



# Board Highlights

## Making Important Decisions for You!

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors meeting | March 31-April 1, 2020

**DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** and the requirement for self-isolation, the ONA Board of Directors held a condensed April meeting via teleconference, focusing on key decisions, so they could continue to support our members on the front lines.

### COVID-19

It has been an extremely difficult and exhausting few weeks for our members, as COVID-19 continues to spread. The ONA Board and staff are tremendously appreciative of your steadfast dedication to your patients, residents and clients, and are committed to providing you with all the help you need. We are closely monitoring the situation, providing key information through a variety of channels, including frequent telephone town halls. We are highlighting the critical role of nurses and health-care professionals at every turn, as you fight this virus on the front lines. We are aggressively pursuing our members' rights under their collective agreements and occupational health and safety legislation, relentlessly lobbying the government to ensure you have proper protections, including the personal protective equipment (PPE) you need (see Political Action, pg. 2), and speaking out in the media where we see deficiencies. And we will not stop. Read the latest on COVID-19 at [ona.org/coronavirus](https://ona.org/coronavirus).

### POLICY CHANGES/MOTIONS

- ▶ The following motions regarding Policy 23.1 (Administration) were approved, taking effect on April 1.
  - West Haldimand General Hospital in Hagersville and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health have been removed from Administration.
  - Labour Relations Officer Barb Conlon has been named Administrator for St. Joseph's Health Care in Guelph.

- ▶ The Board accepted the Auditor's Report for 2019, as presented by Grant Thornton LLP.

### TELECONNECTS

The Board reviewed the results of our member survey on ONA teleconnects, and supported the recommendation to hold ad hoc teleconnects for hot topics in professional practice, long-term care, hospitals, and health and safety.

### DONATIONS

The following donations were approved:

- ▶ \$10,000 in each of 2020 and 2021 for the partnership between the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and the Stephen Lewis Foundation to support the Swaziland Nurses Association project, which provides information and services in the prevention, testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS across Eswatini.
- ▶ \$10,000 to the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, which provides a province-wide voice for those who have been injured or made ill on the job.

### REGIONAL REPORTS

- ▶ **Region 1:** ONA has reached a Professional Responsibility Complaint (PRC) settlement for members on the cardiovascular thoracic intensive care

unit at Sudbury's Health Sciences North over staffing levels, skill mix, an unclear staffing model, and inadequate supplies. As a result, the employer clarified the staffing model, agreed to ensure an adequate staffing complement is hired, and developed a mechanism for staff to identify gaps in supplies.

- ▶ **Region 2:** A PRC settlement was also reached for RNs in the emergency department of The Ottawa Hospital, who expressed concerns over staffing, float RNs, EMS offload, lack of supplies and equipment, and non-nursing duties. The employer agreed to increase the number of RN positions by 14 part-time and three full-time, increase baseline RN staffing by one RN 24/7, implement an enhanced orientation program, and develop a process to report equipment issues.
- ▶ **Region 3:** ONA welcomes our first health-care professionals from North York General Hospital. While we originally applied for the respiratory therapist (RT) group – 35, plus one respiratory technician – the employer added the 10 anesthesiologist assistants and the pulmonary function lab RTs. The group overwhelmingly voted in favour of joining our union.
- ▶ **Region 4:** ONA continued to speak out on the decision of the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit to lay off public health nurses, especially as we are in the midst of a devastating pandemic. "There are no words to express how utterly foolish this is," ONA President Vicki McKenna said.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?** The full minutes from the April Board of Directors meeting will be available on the Executive Members' section of our website ([ona.org](https://ona.org)) following approval at the next Board meeting.

"I urge the Board of Health to shift their focus from the budget to ensuring they have adequate staff to help bring this pandemic under control."

- **Region 5:** Local 100 Coordinator James Murray has raised concerns in the media over the scant supply of PPE in southwestern Ontario. While nurses understand the need to conserve PPE and research suggests it may be possible to wear N95s for extended periods, this is exceptionally limited and ONA would only consider this if there is adherence to all administrative and engineering controls, and compliance with the manufacturers' guidance and advice. And until there is scientific evidence supporting safe decontamination of N95s that does not invalidate their integrity and put our members at risk, ONA will not agree to their reuse.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

- **Communications:** ONA recently launched a powerful campaign to salute our members on the front lines and emphasize the need for them to be protected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign is comprised of a newspaper ad in key daily provincial newspapers, a special supplement in the *Toronto Star*, two radio ads, and a social media component. See [nursesknow.ona.org](https://nursesknow.ona.org).
- **Government Relations:** Before the pandemic broke, ONA provided a submission to the Ministry of Long-Term Care (LTC) in support of a new Minor Capital Funding Program for LTC homes. This program replaces the Structural Compliance Premium Program, which funds home maintenance and repairs, and ended on March 3. We are calling on the government to ensure the new

program is adequately funded, along with funding equity between not-for-profit and for-profit homes.

- **Student Liaison:** Nadine Abd Elmalak, a nursing student from Hamilton's McMaster University, assumed her one-year term as Canadian Nursing Students' Association Ontario Regional Director on March 1. ONA looks forward to working with her on key student issues and bringing them to government tables.
- **Political Action:** More than 19,100 members and supporters have taken part in our online campaign for proper PPE. While Directive #5 from the Chief Medical Officer of Health clarifies a streamlined process for all health-care workers in hospitals and long-term care homes to access PPE, ONA believes that every health-care professional screening or treating suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients in all health-care sectors must have access to proper PPE. Add your support at [ona.org/ppe](https://ona.org/ppe).
- **Professional Practice:** The pandemic has meant this will be a Nursing Week like no other. While our Locals and Bargaining Units won't be able to hold special events, we are asking you to celebrate all you do this Nursing Week, May 11-17, in different ways. Download our Nursing Week poster at [ona.org/nw20](https://ona.org/nw20) and post where possible, and use the hashtag #ItsMyCalling to share your stories on social media, focusing on our Nursing Week theme of *Our Calling: Care, Compassion Comfort*.
- **Human Rights and Equity:** Assuming we are able to proceed, ONA's Human Rights

The Next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 22-26.

and Equity Team is planning another educational Caucus this November, focusing on racial discrimination.

- **Labour Relations:** As bargaining talks on behalf of our 60,000 hospital members recently broke down with the Ontario Hospital Association during mediation, we proceeded to arbitration via videoconferencing on April 19-20. A binding decision from Arbitration John Stout is expected by the end of May, and we are exploring alternate ways to hold a hospital sector meeting. Read updates at [ona.org/bargaining](https://ona.org/bargaining).
- **Health and Safety:** ONA is encouraging our members to pause and reflect on National Day of Mourning, April 28. The day remembers Ontario workers who have been sickened, injured or killed on the job, including ONA members Tecla Lin, Nelia Laroza and Lori Dupont, and demands improved workplace health and safety measures. In the days of COVID-19, it is even more meaningful, and we have prepared a special downloadable poster to reflect that. Learn more at [ona.org/dayofmourning](https://ona.org/dayofmourning).
- **Local Finance:** ONA is planning at least one webinar in the fall for Local Treasurers, which has proven to be an effective and popular way to connect and relay important information to this group.
- **Member Education:** Due to COVID-19, the April Provincial Leadership Meeting, postponed by the Board last month, has now been cancelled.

If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact ONA President Vicki McKenna, First Vice-President Cathryn Hoy or your regional Vice-President (contact information below).

Board members for 2020: Vicki McKenna, President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison (#2314); Cathryn Hoy, First Vice-President, Political Action and Professional Issues (#7755); Dawn Armstrong, Region 1, Human Rights and Equity (#7703); Bernadette Robinson, Region 2, Education (#7756); DJ Sanderson, Region 3, Labour Relations (#7754); Angela Preocanin, Region 4, Occupational Health and Safety (#7753); Karen Bertrand, Region 5, Local Finance (#7702). **To contact a Board member during regular business hours**, call (416) 964-8833 (Toronto) or toll-free 1-800-387-5580, hit "0" and ask the receptionist to put you through to the appropriate voicemail box (in brackets). **To leave a message for a Board member after hours**, call (416) 964-8833 (Toronto) or toll-free 1-800-387-5580 (if using the toll-free number, hit "0" immediately after dialing the number to be connected to the Toronto office), then dial her or his voicemail box. The Board also has an intake box for emergencies, monitored twice daily. To reach it, call the above numbers and dial voicemail box #7775.