

The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association for Nurses

My mother works as a clinical nurse specialist and has been an Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) member for over 20 years. She is my greatest role model. I have learned from her experience that nurses are clinicians, care-givers, educators, consultants, researchers, advocates, leaders and policy makers.

ONA was instrumental in nurses gaining recognition as professionals and formal partners in the healthcare system, better pay, benefits and working conditions. The union has played a critical role in healthcare restructuring by providing evidence-based research and practice to inform policy-makers.

ONA is a well-respected voice that represents Ontario nurses and advocates for work-life quality, enabling its members to provide quality health care to those in need. ONA continuously supports its members and fights for pay equity. Most recently, ONA's leadership has been demonstrated by their efforts to have nurses and healthcare professionals exempt from Bill 124, Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, or have Bill 124 withdrawn.

ONA has proved their value of, and commitment to work-place safety for its members. ONA takes action to improve and benefit the future of Ontario nurses and the public. For example, after the 2003 SARS outbreak, ONA insisted that N95 respirators be stock piled in preparation for future disease outbreaks. The importance of ONA's recognition of future needs and proactive actions have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, ONA's role of advocacy has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic as it has continued to fight for appropriate personal protective equipment for nurses and ultimately "safety first" for both healthcare professionals and the public.

ONA's passion for the well-being of its members has contributed to my confidence in choosing nursing as a career path. I look forward to becoming a nurse and being a part of a strong, committed, and united union.