

The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA)

Interested first in the nursing profession for its focus on critical thinking and physiology, it was the realization of nurses' several roles beyond the medical scope that drew me in further. Unlike any other healthcare professional, nurses' are distinct in emphasizing health and healing beyond the typical physiological component; valuing concepts of compassionate care, empathy and justice. Nurses' work in providing high quality care wouldn't be possible without the support of the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA); the union continues to work tirelessly to advocate for nurses through government cuts, changes in legislation, and now the global pandemic.

While the ever-changing healthcare system today places an increased demand on nurses, ONA has remained vigilant in responding to these changes to facilitate safe working conditions, fair wages and an improved quality of work-life balance. Seeing my sister, a registered nurse, work through the COVID-19 pandemic, I have witnessed first-hand the guidance, support and active involvement ONA has taken in supporting her work and safety. As the pandemic continued to peak, protective personnel equipment became dangerously low for front-line nurses. Leaders in advocacy, ONA worked diligently to launch its campaign to ensure all healthcare professionals received the necessary masks to protect themselves while caring for others. Additionally, ONA has strived to bring recognition to the critical role nurses play in protecting the public and serving the community. By doing this ONA has been able to successfully improve the socioeconomic welfare of nurses through the campaign, *Pandemic Pay*, allowing nurses like my sister, to focus on providing quality care for patients.

ONA's commitment to supporting, guiding and advocating for its members is evident through their long-standing history and collaboration during times of great need. As a young novice nurse entering the profession, I look forward to working on the front-lines knowing I am a member of a supportive organization dedicated to helping me better serve the community.

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