The Importance of the Ontario Nurses’ Association for nurses and/or health care professionals

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My first recognition of the Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA) was when I was a young girl noticing the ONA symbol all around my house. My mother is a proud member of the ONA and I remember observing the same three letters printed on umbrellas, mugs, pens, and other items throughout my home. When I began my Nursing studies, I have come to appreciate the significance of ONA and the values behind its logo, other than a decorative design to fill gifts. To me, ONA symbolizes a communal voice that embodies the values and standards of nurses throughout Ontario.

About ONA

ONA is an Ontarian union that represents over 68,000 registered nurses, 18,000 students, and other health-care professionals. The association offers healthcare workers the ability to provide patients with quality care throughout all the healthcare settings. On behalf of its’ members, ONA bargains for a fair workplace and enhanced working conditions. Some improvements made by ONA include protection from harassment and discrimination, wage increases, and pension improvements. In addition, the union offers its members a collective voice with which salary, hours, benefits, health, and safety can be negotiated with employers to ensure a positive working environment. I feel especially connected to ONA’s founding day of October 13, 1973, since it also happens to be my birthday (just three decades later).

ONA’s Impact on Students

Not only will ONA have a great impact on my career as a future nurse, but the union is also already affecting me today as a student. The association works with nursing students to improve clinical placements, advocate for high-quality public health care, and focuses on the major issues new nurses face. Through the uncertain times brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic, ONA has been working to ensure nursing students can have safe access to in-person clinicals and gain an authentic nursing experience. To guarantee safe practice, ONA ensures students are provided with orientations that cover rights and responsibilities for caring for infectious patients, access to personal protective equipment, sick days dedicated to quarantining, and options of reassignment for students that are concerned about exposure to Covid-19.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ONA is a union that shows up and advocates for its members at times when their voices need to be heard. ONA is continuously demonstrating their support for all the nurses and other healthcare workers around Ontario who work hard and set a great example for myself and my fellow student nurses. A union that stands for equity, safety, and overall positive working conditions, is one that I fully respect and am proud to join as a future nurse.