

# 2023 Biennial Report







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## Message from the President



When faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, it's easy to give up the fight. Not so for ONA and our members.

The past two years and more have seen too many moments of horror, tragedy and outrage. From a province entering a global pandemic unprepared and a provincial government that not only failed to protect those of us on the front lines of health care, but leveraged the emergency to worsen our working conditions, there have been no lack of sad moments. Now we see this government using the subsequent exodus of nurses as an excuse to implement its goal of privatizing our health-care system.

Instead of giving up, ONA and our members are taking a deep breath and fighting back with new determination. We have rediscovered our feistiness, and are celebrating ONA's 50th anniversary stronger and more determined than ever.

As we meet for Biennial Convention and have a much-deserved chance to celebrate, I want to personally thank our members for not only entrusting me to be your Provincial President, but for answering my call to become more outspoken and politically active than ever.

There have been rallies, pickets, impassioned speeches and more signatures on anti-privatization health-care petitions than I hoped was possible. We are standing together in solidarity again and again to push back against our employers and the Ford government and its determination to destroy our publicly funded and delivered health-care system. This government is willing to sacrifice our patients', residents' and clients' access to quality health care in favour of profit for greedy corporate private clinics and health-care providers.

We're having none of it.

I am so proud of our members. I have often said that we nurses and health-care professionals are not martyrs or victims; we are a highly educated workforce, who are also strong and united. Your support of this union and your courage in speaking the truth to Ontarians has shown what you are made of and will make a difference.

I have always believed that ONA is the best health-care union in this country. I am excited to see how our renewed energy and determination plays out over the coming years, as ONA transforms to better meet your current and future needs. I can feel the new energy and sense of optimism as I speak with more members.

It was my goal as your new President that ONA enter into a new era of passion, determination and equity for all. We have taken our collective anger and outrage and channeled it to do what we all entered our professions for – to advocate for our patients, residents and clients.

From hitting the streets of Toronto for an all-out picket action during hospital bargaining to calling on our health-care CEOs to join us in the fight to save public health care, you are answering the call.

Thank you for joining me and your dedicated Board of Directors, ONA leaders and staff on this journey. Here's to our next 50 years!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Ariss'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'E' and 'A'.

**Erin Ariss, RN**  
*President*

# Members of the Board of Directors

Please note these were the portfolios in place for most of this reporting period.  
To learn of portfolio changes since July 2023, see [ona.org/board](https://ona.org/board).



**Angela Preocanin, RN**  
First Vice-President

**Portfolio: Political Action/Professional Issues**

*“While ONA members have always been willing to take a strong stand throughout our 50-year history, we have never seen anything like the lobbying you have done over the past few months in your workplaces and on the streets to protect your professions, your rights and your patients, clients and residents – and with resounding success!”*



**Dawn Armstrong, RN**  
Vice-President, Region 1

**Portfolio: Human Rights and Equity**

*“This has been a pivotal two years in ONA’s history. It has been the time when we put in motion a concrete course of action to address the ongoing racism and oppression that exist for so many members in our workplaces, communities and society at large. And we implore all of you to join us on this critical journey.”*



**Bernadette Robinson, RN**  
Vice-President, Region 2

**Portfolio: Education**

*“While we always enjoy seeing our members in person, the past two years have certainly taught us that digital education is not only possible, but preferable in some cases where there are geographical and other challenges. For that reason, we continue to offer both options to members, and frequently revisit and revise our education offerings to ensure your ever-changing needs are being met.”*



**Karen McKay-Eden, RN**  
Vice-President, Region 3

**Portfolio: Labour Relations**

*“No matter how much work we do in other key areas, we know that labour relations, including contract negotiations, remain the primary function of any union, including ours. The past two years have certainly brought challenges in bargaining, but by using every available means – and thanks to your refusal to back down – we have met them head on together.”*



**Erin Ariss, RN**  
Vice-President, Region 4

**Portfolio: Local Finance**

*“During the past two years, it has been my absolute pleasure to get to know our Treasurers and work with Local executives as they continue to adopt strategic planning in their budgets to respond to changes as they come up, most notably throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This isn’t easy work, but their leadership on behalf of all members is inspiring.”*

As of July 1, 2023, Grace Pierias, RN, is the new Region 4 Vice-President.



**Alan Warrington, RN, BScN**  
Vice-President, Region 5

**Portfolio: Occupational Health and Safety**

*“In the past 50 years, ONA has made tremendous gains in the area of occupational health and safety and this advocacy has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Members are not sitting back and accepting unsafe work environments, knowing that if you aren’t safe, neither are those under your care.”*

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## Message from the CEO



This is a year of milestones, both for ONA and in health care.

As we celebrate the milestone 50th anniversary of ONA, the union founded by and for nurses, which now also includes health-care professionals, we also face a milestone in Ontario's health-system: the fight to save publicly funded and delivered quality care.

In 2023, the full picture of the Ford government's plan to destroy public health care became clear. The anti-union, anti-nurse policies, such as Bill 124, that created a crisis in health care were clearly part of a deliberate plan on the part of this government to implement its privatization scheme.

This fight has united ONA, our members and leaders, Board of Directors and staff as never before. The past few years of challenges has, at times, left us all exhausted. Yet much like the nurses from five decades ago who rose up and created ONA, we have a sense of renewed determination.

The pandemic forced ONA to pivot, to innovate, to prioritize and to become united as a team. We did so in 2020, and are doing so now more than ever.

For instance, your incredibly dedicated ONA Board of Directors, managers and staff are making excellent progress in implementing our Strategic Plan (see page 4). ONA is focused on ensuring that we meet your expectations and priorities.

Just as you, ONA members, have stepped up and found your voices to call out this government, your ONA staff has come together to fight alongside you.

While ONA has undergone a number of changes since our last Biennial Convention, we have done so with dedication and professionalism. Current ONA President Erin Ariss is shaking things up in the best way. She is out in the trenches, talking openly with members, ensuring transparency.

We have had a number of wins since the last Biennial, the most significant being the ruling that Bill 124 is unconstitutional (see page 14). Three long years after Premier Doug Ford passed this legislation, ONA was able to return to the table and push for higher wages and benefits. ONA will not give up the fight for better wages, better staffing and better care.

We are a united team, and we strive to always do our very best for you. We believe, as you do, that a high-quality, publicly delivered and publicly funded health-care system is an invaluable asset. Nurses and health-care professionals are the very heart of that system. No matter what the Ford government and your employers throw at you, we have your back.

Happy anniversary, ONA. Your staff team of nurses, IT professionals, finance and accounting staff, Labour Relations Officers, administration and others are here for you.

Thank you to every one of you for your dedication. Let's keep up the fight, and win.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Kay". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Andrea Kay, RN**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# Strategic Plan

[ona.org/stratplan](http://ona.org/stratplan)

Created with members at its heart, ONA's first ever five-year Strategic Plan was officially launched at the 2021 Biennial Convention.

The Strategic Plan was based on feedback from deep consultations with members with varying degrees of union involvement, leaders and staff from fall 2020 to early summer 2021. They told us what is important to them, along with their hopes for ONA's future, through a series of surveys, workshops, focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

Receiving unanimous Board approval in June 2021, the Strategic Plan includes a new Mission, Vision and Values, which were ratified by 98.5 per cent of ONA's voting delegates at the 2021 Biennial, as well as 22 actions that fall within six strategic priorities: *Members Informed*, *Members Supported*, *Stronger Bargaining Units*, *Telling Ontarians the Truth*, *Everyone Included* and *Our Work, For You*.

## Our Strategic Plan Priorities



### Members Informed

Empowering you with the information members value



### Members Supported

Supporting you to achieve better work conditions



### Stronger Bargaining Units

Equipping your Bargaining Unit representatives to support and work with you



### Telling Ontarians the Truth

Sharing what you know about the state of the health-care system



### Everyone Included

Creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive union



### Our Work, For You

Excellence for you from ONA's Board and staff

## Critical Guiding Documents

The next phase involved the creation of three critical guiding documents to help steward ONA through our strategic planning work:

1. **The Implementation Direction Statement by the Board:** The Board identified nine of the 22 actions to be prioritized in the near-term.
2. **The Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP):** Senior staff co-lead the development of 22 detailed MYAPs that align with and support the 22 actions of the Strategic Plan. All 22 actions have defined measures of success to help determine if ONA is making progress.
3. **Accountability Framework 2021-2026:** ONA's Quality of Service to Members Committee provided oversight to a smaller working group of their committee, the Quality Committee Working Group (QCWG), which created an Accountability Framework of high-level definitions and measures of our union's wellbeing. The framework is like a public agreement between ONA members and the organization that details how ONA will be accountable for ensuring our wellbeing and is delivering on our Strategic Plan. It includes measures that define success for each of ONA's Mission, Vision and Values and six strategic priorities, as well as the accountabilities for the Board of Directors, elected leaders, managers and staff, and grassroots members.

Measures of success provide ONA with information about our union's wellbeing and implementation progress, which supports transparency with members and accountability. The results can help us navigate problems, learn what works and what doesn't, and make better decisions.

***"Statement of our Union's Wellbeing: ONA is only as strong as our grassroots members when they are supported, engaged and committed to exercising and enhancing their own rights and advocating for the protection and advancement of the rights of fellow members."*** – Accountability Framework 2021-2026

From January to June 2023, the QCWG was tasked with conducting an inventory of what, if any, indicators could be measured from the Accountability Framework, and what needed to be developed to measure and report.

Their work culminated in a recommendation approved by the Board of Directors in June 2023 for ONA to conduct a membership survey every



*ONA's innovative five-year Strategic Plan is all about ensuring our members' needs are met.*

two years, launched at Biennial, for the chief purpose of collecting data and reporting on member-related measures in the Accountability Framework, and to release the results at the following Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM).

The PLM was the chosen venue because it is ONA's best attended annual event and has the most representation across all sectors. The PLM also provides the opportunity, through its design, for engagement by one of our most critical stakeholder groups: Bargaining Unit Presidents.

Biennial 2023 marks the first official launch of our membership survey, which will provide us with a report on some of our measures. We look forward to sharing the results at the PLM in 2024.

ONA members are at the heart of our Strategic Plan. Please complete the membership survey, which launches at noon on November 9, so we can inform our strategic planning efforts with your input! Visit [ona.org/voice](https://ona.org/voice).

## Strategic Planning Work is Underway!

Since the Strategic Plan's adoption in 2021, ONA has been working on our strategic planning priorities. Highlights under each strategic priority include:



### Members Informed

- Implemented a plan to encourage leaders and members to use Access ONA, which allows them to manage their personal and Local information. At the end of the second quarter of 2023, we have 9,580 sign-ups, compared to the baseline of 6,980 in 2022.
- Conducted communications research to gather member insight and feedback on their preferences and views. More than 1,500 members completed the survey, in addition to three focus groups and outreach to leaders from each region on key topics.
- Launched a central email newsletter sign-up page to enable members to customize their communication preferences and the type of ONA emails they wish to receive. By the second quarter of 2023, the average email unsubscribe rate is 0.05 per cent and open rates average 54 per cent, both improving upon 2022 baselines.
- Developed a social media content strategy for ONA's private members' Facebook group. In the second quarter of 2023, we had 476,171 engagements on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, which maintained our strong 2022 baseline numbers.
- Developed a plan to expand and promote the use of Local websites, including providing support and education. In 2023, 31 Locals had websites, with pending requests for four more websites, compared to 30 in 2022.
- Refreshed core content on the ONA website. The website bounce rate improved to an average of 62 per cent in the first two quarters of 2023 compared to 71 per cent in 2022.
- Updated new member orientation pages on the ONA website, and our annual views on these pages remain consistently strong compared to 2022 baseline.



Representatives of 85 independent nurses' associations converge to form ONA in October 1973.





### Members Supported

- Created:
  - Five Labour Relations Officer (LRO), Leadership Development and Member Support positions.
  - Three LRO, Long-Term Disability Appeals Specialists.
  - Manager, Labour Relations, Assistants/Projects.
  - Manager, Member Education.
- Launched ONA's first hybrid Provincial Leadership Meeting in April 2023, welcoming 336 members in person and 152 virtually.
- Transferring the support of professional practice issues from Regional Teams to the Professional Practice Team (*in progress*).



### Stronger Bargaining Units

- Held townhalls for leaders and members, including multiple hospital sector meetings in 2023 and one for nurse practitioners, which saw more than 2,300 members and leaders registered and approved to attend.
- Establishing sector connects led by negotiations staff (*in progress*).
- Conducting a comprehensive review of all workshops and potential new workshops (*in progress*).



### Telling Ontarians the Truth

- Expanded ONA's use of social media and digital advertising. Number of impressions on paid social media advertising remains consistently strong compared to 2022 baseline and were at about 3.35 million impressions in the first quarter advertising of 2023.
- ONA's *Nurses Talk Truth* campaign print advertising achieved an average recall rate of 60 per cent, ensuring a majority of those who saw the ads remembered them.
- Consolidated our media tracking onto a central platform to enable better analysis. ONA had an impressive performance, with 2,080 media hits and potential reach of 484 million in the second quarter.
- Conducting a comprehensive review of ONA's recent media performance, with the goal of strengthening our earned media profile (*in progress*).



### Everyone Included

- Created:
  - Team Lead, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO).
  - Two ARAO Specialists, Member Services (*in progress*).
- Developing an internal recruitment process to promote and support equal opportunities for staff (*in progress*).
- Providing ARAO education to Board of Directors, managers and staff, leaders and members (*in progress*).
- Implementing the ARAO Action Plan, including the development of Communities of Support and the creation of a digital toolkit (*in progress*).



### Our Work, For You

- District Service Teams (now Regional Teams) realigned to match ONA's five geographic regions.
- Created opportunities to foster cross-team collaboration and adopt a coordinated approach to issue resolution, including updating the mandate and framework for the Complex Resolution Table.
- Improved ONA staffing and regional manager-to-staff ratios to expand opportunities for interaction and coaching.
- Created and recruited a Member Events/ Experience Manager, focusing on provincial events and ONA branding.



ONA amends the Constitution in November 1992 to allow allied health personnel, now referred to as health-care professionals, to be organized and included in our Bargaining Units.



# Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan

[ona.org/arao](http://ona.org/arao)

As part of the Strategic Plan priority, *Everyone Included*, ONA launched an ambitious four-year Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Action Plan in May 2022.

The Action Plan is the direct result of a call to action from our members, elected leaders and staff with lived experiences of intersectional forms of racism, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, discrimination and acts of exclusion. It contains seven priority areas and 34 action items.

In Year 0 of the Action Plan (May 2022 to April 2023), the staff Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group (ARAOWG) and internal stakeholders, including the Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team and the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG), along with the ARAO Lead Consultant, worked to fulfill Year 0 priorities one to seven.

## Key Highlights from ONA's Year 0 ARAO Work

### Priority 1: Reconciliation

- Created the RAPWG.
- Developed a list of Indigenous consultants and organizations to expand ONA's professional network of Indigenous professionals.
- Assisted with the development of the educational content and agenda for the 2022 Human Rights and Equity Caucus.

### Priority 2: ARAO Education

- Created the *Introduction to ONA's ARAO Journey* eLearning course.
- Began designing the *Beyond Good Intentions: Understanding Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression* eLearning course.
- Conducted an ARAO education needs assessment with internal stakeholders.
- Developed ARAO-related tools and resources, including ONA's ARAO website, Glossary of Terms, and *Microaggressions Tips and Considerations* sheet.
- Developed and delivered concurrent education sessions focused on microaggressions at the March 2023 Provincial Leadership Meeting.
- Conducted a facilitated dialogue focused on community engagement with the Board of Directors.

### Priority 3: Support for Members, Elected Leaders and Staff from Indigenous, Black, Racialized and Historically Marginalized Groups

- Provided in-house subject matter experts.
- Designed and developed initial frameworks for the Communities of Support (CoS), where those with or without lived experiences of marginalization come together to find and offer support to each other. The Board of Directors approved the member CoS.
- Supported the 2022 Human Rights and Equity Caucus.
- Submitted ARAO-related topic ideas to *Front Lines* magazine.
- The ARA Team reviewed and made recommendations on topics such as Community and Group Engagement Guidelines, eLearning courses and CoS.

### Priority 4: General Support, Resources and Tools

- Began designing the ARAO Advocacy 101 Digital Toolkit.
- Explored support for members and elected leaders who may not have direct lived experiences with intersectional forms of racism.

### Priority 5: Organizational Development and Operations

- Developed an initial Staff ARAO Policy.

### Priority 6: Representation Matters – Leadership

- Discussed strategies to increase leadership representation from Indigenous, Black, Racialized and historically marginalized groups.
- Discussed the creation of an ARAO education program for elected leaders.

### Priority 7: Leading Change – 2022 and Beyond

- Began building ONA's network of community-based Indigenous, Black, Racialized and historically marginalized health-care advocates, community members and professionals across ONA's regions.
- Explored ONA's community engagement using an ARAO lens.

## Conclusion

ONA has invested resources to build our internal capacity, strengthen our infrastructure and create sustainable systemic changes within our operations, our member services, member engagement, work environments and outreach to diverse communities. This work is making a real difference.



In a landmark human rights settlement in May 1994, Northwestern General Hospital agrees to pay seven Black nurses \$320,000 and take steps to ensure a racism-free workplace.

# Communications

NursesTalkTruth.ca

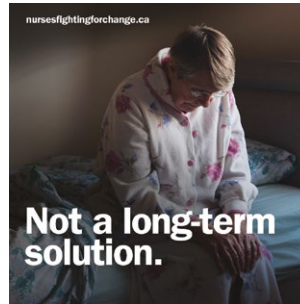
From advertising to email, ONA continues to tell Ontarians the truth with high-performing and impactful communications.

## Advertising

ONA's advertising is a fearless public voice for the realities facing front-line nurses and health-care professionals, targeting the government more directly than ever before:

- **Spring 2022:** Heading into a provincial election, print, radio and social media ads highlighted *Nurses Fighting for Change* amidst staffing shortages and chronic underfunding.
- **Fall 2022:** After many summer hospital unit closures, print and social media ads held Premier Doug Ford and fledgling Health Minister Sylvia Jones responsible for the damage.
- **Spring 2023:** As Premier Ford revealed his privatization plans, *Nurses Talk Truth* became the rallying cry for a stark print, transit and social media campaign focused on poignant symbols: a wrecking ball, gambling dice and more.
- **Fall 2023:** The spotlight is on members in video ads featuring real and unvarnished voices from Ontario's front line.

The public is listening, watching and responding. Market research reveals up to 93 per cent of readers recalled seeing ONA's top-performing print ad (*Toronto Star*, December 3, 2022), which is 72 per cent higher than the Canadian average. Social media, radio and transit shelter ads reached millions of people across the province. They engaged, visited the campaign websites, and shared our message.



ONA's hard-hitting campaigns tell it like it is.



ONA is always on the front page!

## Website

ONA's main website remains a top resource for members and the public alike. It is a dynamic space for content and materials related to member-driven campaigns and actions, while content improvements have streamlined the user experience. From January 2022 to July 2023, [ona.org](https://ona.org) had more than 1.427 million sessions and 2.37 million page views.

## Media Relations

ONA's profile and presence in news media is industry leading. We are a trusted source for the most prominent journalists in provincial politics and health care. From September 2022 to September 2023, ONA received roughly 11,300 mentions in news media, with more than 60 per cent in broadcast sources. These sources had a cumulative potential reach of 2.21 billion viewers, listeners or readers. Coverage for this period was driven by ONA's Bill 124 Charter challenge, bargaining actions, arbitration decisions, and the Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health strike.

## Email

Email has emerged as the preferred communications channel for ONA members. Email open rates remain exceptionally strong, well above commonly reported benchmarks. During this period, the monthly eBulletin continued, with four new quarterly email newsletters providing updates on professional practice, health and safety, education, and human rights and equity. Member email preferences can be set at [ona.org/enews](https://ona.org/enews).

## Social Media

ONA has seen dramatic growth on social media, driven by member actions and dynamic design. As of September 2023, ONA has more than 80,000 followers across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. During this period, ONA clocked our highest-performing content ever, led by our Bill 124 Charter challenge and campaigns across the province. From September 2022 to September 2023, ONA recorded more than 30.46 million impressions and 1.698 million engagements on our posts. Photo and video content continue to drive the most engagement.



ONA holds our first Public Relations Conference in October 1979 with a panel of journalists and guest speaker former NDP leader Stephen Lewis, who advises nurses to "make a concerted effort to have their voices heard."



# Government Relations

[ona.org/submissions](https://ona.org/submissions)

The re-election of a Conservative majority government led by Doug Ford in 2022 was a disaster for our health-care system. Sure enough, mere weeks after the election, the Ford government began introducing legislation that would only make matters worse.

## Legislation

That legislation included:

- Bill 7, the *More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022*, which allows alternate level of care patients to be coerced into long-term care homes that are not of their choosing or face charges of up to \$400 per day.
- Bill 60, the *Your Health Act, 2023*, which opens the floodgates for more private companies to perform surgical procedures and diagnostic tests, billed to OHIP. It waters down oversight, providing no confidence that clinics are properly regulated. The bill also allows the government to determine who can be licensed as a nurse, extending that status to anyone with a licence from another Canadian jurisdiction.

## Submissions

Amidst many damaging proposals from the Ford government, ONA has continued to provide clear and detailed feedback to government and legislative committees. In 2022, ONA made five submissions on proposed legislation or regulations. As of September 2023, we have made seven. Nurses and health-care professionals continue to go on the record with our views and evidence in support of real and meaningful improvements to working conditions and public health care. Read our submissions at [ona.org/submissions](https://ona.org/submissions).

## Lobbying

To say that relations with the Ford government have been strained would be an understatement. At every turn, they have shown their clear agenda to dismantle public health care and carve out a costly and dangerous private system. From the Greenbelt to health care, Premier Ford is focused on paying dividends to his corporate buddies at the expense of taxpayers.



*ONA President Erin Ariss (centre) and our allies hold citations for shouting “shame” in the Ontario Legislature when Bill 60 passed on May 8, 2023.*

Shortly after assuming her new role, ONA President Erin Ariss attended proceedings at Queen’s Park as the Ford government steamrolled Bill 60 through. Along with allied organizations and unions in the viewers’ gallery, Ariss shamed the government for their dangerous actions, and was ejected from Queen’s Park with a warning from officials.

Despite this, ONA continues to attend lobbying events, such as the summit of provincial and territorial premiers. We maintain a strong working relationship with Ontario’s official opposition, and work closely with them to advance our priorities, such as legislative readings of campaign petitions highlighting compromised care in our communities and workplaces.

One thing is certain – we refuse to take Premier Ford’s attacks lying down, and our eyes are already turning to the next Ontario election.

## Nursing Students

ONA continues advocating for nursing student affiliate members on pressing issues such as access to paid clinical placements, skyrocketing post-secondary tuition costs and the lack of mentorship opportunities. We have advocated for the conversion of mandatory unpaid clinical placements into fully paid ones for students to gain the skill, mentorship and knowledge necessary to succeed in their careers.



In September 1996, ONA launches a province-wide *Save Medicare* campaign and requests a meeting with the premier to discuss health-care reform.

# Timeline

October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023

(to view the previous year, see the 2022 Annual Report at [ona.org/ar](http://ona.org/ar))



## October 31

In keeping with the first priority of ONA's ARAO Action Plan – *Reconciliation* – the HRE Caucus features inspiring Indigenous speakers under the theme, *Truth and Reconciliation: History, Healing and Hope*.

## November 24

With our fellow provincial health-care unions, ONA issues an SOS to the Ford government about our crashing health-care system after years of neglect, underfunding and failure to improve staffing levels.



## January 1

Political Action, ONA's fourth Board committee, launches to identify province-wide issues and assist members in developing and implementing plans to address them.



## February 2

Members hold the first in a series of escalating collective actions by wearing a sticker to show support for ONA's hospital bargaining team.

## February 21

ONA stands shoulder to shoulder with our labour allies at an OFL media conference on its Enough is Enough campaign, which sees hundreds of members protesting the growing disparity between the rich and the working class.

## March 2

We shut down the streets of downtown Toronto outside the hotel where hospital mediation is taking place and during a march to Queen's Park.



2022

2023

## November 12

In a precedent-setting decision, an arbitrator agrees with ONA that NPs fall within the collective agreement's "scope and recognition" clause and are therefore included in the St. Michael's Hospital Bargaining Unit, where they were historically excluded.

## November 29

Justice Markus Koehnen from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice releases his decision in ONA's Bill 124 Charter challenge, calling the legislation unconstitutional and "to be void and of no effect," which the Ford government appeals.

## February

ONA acknowledges Black History/Black Futures Month by commissioning Canadian artist Alexis Eke to create an illustration for our poster, shareables and Zoom background to increase the representation of Black women in design and offer a space for deep reflection.



## February 14

In a prebudget submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, ONA calls for wage increases, minimum staffing ratios, workplace safety investments and an end to privatization.

## February 23

Members and our supporters picket at 40 locations throughout the province, calling for better staffing, wages and care.



## April 5

ONA members lay down in a silent "die-in" protest at a major intersection near Queen's Park to symbolize that understaffing and underfunding of health care is having deadly consequences.





**April 23**

During a community day of action throughout the province, members collect 7,500 signatures for our petition for better staffing, wages and care, which are read in the record at Queen's Park.

**May 8**

Under the Nursing Week theme, *Lasting Impact: Forging our Future*, ONA invites members to tell us how they envision the future of nursing as part of a social media contest.



ONA President Erin Ariss is thrown out of the Legislature for yelling "shame" after the passage of Bill 60, which continues a dangerous path towards health-care privatization that will further erode patient care.

**June 20**

Our staunch opposition of Bill 124 continues during the government's appeal hearing before the Court of Appeal of Ontario.



**265**

Members organized during the past two years at

**12**

employers

**June 30**

ONA issues a statement condemning hate-motivated violence at the University of Waterloo.

**August 5**

In an ONA first, members, adorned in spectacular costumes, march in the Grand Parade of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival.



**September 7**

ONA supports the full implementation of the Ombudsman's recommendations to ensure LTC inspectors are given the proper tools and PPE to carry out their jobs in helping to protect residents.

**May**

Our regional Health and Safety Caucuses throughout the month encourage open conversations about workplace challenges regarding mental health and the resources needed to support our wellbeing.



**June 13**

ONA calls for the government to immediately stop Canadian Blood Services from outsourcing plasma collection to a foreign-owned for-profit plasma collection corporation in Ontario.



**June 26**

During an arbitration hearing for our central VON contract, members' priorities, including wage increases, are at the forefront of our arguments.

**July 20**

The Kaplan arbitration decision includes the most significant wage increases for our hospital members in decades, acknowledging that wages have fallen behind and play a key role in the ability to retain and recruit nurses.



**August 21**

Fifty public health nurses from Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health commence job action, seeking fair wage increases, and undertake a variety of creative actions and tactics.

**September 29**

Soon after ONA files a Freedom of Information request to obtain transparency in the finances of the Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health's Board of Health and calls for the immediate resignations of the Board Chair and Vice-Chair, a tentative deal is reached.

# Member Mobilizing

[ona.org/campaigns](https://ona.org/campaigns)

Our member mobilizing team and work has grown substantially over the past two years as we continue to empower members to make workplace and political change by organizing their fellow members and building campaigns to win!

## Hospital Bargaining Campaign

One of ONA's biggest campaigns to date, engaging thousands of members, launched in early 2023 to coincide with hospital central bargaining with the Ontario Hospital Association. Aimed at employers and the Ford government, the message was clear: nurses and health-care professionals can't provide better care without a better contract.

Working with Local leaders, ONA planned a series of coordinated collective actions, and disseminated this information via emailers, a dedicated webpage ([ona.org/bettercare](https://ona.org/bettercare)) and social media, and during our newly created Hospital Contract Action Team meetings, opened to all hospital members.

Actions began during the first week of talks on February 2 with members wearing bright stickers in support of our bargaining team, and escalated from there, including: All-out pickets on February 23 to seek community support at 40 locations throughout the province; an all-out shut-down protest a week later outside the Toronto hotel where mediation was taking place, followed by a march to Queen's Park; a powerful "die-in" in the shadow of the Ontario Legislature on April 5 to symbolize that understaffing and underfunding are having a deadly impact on health care; and a community day of action on April 23 where more than 7,500 signatures were gathered for a petition that was later read in the record in the Legislature by opposition MPPs.

Throughout our campaign, members were strongly supported by our allies and were a visible presence at more than 30 Ontario Federation of Labour Enough is Enough day of action rallies on June 3, speaking out against the Ford government's destructive agenda.

We were clearly heard with Arbitrator Kaplan issuing a favourable award that sets a precedent for bargaining in other sectors (see page 13). These actions also laid the groundwork for future challenges as we continue to harness the collective power of our members!

## A Bargaining Unit Success Story

Inspired by the incredible advocacy shown by members at Hamilton Health Sciences dealing with a similar situation, members at The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) fought together against a harmful employer decision – and won!

Early in 2022, TOH announced it was bringing unregulated operating room assistants (ORAs) into the scrub nurse role in operating rooms (ORs) after a 10-week online course, despite the unpredictable nature of OR patients.

OR nurses immediately took their patient safety concerns to management – they were ignored – and sought the assistance of ONA, which helped them plan a push back. That included setting up an Action Committee; writing a strong letter demanding TOH keep ORAs out of the scrub nurse role; and identifying and recruiting trusted and well-respected leaders within their workplace to have one-on-one conversations with members to encourage them to sign the letter, and keep them regularly informed. The hard work paid off, with 84 per cent of the 182 affected nurses signing.

Just before an appointment with the Chief Nursing Executive (CNE) to hand deliver the letter in March 2023, the OR nurses received an email saying management had decided to put the ORA initiative on hold. The members insisted on continuing with the meeting, and soon after, the CNE reached out to arrange another meeting to clarify the ORA initiative. As of press time, TOH has no ORAs in the OR, thanks to the dedication of these members!



Nurses from all sectors rally on the front steps of Queen's Park in June 1985 to fight the wage disparity between public health and hospital nurses.



*We learned what we are capable of with a united front, TOH members said of their campaign.*



# Collective Bargaining

[ona.org/bargaining](http://ona.org/bargaining)

Because ONA had the foresight to achieve reopener clauses to seek retroactive wages should Bill 124, which capped wages and benefit improvements at a maximum of one per cent per year for each of three years, be struck down by the courts, we received binding arbitration decisions for affected members (with more on the horizon) when that happened in November 2022.

**Hospitals:** The following Bill 124 reopener decisions were issued in April 2023:

- For the collective agreement term April 1, 2020 to June 7, 2021, Arbitrator Stout awarded an additional .75 per cent and 1 per cent, effective April 1 of 2020 and 2021 respectively (added to the 1 per cent already awarded), along with an increase in night and weekend premiums and unlimited mental health coverage.
- For the collective agreement term June 8, 2021 to March 31, 2023, Arbitrator Gedalof awarded an additional 2 per cent effective April 1, 2022 (added to the 1 per cent already awarded), along with elimination of the 25-year step on the wage grid.

After the Ontario Hospital Association failed to present an offer we could take to membership at the bargaining table, we headed to arbitration in May 2023 for a renewed central collective agreement. Arbitrator Kaplan's subsequent decision, which covers April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2025, includes a new RN grid, plus 3.5 per cent and 3 per cent in each year, equalling approximately 11 per cent, along with an increase of 1 per cent in lieu of benefits for part-time. We also received isolation pay to ensure salary continuation in the event of exposure to communicable diseases – a first for provincial health-care contracts – and other improvements. We pushed hard for the implementation of a central NP wage grid, and will continue.

**Not-for-Profit Nursing Homes:** In March 2023, Arbitrator Stout awarded a Bill 124 reopener for the collective agreement term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024 that includes wage parity with the for-profit nursing homes, as well

as improvements in shift and weekend premiums, responsibility pay, vacation and standby pay. As the current contract expires on June 30, 2024, bargaining begins next year.

**Homes for the Aged:** This sector includes both non-profit/charitable or municipal, and the non-profits are affected by Bill 124. At the conclusion of this report's timeline, they were entering into Bill 124 reopener negotiations.

**Home Care Providers:** Bargaining with the participating Victorian Order of Nurses branches began in the spring of 2023, followed by mediation in May and arbitration in June, where ONA highlighted the devastating impact of years of below cost-of-living increases and the need for premium and benefit improvements. The arbitration award is expected in November 2023.

**Public Health:** After announcing their intent to merge the province's 34 existing public health units into 10 new entities, delayed due to COVID-19, the Ford government is now offering funding to units that voluntarily merge as the province works on a "longer-term" approach that clarifies roles and responsibilities. Settlements in this sector have ranged from 2 per cent to 3.25 per cent. Fifty members from Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health were forced to strike for six weeks on August 21, 2023 after their employer came to the table with just one monetary offer and refused our offer of voluntary arbitration.

**Community/Industry/Clinics:** ONA continued to achieve decent settlements for members in this group.

**Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS):** This group is currently in bargaining, and will enter into conciliation in November 2023. In fall 2023, the government tabled Bill 135, the *Convenient Care at Home Act, 2023*, which, if passed, would consolidate 14 HCCSS into a single organization – Ontario Health at Home – to coordinate home care services across the province through Ontario Health Teams. ONA is reviewing what this means for members in this sector.



ONA and the Hospitals' Master Bargaining Committee, representing 41 hospitals, settle on the first central agreement in July 1974.

# Legal

ona.org

As part of the vast array of legal services we provide to support our members, which fall under the umbrella of ONA Legal, we continue to fight back against regressive laws that disregard our collective agreements and bargaining processes with great success.

## Bill 124 Charter Challenge

Most significant was the Bill 124 Charter challenge, launched by ONA soon after the Ford government introduced the wage suppressing legislation in late 2019. Joined by fellow unions, ONA argued the bill violated our right to freedom of association and collective bargaining under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

ONA counsel from Cavalluzzo presented these compelling arguments to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice the week of September 12, 2022, and two-and-a-half months later, Justice Markus Koehnen ruled the bill unconstitutional and contrary to section 2(d) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. He held that the law infringes with our right to freedom of association by directly interfering with ONA's ability to engage in meaningful collective bargaining for our members on compensation and other important issues:

*“(Bill 124) is not a reasonable limit on a right that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society,” and as a result, the bill is “to be void and of no effect.”*

Unfortunately, before 2022 was over, the Ford government appealed the decision, and during a three-day hearing before the Ontario Court of Appeal, which began on June 20, 2023, ONA continued our staunch opposition to the bill. We await the court's decision.

## Three Rulings, Same Result: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

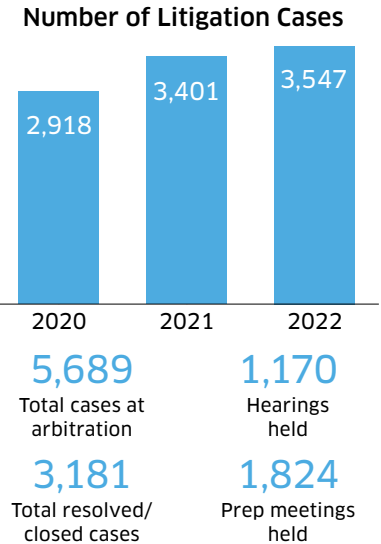
In 2020, the Ford government introduced Bill 195, the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and emergency orders, which permitted employers to disregard collective agreement provisions during the pandemic subject to limitations.

Like so many nurses and health-care professionals, public health members at the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit worked tirelessly on the front lines fighting COVID-19 and accumulated significant comp time. The employer tried to rely on the emergency orders under Bill 195 to deprive them of their negotiated right to an overtime payout at time-and-a-half for unused comp time.

ONA fought back and the arbitration decision was in our favour. It found that while the employer could take measures reasonably necessary to respond to COVID-19, it could not avoid the cost consequences of the emergency measures authorized under Bill 195.

The employer applied for judicial review at Divisional Court, but ONA continued our fight and won again! The court found that while cost consequences could be considered, they needed to be reasonably necessary to respond to or prevent the COVID-19 outbreak. In this case, the cost consequences of withholding premium pay were not reasonably necessary, the court ruled in upholding the arbitration decision.

The employer tried to appeal this decision to the Court of Appeal and ONA won for a third time, with the court denying the appeal.



(September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2023)

## Important Arbitration Wins

- **Brant Community Health System:** This case is another win regarding double-time premium for accepting a call-in that occurs within 24 hours of the end of the previous shift.
- **Halton Health Services:** Providing availability for additional shifts on weekends is not “requesting weekend work” and does not disentitle nurses from consecutive weekend premiums.
- **Southlake Regional Health Centre:** The hospital violated the collective agreement and Regulation 241/20 when it failed to correctly pay temporary pandemic pay to ONA members in all classifications.



ONA wins a Charter challenge in April 2014 allowing members who are forced to take “stress leave” or have a mental disorder arise or exacerbated due to expected, chronic or non-traumatic workplace events to make WSIB benefit claims.



# Grievance Management

[ona.org/yourcontractrights](http://ona.org/yourcontractrights)

Handling grievances is the nuts and bolts of what we do as a union. In fact, in collaboration with our dedicated front-line leaders, we work on thousands of member grievances annually, with the goal of reaching a resolution without having to advance to arbitration. Here are three notable recent wins.

## Errors in Calculating the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Benefit

In this case, ONA concluded that the employer had been incorrectly calculating the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Supplemental Unemployment Benefit provisions of the collective agreement. The error significantly impacted the total amount paid to ONA members.

Minutes of Settlement between ONA and the employer were finalized, which included a reimbursement provision to 58 ONA members. In total, the employer returned more than \$380,000.

## Enforcement of Letter of Understanding

ONA argued that the employer was not in compliance with a Letter of Understanding that entitled members to premium pay of up to \$5/per hour for having additional nursing skills (\$1 for each of five added nursing skills).

The parties unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the dispute during negotiations. A group grievance was filed on behalf of all impacted members.

Minutes of Settlement were reached that included retroactive payments. A nurse with all five added nursing skills would qualify for reimbursement of up to \$48,000.

*Legal counsel and litigators work closely with ONA's Local leaders, Labour Relations Officers, Specialists and others to ensure members' workplace rights are upheld.*

## Denial of Benefit Coverage

The employer substituted their insurance carrier and eliminated the provisions of the previous plan that allowed members to enroll in benefits outside of a qualifying life event.

The open enrollment period typically took place for a 30-day period once annually. The employer informed members that they would never be able to enroll in benefits if they did not experience another qualifying life event.

ONA filed several grievances, arguing that the change was unreasonable, not in alignment with the industry standard, and in violation of the collective agreement. We successfully achieved a settlement that included immediate enrollment of all grievors into the plan, education and training for human resources staff, and a process for members to enroll in benefits at any time.



In 2019, legal work done by the Senior Executive of Legal in conjunction with our general counsel, litigation and LEAP teams, including grievances, realign under one umbrella – ONA Legal – to seamlessly support members.



4,945

Grievances have been resolved

6,825

Grievances remain in active status

(October 1, 2021 to August 31, 2023)

## Number of Grievances Filed from October 1, 2021 to August 31, 2023

Sector	Number of Grievances
Clinics	61
Industry	4
Home and Community Care Support Services	215
Public Health Units	205
Home Care	116
Homes for the Aged	450
Nursing Homes	793
Hospitals	7,757
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,601</b>

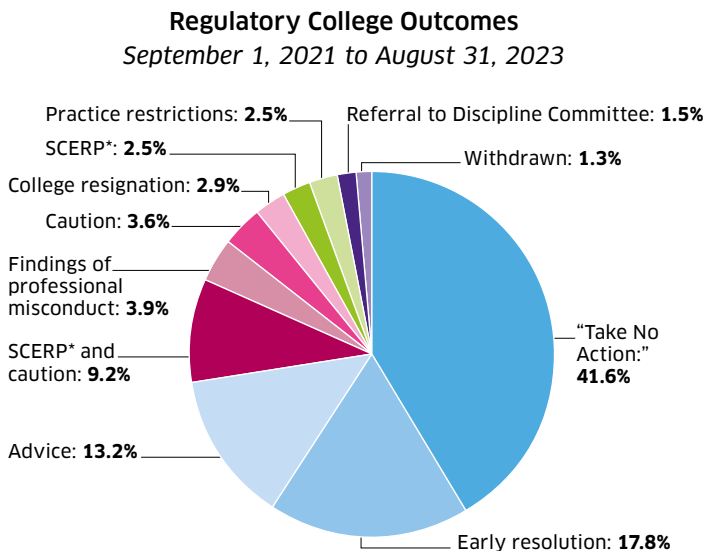
# LEAP

[ona.org/leap](http://ona.org/leap)

ONA's unique Legal Expense Assistance Plan (LEAP) continues to provide stellar representation and assistance to members who face a complaint/report against them at their regulatory college or have a medical condition impacting their ability to practice.

## LEAP's RN Roster

When the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) receives a complaint from a patient or family, or a report from an employer, it does not necessarily investigate every case. The CNO is able to pursue an early resolution option for less serious concerns. About 20 per cent of cases are resolved this way, with the CNO allowing nurses to avoid an investigation if they are willing to reflect on the allegations against them, review the applicable standards and sometimes meet with a CNO representative. These early resolution options avoid the stress, time commitment and uncertain outcome associated with an investigation.



\* Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program



LEAP was created in 1980 as an external legal service to assist ONA members only with regulatory college issues, and has evolved into a multi-service, in-house team staffed by five Legal Counsel, an RN and three Labour Relations Assistants.

In addition, they are not seen as admissions of wrongdoing and do not appear on the CNO public registrar, Find a Nurse.

In 2022, LEAP created an RN Roster to help with these cases. We have four experienced nurse experts who help members navigate the CNO process and reflect on the allegations against them as they relate to CNO standards.

The RN Roster has been a resounding success: 100 per cent of the cases handled by the RN Roster have successfully resolved at the CNO. In addition, ONA members report that they love working with these expert RNs who understand the pressures they face in their practice settings and empathize with the fact that even the best nurses sometimes receive complaints. One member provided the following feedback:

*"[The Roster RN] was absolutely amazing. She kept me grounded throughout this whole ordeal. She was there always with a prompt response and advice on how to deal with the situation with dignity and in a professional manner. Great help!"*

## Judicial Review

For several years, LEAP has been complaining to the CNO about undue delays in its investigation process. The CNO was often taking one to three years to investigate complaints or reports against members, and sometimes as much as four or five years. In these files, LEAP regularly made arguments to the CNO's Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) to dismiss the allegations because of undue delay. The ICRC almost always ignored our arguments.

In 2022, LEAP took the CNO to Divisional Court, asking the court to strike down two ICRC decisions. We argued the decisions were unreasonable because they did not fully consider or respond to our arguments about investigative delay and a disability/human rights issue. In early 2023, we won and the court ordered the matters be sent back to the ICRC for new decisions.

This is a victory for all ONA members. It means that in the future, the ICRC must address the arguments that LEAP Legal Counsel make about investigative delays. The process of challenging the CNO in court also seems to have prompted the CNO to address backlogs and speed up its investigations: in the months since we received the judicial review decision, LEAP is seeing some investigations being completed in as little as two to three months.



## Two-fold

In the past 10 years, the number of LEAP files opened each year has doubled, going from an average of 300 per year in 2013 to approximately 600 per year in 2023.



# Professional Practice

[ona.org/pp](http://ona.org/pp)

ONA's Professional Practice Team has expanded to meet needs and continues to work collaboratively with Bargaining Unit leaders and members to achieve significant wins that positively impact their work environments and ability to provide quality care.

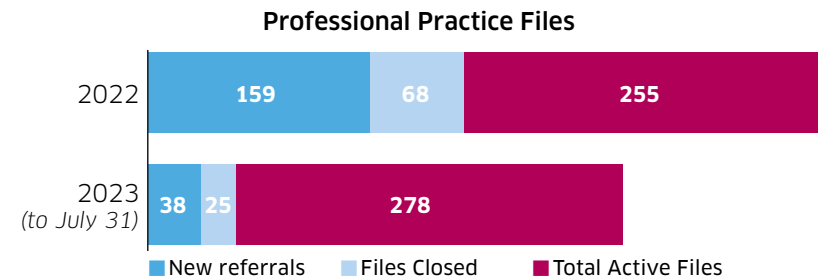
## Independent Assessment Committees

During the time period of this report, Professional Practice Specialists (PPS) led four successful Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) hearings – the last step in our professional responsibility and workload process when all avenues to reach a settlement with the employer have been exhausted – which resulted in recommendations to improve patient care and address workload issues:

- **Southlake Regional Health Centre:** An IAC delivered 157 recommendations to improve staffing and safety conditions on the medical assessment consultation unit in November 2021. ONA members reported workload concerns on more than 110 Professional Responsibility Workload Report Forms (PRWRFs). Improvements include RN-to-RPN staffing ratios.
- **Kingston Health Sciences Centre:** RN members in the inpatient mental health and addictions program submitted more than 200 PRWRFs after the employer violated previously agreed-to Minutes of Settlement. The panel heard volumes of evidence and member testimonials of the dangerous working conditions. As a result, in December 2022, an IAC issued 64 recommendations.
- **Collingwood General and Marine Hospital:** RNs in the emergency department submitted 224 PRWRFs over two years, reporting inadequate baseline staffing, unpredictable volumes and acuity of patients resulting in missed and rationed care. An IAC made 136 recommendations in nine areas in May 2023, including staffing, leadership, retention and education, and orientation.



Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto becomes the first Bargaining Unit to win the professional responsibility clause in July 1977.



- **Campbellford Memorial Hospital:** RNs on the medical surgical unit reported on more than 70 PRWRFs that patient care worsened when the employer laid off four RNs in February 2023. An IAC issued 141 recommendations in August 2023 to improve the workplace and the quality and safety of patient care, including the reinstatement of the four laid-off RNs and an increase to the resource nurse hours to 12 hours per day.

**Perth Community Care Centre Long-Term Care Home:** As an alternative to an IAC, a mediation process was used, which resulted in binding Minutes of Settlement and 15 agreed-to resolutions, including a full-time resource nurse, and an increase of RAI RN coordinator hours, equipment, education and orientation support.

## Ask a Specialist Webinars

ONA's popular Ask a Specialist Webinars, which provide an opportunity for front-line ONA leaders and grassroots members to learn more about the professional responsibility and workload process by speaking directly to a PPS, continued with 167 sessions and 480 participants attending. The sessions will move to Zoom in 2024 with registration through Access ONA.



ONA's workload forms are available for all sectors – and make a difference!

# Human Rights and Equity

[ona.org/hre](http://ona.org/hre)

Throughout our history, ONA has been a champion of human rights and equity (HRE) issues, and with the guidance of our dedicated HRE Team, that critical work continues to grow.

The team, chaired by the regional Vice-President with the HRE portfolio and comprised of representatives from ONA's five equity groups (Racialized, Indigenous, Disabilities, Francophone and 2SLGBTQI) and staff, welcomed new members over the past two years and will do so again in 2024. They continued to meet regularly on Zoom and in May 2023, held their first in-person joint meeting with the member Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team to discuss how to work together on common goals.

## Commemorative Dates

A key component of the HRE Team's work is to advise on and promote commemorative dates, including Black History/Black Futures Month, International Women's Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day and Pride, in collaboration with the ARA Team and other staff teams.

After a two-year pandemic hiatus, ONA was excited to return to the Toronto Pride parade in June 2022 to demonstrate our unwavering support for the 2SLGBTQI community. The cheers from the crowd for our vibrant float and

strong marching contingent, which included the Board of Directors, members and staff, was overwhelming! For Pride 2023, we came up with a clever theme – *ONA at 50: Speaking up and Staying Proud* – that spoke about becoming part of a movement, and speaking up and staying strong for that movement. For the first time, we ordered hard-to-miss bright pink t-shirts displaying the theme for our record numbers of participants!

For National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2022, we commissioned a transformative piece of art from Indigenous artist Tsista Kennedy and shared the powerful story behind it, which we used to create our stunning poster and shareables that year and in 2023.

## HRE Caucus

In October 2022, we held our first in-person Caucus since the pandemic began. Under the theme, *Truth and Reconciliation: History, Healing and Hope*, the day-long event, planned with input from two ARA Team Indigenous members, featured guest speakers, education, the documentary *Blood and Water: A Reclamation Story*, and sacred Indigenous ceremonies.

An important component of the Caucus was the reintroduction of the equity group breakout sessions, reimagined as Communities of Support, a group of people brought together by commonalities to support one another in a culturally safe environment.

During the time period of this report, planning for the 2023 HRE Caucus was well underway with the Board approving the theme, *Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion and Creating Equitable Communities*. The day will focus on how ONA and our members can assist within our own communities and workplaces from a social determinant of health, and equity, diversity and inclusion perspective.

## HRE Webpage

The HRE Team continues to review and update the HRE section of ONA's website to ensure valuable, informative and relatable resources for all members.

## Book Club

Every six weeks, the team also hosts ONA's thought-provoking HRE Book Club, launched in 2021 for all interested members and staff. All book titles are selected through a HRE lens and have included women's, 2SLGBTQI, Indigenous and mental health issues.



ONA launches our first annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus in November 2000, where Dr. Tania Das Gupta leads a panel discussion on racism and other discrimination issues.



ONA's HRE and ARA Teams come together for a historic meeting of the minds on May 16, 2023.

# Health and Safety/LTD/WSIB

[ona.org/ohs](http://ona.org/ohs)

ONA continues to work relentlessly to safeguard members from occupational health and safety (OHS) hazards and to ensure they receive the benefits they need and deserve.

## Health and Safety

### Support

Our OHS Specialists provide steadfast support to members and staff. Over the past two years, ONA proactively advocated for access to appropriate PPE with a reliable supply chain by responding to outbreaks, supporting complaints to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and participating in appeals. We also answered Bargaining Unit questions and ensured all members were well informed.

### Health and Safety Caucuses

The 2022 Health and Safety Caucuses provided information on how to leverage the powers of the Joint Health and Safety Committee, including resolving issues through the internal responsibility system, preparing for MLITSD visits and gathering information needed for appeals. This was one of ONA's best-attended Caucuses – 400 members! – with 95 per cent noting its effectiveness. Our 2023 Caucuses focused on psychological injuries in the workplace and featured a video of a member's firsthand account of coping with PTSD. Leaders were shown how to identify psychological injuries and the workplace conditions – or injuring mechanisms – that give rise to them.

### Long-Term Disability

A dedicated Long-Term Disability (LTD) Appeals Team was created in late 2022, which consists of three LTD Appeals Specialists assigned to cover ONA's five regions. In a brief period of time, the team has had remarkable success advocating for members' disability benefits and will continue to advance ONA's mission to defend the rights of and advocate for nurses and health-care professionals.



Years of lobbying by ONA pays off as the government announces in August 2007 that safety-engineered needles will become mandatory.

## LTD Cases from January to August 2023

Item	Total
Open files	103
Closed files	80
Money in members' pockets	\$1,140,719

## Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

### WSIB Appeals Team Statistics from January 2021 to July 2023

Item	Total
Written and oral submissions	317
Files closed	307
Initial merit review	585
Workplace Safety and Insurance Tribunal wins	72% win rate
Appeal wins	63% win rate
Money in members' pockets	\$5,408,984

These statistics indicate the remarkable progress the WSIB Appeals Team has made in reducing our waitlist, advocating for our members and the value of benefits we have returned to them. The team is currently engaging in a comprehensive process improvement plan to adapt our process to the proposed changes WSIB intends to introduce in January 2024.

The WSIB Appeals Team continues to monitor policy and adjudicative developments at WSIB concerning COVID-19 and communicable illnesses. Of note, the WSIB opened a consultation process for a new communicable illnesses policy for Ontario workers wherein the team provided feedback from our experiences supporting members.

ONA has received 85 COVID-19-related WSIB appeal files. Of these, 61 have been closed and 24 remain open.



# Education and Events

[ona.org/education](http://ona.org/education)

ONA's Member Education Team (MET) has been steadfast in adapting education for both virtual and in-person formats. The expansion of delivery choice has increased our connection with grassroots members and we continue to ensure they are front and centre in the development of education.

## Education

Several workshops have been refreshed, new workshops created, and the eLearning platform, which offers free online education that can be accessed and completed at anytime from anywhere, has been updated.

Our digital workshops continue to be available province-wide as well as to core groups. Most workshops can now be delivered digitally, and ONA continues to see greater success with increased participation of front-line members.

## Access ONA

Launched in 2021, Access ONA allows members to self-register for workshops, and to modify or cancel their registration. Since December 1, 2021, more than 50 per cent of all workshop registrations have been conducted by members via their Access ONA account.

## In-Person Workshops

In-person education at the provincial and Local levels continues. Workshops most offered for in-person delivery in 2023 include Executive Skills I and II, Being an ONA Representative, Preparing for Negotiations and Rocking Your Role.

## eLearning

ONA's eLearning platform includes new and engaging content. ONA's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) web series was added in August 2023 and includes two engaging and insightful videos: *ONA's Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Journey* and *Beyond Good Intentions*. MET is creating a negotiations series that will comprise of six programs for release in 2024.

## Workshop Statistics: December 2021 to November 2023

More than 640 workshops were available, including 110 provincially attended sessions such as the Health and Safety Caucuses, New Executive Partnerships, Treasurers Workshop, Leadership Summit and the Biennial Convention education day. A total of 3,632 registrations occurred with an 89 per cent attendance rate.

## Events

In 2022, the March Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) and the May Health and Safety Caucuses continued virtually. The following June, the Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) was in person, and for the first time since COVID-19 began, we also resumed our annual Leadership Summit in person in September 2022.

All provincial leadership events continue to be offered in person or as a hybrid of in person and digital (March 2023 PLM, November 2022 PCM and November 2023 Biennial Convention).



ONA shifts from Annual Meetings to Biennial Conventions and Provincial Coordinators Meetings in 2000.



*It's cheers all around after another successful Leadership Summit in September 2023!*

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# How Staff Support You

## Senior Executive Team

- Provides organizational leadership and direction.
- Establishes organizational outcomes, strategies and structures so the Board of Directors can carry out its governance function.
- Determines the most effective and efficient allocation of resources.
- Supported by the **Senior Administrative Team**.

## Regional Servicing Teams

- Provide labour relations services, including contract negotiations, and support to members in the regions where they work.
- Ensure employers respect collective agreements and take action where they are in violation.
- Supported by the **Regional Labour Relations Support Team**.

## Litigation Team

- Represents ONA and members at rights arbitrations.
- Provides strategic advice in other areas of practice, including human rights, return to work/accommodation, and health and safety.
- Represents ONA at court injunctions/hearings, etc.
- Oversees ONA's Library Services.

## Negotiations Team

- Assists with the development and research of strategic approaches related to pay equity, gender equality and collective bargaining for members in all sectors.
- Coordinates contract and benefit analysis and economic/labour market research.
- Represents ONA in interest arbitrations on matters related to collective bargaining.

## Legal Expense Assistance Plan Team

- Represents members who have complaints and reports against them at their regulatory college.

## Long-Term Care Non-Institutional/Organizing/PSLRTA Team

- Informs the organization about health-care restructuring.
- Provides membership with a voice on legislative changes by assisting with commentary.
- Ensures staff awareness of changes impacting members and their ability to provide care.
- Empowers the growth of ONA through organizing/*Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* campaigns.

## Communications and Government Relations Team

- Ensures members are well informed through the ONA website, social media, direct emails, publications, etc.
- Lobbies the government for needed changes.
- Informs the public of our key messages via the media and campaigns.
- Mobilizes members to ensure their voices are heard.

## Leadership Development Team

- Provides support to new Bargaining Unit Presidents, ensuring they obtain high-quality onboarding and intensive needs-based assistance.

## Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group

- Guides ONA's critical anti-racism and anti-oppression (ARAO) work and ensures the roll-out of our ARAO Action Plan.

## Membership Education Team

- Provides a mixed education program to members through in-person and digital workshops, lecturettes, eLearning, etc.
- Reviews program offerings on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and meet members' needs.

## Membership Events/Experience Team

- Plans and executes provincial meetings and events that provide engaging environments for members to meet and collaborate.

## Professional Practice Team

- Assists members with their professional responsibility and workload issues.
- Supports members in maintaining their regulatory college standards to deliver high-quality care.

## Health and Safety Team

- Raises health and safety awareness, holds employers accountable for injury prevention, and assists members when this does not happen.
- Liaises with other unions and stakeholder groups on health and safety, and lobbies the government on legislation to help ensure safe workplaces.

## Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Appeals Team

- Represents members in WSIB appeals when they receive adverse decisions.
- Lobbies the government and WSIB directly about WSIB legislation and policies.

## Long-Term Disability (LTD) Appeals Team

- Advocates on members' behalf, and works tirelessly towards reversing denials of benefits.

## Information Technology Team

- Comprises the **IT Operations Team** and **Applications and Database Development Team**.
- Manages and secures servers and technology infrastructure systems, connecting our 11 offices and supporting a userbase of approximately 1,400 staff, Local leaders and the Board of Directors.
- Oversees the access.ona portal.
- Creates, manages and maintains custom-built data management systems used by staff and leadership.
- Continuously improves ONA's access to information using data warehousing and systems integration.

## Finance and Accounting Services Team

- Ensures Treasurers are trained and able to utilize the tools necessary to handle their Local's books.
- Provides assistance via Simply Help.

## Administrative Services Team

- Keeps the ONA machine running smoothly.
- Fulfils member orders and ensures that ONA offices are in good order and staff have the necessary tools.

## Dues and Membership Services Team

- Processes new membership forms, along with membership payments.
- Inputs information updates to accurately maintain the Constitutional entitlements of members.

## Human Resources Team

- Ensures ONA has a robust team of experts, including RN staff where possible, to provide services to members in all areas.
- Manages employees' onboarding and training.





*“As we celebrate ONA’s 50th anniversary and all we have accomplished, I know without a doubt, we’re just getting started! When we look back on our union in the next 50 years, I truly believe the advocacy we are witnessing today will be one of our defining moments. It was when members joined forces with one collective voice as part of a powerful movement to say we will not accept draconian legislation from a government bent on destroying our public health-care system, and harmful employer policies that negatively affect our work environments and ability to provide quality care. We are standing up like never before. We are speaking out like never before. And we are being heard like never before. Together, we must keep this up!”*

—ONA President Erin Ariss, RN



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