

## The Importance of ONA For Nurses

ONA is an association devoted to fighting for fairness, equality and safety for all Ontario nurses and the people using our healthcare system. My mom has been a pediatric nurse for over 25 years, working in both unionized and non-unionized hospitals. She speaks highly of ONA, especially as their ongoing efforts to improve nursing wages; working conditions and fight the privatization of healthcare have not gone unnoticed. Doug Ford's Bill 124 unfairly suppressed the wages of nurses, and did not allow nurses to fight for fair pay. ONA worked relentlessly on major public awareness campaigns to have Bill 124 struck down, and continues to work side by side with other health care unions to save our valued public health care system.

Sometimes people ask me if a career in nursing is the best choice when there is so much negative talk of unsafe staffing levels, poor working conditions and inadequate wages. Despite these conditions, my decision to pursue a career in nursing has never wavered. I consider myself lucky to be going into such a dynamic profession with endless opportunities. My mom has told stories this year of nurses banding together to help make positive changes in healthcare. Some of these events included pickets, rallies, and wearing stickers at work for "better staffing, better care, better wages". Each of these events were led by ONA and empowered nurses to get involved in making change. ONA is such a strong and powerful union because of all the nurses working together to have their voices heard. There will always be challenges within the healthcare system but it is comforting to know that ONA will continue to advocate strongly for nurses, and for the health of all Ontarians both today and in the future. I certainly look forward to becoming another important member of the ONA team when my nursing journey begins this fall!

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