

## The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association for nurses

Kyle Phillips

While watching my Mom obtain her nursing degree as a single parent 4 years ago, entering the profession never crossed my mind. I am now entering my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of nursing, and I can't imagine doing anything else. I consider the nursing profession fortunate to have ONA as an advocate for optimal work conditions.

ONA is the voice of 65,000 health care professionals and 18,000 nursing student affiliates in a variety of settings including hospitals, home care, long term care and public health.

I believe that the most important work that ONA is engaged in is public awareness and striving for adequate staffing, standard nurse to patient ratios and adequate funding in all health care sectors. I feel that the general public have a lack of understanding of the challenges facing nurses and how these challenges can ultimately impact their care.

Through multimedia strategies ONA is committed to enhancing public awareness and knowledge regarding nursing skill level, education and experience. ONA also draws public attention to staffing issues, lack of funding, long wait lists and overcrowding. ONA is currently campaigning for increased base funding and improved staffing in long term care facilities. ONA is also currently challenging the government regarding their changes and cuts to public health system.

ONA is regularly involved in government activity. ONA attends government committees and meetings and create presentations and strategies regarding legislation changes. ONA also makes regular submissions to the government on a range of political issues impacting nurses.

ONA is not only a bargaining unit for nurses and other health care professionals, they are the voice for optimal conditions to facilitate optimal care delivery. ONA is not just the voice for nurses, it is the voice for all of Ontario.