



Board Highlights

Making Important Decisions for You!

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting | NOVEMBER 24, 25 AND 26, 2021

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ITS FINAL MEETING FOR 2021 IN NOVEMBER, receiving updates on ONA operations and planning next steps.

President Vicki McKenna, who is retiring at the end of 2021, chaired her final Board meeting. Region 5 Vice-President Karen Bertrand also is retiring at the end of 2021. In 2022, First Vice-President Cathryn Hoy takes over the helm as President and Angela Preocanin assumes the role of First Vice-President. The rest of the 2022 Board is as follows:

- Region 1: Dawn Armstrong
- Region 2: Bernadette Robinson
- Region 3: DJ Sanderson
- Region 4: Erin Ariss
- Region 5: Alan Warrington

PRIORITIES

The following priorities were addressed by the Board:

- 1. Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression Project:** The Board passed a motion to approve the request for support for the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee's work to develop an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan for the organization. The funding resource will be supported by the Security Fund.
- 2. 2022 Budget Approval:** The Board approved the 2022 proposed annual plan for operating and restricted funds. The plan had been discussed at the 2021 October Area Coordinator Conferences (ACC) and the Biennial Convention in November.
- 3. Meeting Debriefs:** The Board debriefed on the following provincial membership meetings: Leadership Accountabilities Forum, Human Rights and Equity Caucus, and the Biennial Convention. Highlights from the Biennial Convention will be available on the ONA website. The Board also debriefed on ONA's activities for the federal election.
- 4. Board Portfolios:** The following portfolios have been assigned for the incoming Board for 2022:

- President Cathryn Hoy: **Communications/Government Relations and Student Liaison.**
- First Vice-President Angela Preocanin: **Political Action and Professional Issues**
- Region 1 Vice-President – Dawn Armstrong: **Human Rights/Equity**
- Region 2 Vice-President – Bernadette Robinson: **Education**
- Region 3 Vice-President – DJ Sanderson: **Labour Relations**
- Region 4 Vice-President – Erin Ariss: **Local Finance**
- Region 5 Vice-President – Alan Warrington: **Occupational Health and Safety**

The Board also approved member appointments to provincial committees.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Reports were provided on the ongoing work of the Quality Committee, Enterprise Risk Committee, and the Governance and Nominations Committee.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the November Board of Directors meeting will be available on the Executive Members' section of our website (ona.org) following approval at the next Board meeting.

POLICY UPDATES

The following policy updates were approved by the Board:

- Policy 3.2 Benefits – Payments
- Policy 17.1 Ratification of a Negotiated Settlement
- Policy 20.1 Professional Responsibility Independent Assessment Committee Reports
- Policy 26.12 Local Treasurers, Local Coordinator/ Local Treasurer and New Local Coordinator Workshops
- Nursing Home Central Pay Equity Negotiating Team Mandate and Expression of Interest

POSITION STATEMENTS/GUIDES/TIP SHEETS

The following tip sheets were approved by the Board as resources for health and safety representatives:

- Joint Health and Safety Committee Representative Tracking Tool (New)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act at A Glance* Tip Sheet (New)
- Tips for Escalating Unresolved Health and Safety Issues to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (Updated)
- Tips for ONA Executives on Joint Health and Safety Committee (New)

DONATIONS

The Board approved the following donations:

- Canadian Cancer Society – Workplace Cancer Research Fund: The Board approved a donation of \$5,000 per year for three years.
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: The Board continues to support ONA's yearly sustaining contribution of \$22,000.
- Operation Christmas Cheer: The Board approved a donation of \$3,500 for 2021.
- Ontario Legislature Internship Program: The Board continued sponsorship at the level of \$2,500.
- Ontario Health Coalition: The Board supported a contribution in the amount of \$50,000 for 2022. The contribution is allocated in two

areas: a \$10,000 sponsorship, and \$40,000 for campaigns. In 2022, the main campaigns will be stopping further cuts to hospitals and any further privatization, as well as protecting long-term care and home care.

REGIONAL REPORTS – HOT TOPICS/TRENDS

► **Region 1:** There are critical nursing shortages in all sectors, particularly in small rural hospitals and long-term care homes, and an increased use of agency nurses. We are seeing increases in violence, particularly in hospitals and at health units. Employers are offering recruitment bonuses with no regard for retention of current members. There is also ongoing use of small hospital ERs for treatments as no community nurses are available.

► **Region 2:** There have been unprecedented labour relations issues throughout the pandemic with the current focus on the vaccinate-or-terminate employer policies. We continue to see short staffing, with increased RN workloads in long-term care and other sectors. Some employers are implementing inadequate model-of-care changes to compensate. Others are blaming the pandemic for many of their decisions, even when they aren't in outbreak. We continue to wholeheartedly support our Locals in organizing rallies outside MPP offices, mainly in protest of Bill 124. We are letting elected officials know we will be voting for change in the provincial election in June 2022, and an end to this restrictive legislation.

► **Region 3:** There are concerns about vaccinate or terminate policies... we're already dealing with many vacancies in all sectors. Pandemic-related issues remain at the forefront, with concerns such as redeployment of members, unpredictability in workplaces, personal protective equipment (PPE), employers abusing pandemic orders and short-staffing across sectors. Violence is a concern, including under-reporting of incidents. Employers are not dealing with this long-standing problem.



- ▶ **Region 4:** There is continued difficulty with COVID-related mandates. Workloads are increasing, there are staffing issues and employers are offering incentives for new hires – St. Mary's and Grand River are offering \$10,000. On a happy note, political action in Region 4 is going very well. Local 7 had a fantastic turnout for a rally at MPP Will Bouma's office.
- ▶ **Region 5:** Many vacancies are being reported across all sectors, with difficulty recruiting and retaining nurses. Use of agency nurses is increasing. Nurses are resigning/retiring if they can, compounding staffing issues. Bonuses for newly recruited nurses is causing resentment. Vaccinate-or-terminate policies are causing stress for members and leaders. There is increased verbal abuse towards leaders, and a lot of concern about burnout and mental wellness.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

- ▶ **Communications:** ONA's fall advertising campaign, "Keep Nursing Strong," launched provincially on October 25 on radio, social media and in print to draw attention to the current crisis in nursing. The tagline, "Without Nurses, Health Care Will Fail," is a response to the chronic nursing shortage and extreme demands of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our campaign website is here: www.keepnursingstrong.ca/.
- ▶ **Government Relations:** On September 21, 2021, ONA launched a province-wide selfie campaign in response to the ONA and OHA central hospital arbitration decision from Arbitrator Geldof, who capped wage increases for RNs and health-care professionals at one per cent, per Bill 124. Nurses and health-care professionals directed their anger and frustration at the Ford government by posting selfies tagging Ford. Messages included: "Ontario is driving nurses away. Stop the wage cuts!" or "I am worth more than a wage cut."
- ▶ **Student Liaison:** Among the top issues for nursing students is the ongoing challenge in clinical placements, primarily access to in-person clinical placements and labs. ONA continues to work with the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) on this issue. The Ontario Appeal Court dismissed the Ford government's "Student Choice Initiative." This policy would have allowed students to opt out of certain ancillary fees, undermining the operation of vital on-campus services, including student unions. ONA supported the legal challenge, donating \$10,000. Ontario's Nursing Graduate Guarantee (NGG) program launched in August in response to current nursing workforce demands and to support health system recovery. Priority for NGG recruitment is in acute care and in long-term care homes.
- ▶ **Professional Practice:** Professional Practice received 30 new referrals, 24 consultations, five pre-complaints and one request for a Unit education session. Meetings resumed in early 2021, and we have since had nine referrals to an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC), with three hearings completed.
- ▶ **Human Rights and Equity:** The Human Rights and Equity Team met monthly throughout 2021. Planning for the Human Rights and Equity Caucus in November formed a major part of the team's agenda. Other topics included: escans (i.e., how COVID is impacting Bargaining Units), planning for commemorative dates and education (i.e., mandatory vaccination policies/human rights). In July 2020, ONA released a position statement on anti-racism. As well, ONA committed to taking proactive steps to address and take action against any form of racism, discrimination or harassment. The formation of a member-driven committee comprised of members at large was the first step towards this goal.
- ▶ **Labour Relations:** The central hospital arbitration decision was released on September 20, 2021. Our 60,000 hospital sector members were enraged that the decision upheld the Ford government's Bill 124, restricting the maximum annual total wage and any compensation increase to no more than one per cent – a pay cut when factoring in inflation. Our members are currently in the third of three years under Bill

124. ONA launched a charter challenge of Bill 124 and sought repeal of the law. ONA and nursing unions across Canada celebrated a long-fought-for victory to strengthen laws related to health-care worker assaults, when on November 26, 2021, the federal government amended the *Criminal Code*. For sentencing, courts can now consider it an aggravating circumstance when an assault victim is a health-care worker. Nurses at North Bay's Cassellhome home for the aged are fighting cuts to RN positions that will put residents' safety at risk. The nurses are raising serious concerns about management's failure to address chronic understaffing and unsafe workloads.

- ▶ **Health and Safety:** Southlake Regional Health Centre made its first court appearance on November 23, in relation to the latest charges laid against the hospital under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*. This employer has an abysmal record of complying with the law, and front-line RNs and health-care professionals have as a result been subjected to workplace violence. The hospital previously pled guilty to two charges and was fined following a violent incident in 2019; one year later, the hospital

was charged again with six counts under the *OHSA*. The Labour Ministry has laid three charges against London's Kensington Village long-term care home under the *OHSA*, related to COVID-19 outbreaks in 2020 that infected both residents and staff, and killed one RN.

- ▶ **Local Finance:** Budget templates for 2022 were sent out on November 1. Locals now have an option to request a two-year budget template to allow for long-term planning. ONA's finance team is working on webinars/tutorials in our new Learn Finance Link in SharePoint. There will be more mini-tutorials on the site from the Accounting Workbook to assist our Treasurers, such as monthly meeting allocations, year-end processes, etc.
- ▶ **Member Education:** Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Membership Education and Events (MEE) Team has changed its education offerings from in-person workshops, augmented by technology, to technology-only education. Our offerings have been reviewed and augmented based on local priority, member need, strategic requirement and the government's reopening schedule.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors in 2022 will be held January 31 to February 4.

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 2021: 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.