

The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association for Nurses

Every profession faces challenges as the world evolves and changes before us. Nursing is no exception and continues to face hurdle after hurdle. Healthcare workers remain an integral part of society and proved this with their valiant efforts during the Covid- 19 Pandemic. The Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) is a vital component of support for these workers by providing advocacy for safety and equality within the workplace. ONA values strength and unity with a focus in achieving shared goals. They are committed to doing the right thing and working towards solutions that are in the best interest of patients, residents, clients, and their members. ONA embraces differences and works to create an organization where all people are included, valued and respected.

The Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) represents over 68,000 nurses and healthcare professionals as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates. ONA is a union of well-respected individuals who come together to make informed decisions to improve the economic welfare and the quality of work-life for all their members. ONA is organized into more than 540 bargaining units and 60 locals across Ontario. Members of ONA elect executives to work alongside ONA's provincial staff to help in support of Ontario's healthcare workers.

In addition to supporting current nurses, ONA also supports nursing students throughout their education. They are automatically affiliate members of ONA and are given the right to participate in the union. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, ONA aided students in fighting together for safe access to in-person clinical placements across the province. ONA recognized concerns presented by students such as access to PPE, sick days without penalization, and alternative options for immunocompromised students. ONA also offers free education that nursing students are encouraged to participate in through various workshops to further their educational experience.

As a fourth year nursing student, I feel confident in knowing that I will be entering a profession supported by ONA. There is so much stress and uncertainty in the beginning of a career especially during a pandemic, but knowing that I have the support of ONA to back me up will help to ease the anxiety. I have seen first hand the support ONA has been able to provide as a student who only experienced nursing school during a pandemic. ONA understood the importance of an authentic experience as a student and was proactive in finding solutions for nursing students across the province. I feel thankful to ONA for my experience as a nursing student and fortunate to have ONA as a part of my future in nursing.