

The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association for Nurses

As the daughter of a dedicated and proud nurse, I grew up being very familiar with the Ontario Nurses' Association. However, I was never quite sure what ONA did or why they were so significant for all nurses. It was not until I expressed my passion for nursing that I truly discovered the utmost importance of ONA.

To me, the significance of ONA dates all the way back to its founding day of October 13, 1973. On this day, 85 independent nurses' associations came together to form the Ontario Nurses' Association. From this point forward, ONA has been dedicated to defending and advocating for the rights of healthcare professionals in Ontario. Prevailing through changes in society, pandemics, and many more challenges, the vision and mission of ONA has always remained intact. They have grown into Ontario's largest health care union, consisting of 68,000 nurses and health care professionals, in addition to 18,000 nursing student affiliates. The unwavering dedication of ONA, along with the vast size of the union, clearly signifies ONA's importance.

Along with the history of the Ontario Nurses' Association, I believe their support and encouragement of Ontario's nurses clearly demonstrates their significance. One of ONA's most prominent ways of representing nurses is by negotiating for fair wages and working conditions. This ensures that our hardworking nurses are protected in the workplace and provided with proper salaries to support themselves and their families. To further protect their nurses, ONA has also made improvements to harassment protection, pensions, and vacation entitlement. All these improvements, along with the many more that ONA has made and plans to make, clearly demonstrate how monumental the association is for nurses. Without ONA, our Ontario nurses would certainly not be as protected and supported as they currently are.

Additionally, the Ontario Nurses' Association is important because of the diversity and equality they evoke among nurses. ONA has always encouraged and valued diversity in the workplace, whether it be differences in sex, religion, race, or any other quality. ONA's commitment to promoting diversity ensures that all nurses feel welcome and accepted in the nursing community. Personally, I believe this sense of comfort for nurses is one of the most important aspects of ONA's mission. This breaks down barriers between differing nurses, creating a supportive and united community.

Lastly, the importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association branches far beyond their support for practicing nurses. They are dedicated to improving education, experience, and safety for almost all nursing students in Ontario. One of the most notable demonstrations of ONA's support for nursing students is their advocacy for in-person and hands on experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the course of the pandemic, they have fought for nursing students to have safe access to clinical placements and in-person learning opportunities. Not to mention, they have encouraged nursing students to also raise awareness for the challenges they face with clinical practice and workplace preparation. Altogether, ONA's

support and devotion to nursing students demonstrates their undeniable importance in the nursing community.

Overall, I believe the Ontario Nurses' Association is, without a doubt, one of the most important support systems for nurses. They are outstandingly dedicated to defending and advocating for the rights of Ontario's nurses and nursing students.