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) in Thunder Bay to explain our services and answer questions.
- ONA shows our commitment to future nurses by supporting and attending the National Conference of the CNSA in Hamilton, which encouraged students to discover the many opportunities in nursing and find their passion.
- Catherine Miller, a second-year nursing student, is named the 2010 Ontario recipient of the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions scholarship and states that she has high respect for ONA and looks forward to becoming an active member when she graduates.

Local Political Action

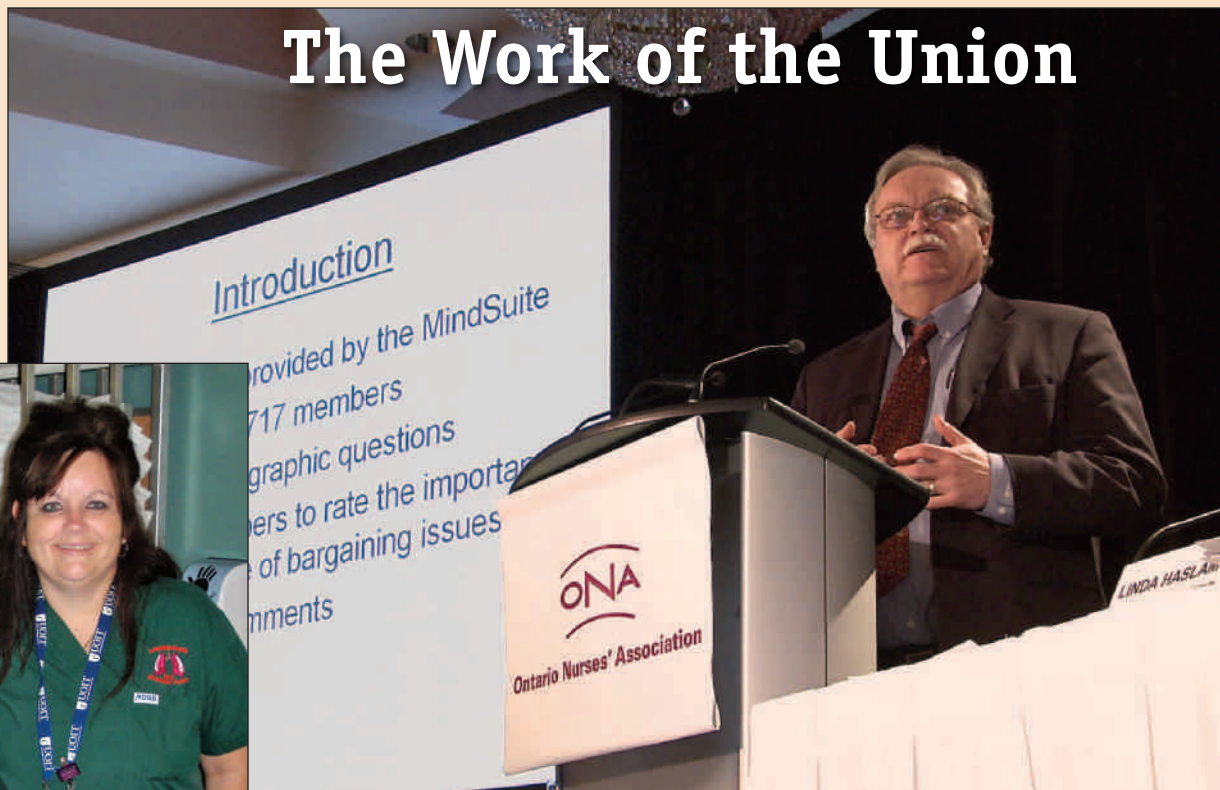
- ONA leaders and members take advantage of a "meet and greet" reception at our 2010 Biennial Convention to ask representatives from the government and members of the opposition parties questions about nursing and the health care system and to lobby for needed changes.
- ONA members join 900 members and 9,000 pensioners of the United Steelworkers Union Local 1005 in their battle for retirement security at the mass *People Versus U.S. Steel* rally in Hamilton.
- Thanks to the lobbying efforts of Local 83 and the overwhelming support of the public, The Ottawa Hospital backs down on its plan to forbid nursing staff from wearing colourful or cartoon scrubs.
- Region 3 members hand out flyers outside a subway station near Queen's Park in Toronto to promote our *Value the Invaluable* campaign and urge commuters to vote in the federal election for their candidate committed to improving our public health care system.
- Members join our allies in the labour movement for an anti-scab rally at Queen's Park, timed to coincide with a vote in the Legislature for a private member's bill, ultimately defeated, which would have banned the growing practice of hiring replacement workers to avoid collective bargaining.



- After a conversation with Local 100 members at the London Gay Pride Parade, London-Fanshawe MPP Irene Mathyssen places a brief statement and link to our *Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care* campaign on her website in the fall of 2010.

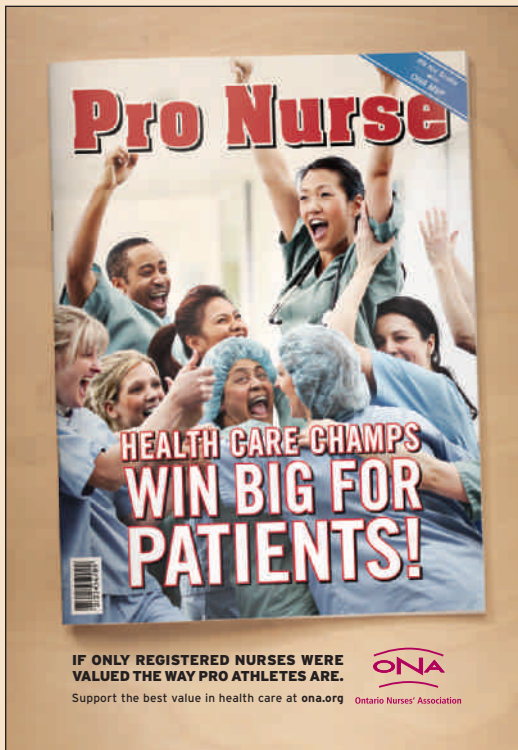
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Bargaining/Labour Relations

- Following bargaining talks in January 2011, mediation in March/April and arbitration in April/May, an arbitration award is handed down to our members in the hospital sector, which provides wage and benefit improvements, including retiree benefits, and is binding and final.
- Elections for member representatives of the Nursing Home Central Negotiating Team are held in the fall of 2010, with the new team receiving orientation in February 2011 and talks getting underway with the participating homes the week of May 2, 2011.
- With unanimous approval from our Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Bargaining Unit Presidents and input from our staff servicing CCACs, the ONA Board of Directors votes in favour of central bargaining for our 10 CCACs, stating it is in the best interest of our members in that sector.
- ONA expresses concern at the plan of Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation, Local 70, to find up to \$1-million in savings this year by reducing sick time, saying that focusing on absenteeism causes sick nurses to feel pressured to return to work before they have recovered.
- ONA lifts its seven-year censure of the Niagara Health System, Local 26, after efforts are made by the hospital to dramatically reduce the number of labour grievances filed and address outstanding ones.
- In a precedent-setting win for our union, an arbitrator rules there is no question that the redeployment of nurses at Quinte Health Care in Belleville, Local 31, to a central transition pool was a layoff under the central agreement and the hospital was obliged to offer severance packages to nurses on the affected units.
- ONA wins at mediation during a jurisdictional dispute, whereby St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Local 75, must assign work in the urology unit exclusively to registered nurses.
- Social workers and registered respiratory therapists at Lakeridge Health, Local 51, whose collective agreement expired on December 31, 2008, obtain an arbitrated settlement after their employer reneges on all prior agreed-to items, including monetary items.



Government Relations

- On the heels of our successful *Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care* campaign, ONA launches phase one of an innovative and clever campaign in November 2010, *Value the Invaluable*, which likens registered nurses to pro athletes and asks Ontarians to value the priceless health care skills, leadership and knowledge they bring to the system. The campaign, which features a series of radio, transit shelter and online ads, receives high praise from members, the media and the public.
- ONA urges the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to move quickly to implement measures to improve long-term care monitoring, as recommended in the report of provincial Ombudsman Andre Marin, which states there are “serious, systemic problems” with the government’s oversight of these facilities.
- Health care funding policies must focus on creating and protecting RN positions, and on targeted retention initiatives, ONA tells the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in our pre-budget submission.
- ONA urges federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty to support the labour movement’s plan to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), which would gradually increase CPP contributions by .43 per cent of pensionable earnings for workers and employers over seven years, effectively doubling the average earnings replaced by CPP pension benefits to a maximum of \$1,868 (in current dollars) per month.
- Representatives of seniors’ groups and unions, including ONA, which make up the Ontario Health Coalition’s (OHC) Long-Term Care Committee, gather at ONA’s provincial office to discuss key issues in this sector.
- ONA continues to speak out against Canadian Blood Services’ decision to replace registered nurses with unregulated unskilled workers for initial blood donor screening, fearing the safety of the country’s blood supply could be at risk.
- The Board releases funds to launch phase two of our *Value the Invaluable* campaign in March 2011, which features a new radio and transit shelter ad, continuing with the pro athlete theme.
- Leading up to the fall 2011 provincial election, ONA participates in Working Families, a coalition formed eight years ago by members of the labour movement to make voters aware of policies that threaten the well-being of working families across Ontario.
- As supported by members at the 2010 Biennial Convention, ONA endorses the *Raise the Rates* campaign, which includes the demand to increase social assistance rates by 40 per cent and restore the Ontario Dietary Subsidy Program.

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➤ ONA attends a Canadian Medical Association/Maclean's magazine panel presentation and open forum in Toronto to discuss health care transformation in Canada.

➤ A letter of support is sent to Wisconsin workers after Republicans in that State's Assembly and Senate pass a measure to effectively strip collective bargaining rights from most public workers to bring state spending under control.

➤ Ontario nurses support greater transparency and improved accountability for public funding for health sector organizations, ONA states in a submission on Bill 122, *the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act*.

➤ ONA interviews members and prepares a submission on health care needs in rural and northern Ontario from a nurse's perspective for the government panel looking into this issue.

➤ While ONA is pleased the Ontario budget takes some action to ensure health care dollars are going to improve health outcomes, we know that a 1.5 per cent increase in hospital operation budgets is not enough.

➤ ONA welcomes the announcement that the government is investing \$99.7-million in the New Graduate Guarantee program in 2011 to help employers create full-time, six-month positions that can be offered to new nursing graduates; \$8-million annually in the Late-Career Nursing Initiative, so approximately 1,500 late-career nurses can take part in the program; and \$64-million in 2011-12 for 60,000 new post-secondary seats of which 15 per cent (about \$9.6-million for this year) will be for RN programs.

➤ To mark Mother's Day and Nursing Week 2011, ONA releases important new research and recommendations that focus on the value of care provided by women, including nurses.

➤ ONA continues to lobby for changes and come up with solutions to help undo the harm done to nurses and their patients in the 1990s, ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud tells the International Congress of Nurses Conference in Malta.

➤ The provincial government's decision to expand the powers of nurse practitioners to allow them to discharge and admit patients from hospitals is good news for patients, who will be able to get home to their families sooner, ONA says.

➤ ONA makes a submission on the proposed initial draft regulations for the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, which covers matters such as care and safety standards, and areas where regulations have not yet been issued.

➤ ONA applauds the government's announcement of 72 public health nurses (two full-time per health unit) to serve priority groups in communities across the province.



Health and Safety

- ➔ The Expert Panel reviewing Ontario's occupational health and safety system issues a report containing 46 recommendations, which reflected many of those spelled out in ONA's submission and from our members, who met with the panel last fall.
- ➔ ONA applauds the news that Metron Construction Corporation, its owner Joel Swartz and others associated with the company will be prosecuted under the *Criminal Code of Canada* for criminal negligence in the deaths of four migrant workers, who fell 13 storeys when their scaffolding broke in half on Christmas Eve 2009.
- ➔ Nurses must never dismiss incidents of violence, no matter how trivial they think they are, ONA tells a symposium on workplace violence, held on National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women in Windsor.
- ➔ ONA members across the province remember the registered nurses, allied health professionals and thousands of other workers who have lost their lives or suffered injuries on the job during Day of Mourning events.
- ➔ ONA provides an oral presentation and written submission to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Funding Review focusing on the issue of full funding and WSIB incentive programs.
- ➔ Thanks to our submission and online letter writing campaign, the government amends Bill 160, *Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act*, which addresses the majority of our concerns.

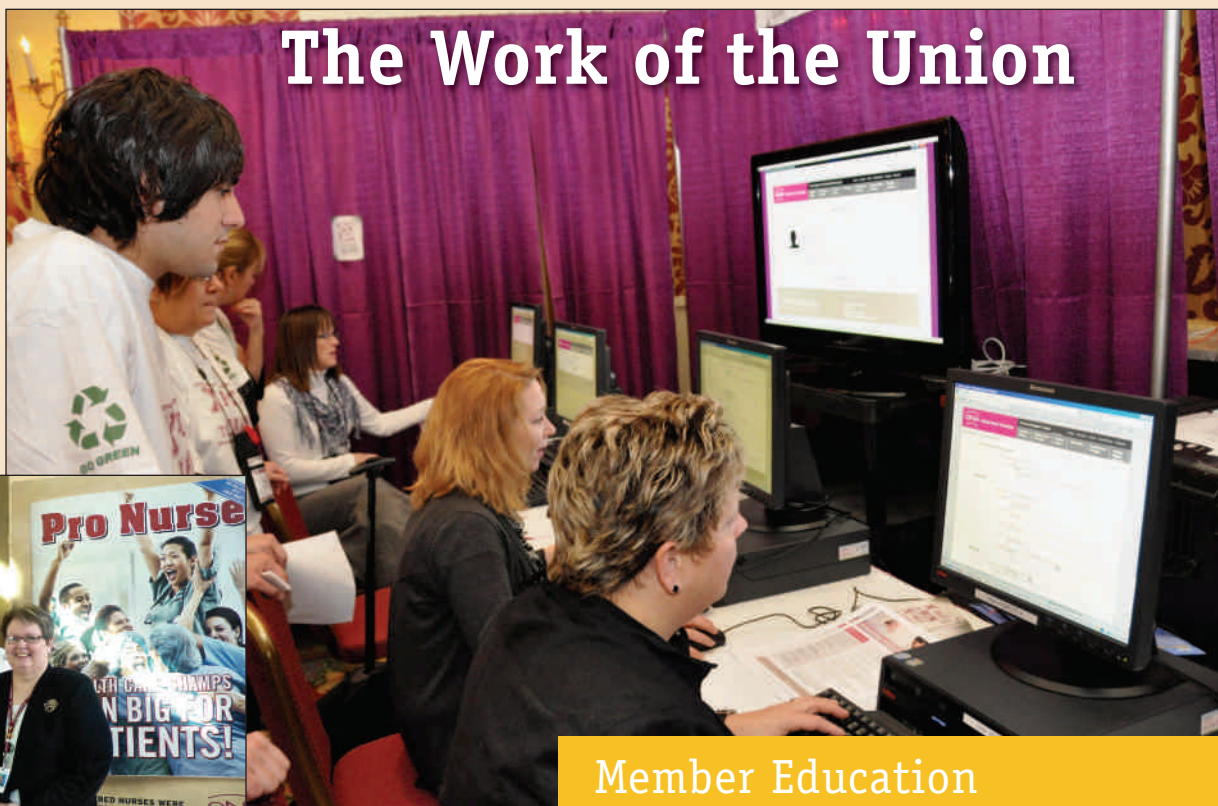


Human Rights and Equity

- ➔ The annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus, held during Biennial Convention week, enjoyed the highest number of attendees ever, with 99 per cent of participants stating they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the day.
- ➔ Important amendments are made to ONA's *Statement of Beliefs*, under "Diversity and Equity," at the Biennial Convention, including replacing the word "gender" with "sex" in describing differences under "diversity."
- ➔ ONA adds our voice to the *Colour of Poverty* campaign's open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, urging him to reaffirm the federal government's commitment to equity by strengthening, not dismantling, the Employment Equity Program.
- ➔ To remove or minimize systemic barriers experienced by RNs and ensure the human rights of other professional employees in this province, the Ontario Human Rights Commission's policies must set standards for how regulatory bodies of self-governing professions should act to ensure compliance with the *Human Rights Code*, ONA states in a submission.
- ➔ ONA holds its first quarterly human rights and equity teleconnect, which receives rave reviews from the participants.

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Organizing Successes

- Approximately 40 registered nurses from the James Bay region are now members thanks to a successful *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act (PSLRTA)* vote in late February 2011 following the amalgamation of the federal Weeneebayko General Hospital in Moose Factory and the provincial James Bay General Hospital, which operates three sites.
- Following a *PSLRTA* vote at the Canadian Mental Health Association in Windsor, ONA represents our first all-nurse practitioner Bargaining Unit.
- After a merger of North Bay and District Hospital with the North East Mental Health Centre, nurses at the facilities overwhelmingly choose ONA as their union during a *PSLRTA* vote, meaning we retain 466 members and welcome an additional 79 members.
- In one of our most successful certification votes to date, nurses at Trillium Health Centre in Mississauga say “yes” to joining ONA, resulting in more than 1,600 new members.
- Nurses and allied health professionals in the following organizations also choose ONA as their union, meaning we welcome 75 new members: Hampton Terrace Care Centre, Brant Centre Long-Term Care Residence, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, OMNI Garden Terrace, and Providence Manor Long-Term Care.

Member Education

- Members and student affiliates can access a vast array of ONA education programs at no cost and from the comfort of their own home after our eLearning platform is officially launched at the Biennial Convention.
- ONA's 2011 *Education Brochure* is posted on our website to detail all the workshops, eLearning modules and training DVDs available.
- The New Local Coordinators/Treasurers Conference, held over three days in January 2011 to help Local leaders meet their accountabilities and learn and update skills, is overwhelmingly received.
- In keeping with the times, ONA launches a Twitter account and Facebook page so users can receive regular updates about our work and to provide another venue to demonstrate the value of our services to prospective members.
- Education at the March Provincial Coordinators Meeting focuses on what's hot in arbitration case law.



Professional Issues

- ➔ ONA meets with government and College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) representatives, and launches a letter writing campaign to protest changes to the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* regarding personal liability, which results in the CNO deferring any changes to its general bylaws until further discussions can take place with government and stakeholders. The government has also not proclaimed amendments to the Act regarding personal liability.
- ➔ The Independent Assessment Committee looking into the Renal Hemodialysis Unit at Sault Area Hospital, Local 46, issues 30 recommendations that confirm RNs have been required to perform more work than is consistent with proper patient care.
- ➔ Registered nurses at Lakeridge Health's 36-bed in-patient surgical unit (Oshawa site), Local 51, take their concerns about inadequate RN staffing levels to an Independent Assessment Committee after waiting two years for their employer to implement the "all-RN skills mix" on the unit.
- ➔ ONA develops a Home Care Network with home care Bargaining Unit Presidents, which teleconnects regularly on key issues in the sector, and follows in the footsteps of our Community Care Access Centre and Public Health networks.
- ➔ Quarterly professional practice teleconnects continue with high ONA member participation and satisfaction.

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

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