



# Board Highlights

## Making Important Decisions for You!

*A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, June 13-15, 2023*

**ONA'S NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT ERIN ARISS CHAIRED THE JUNE MEETING** of the ONA Board of Directors – her first since the election. The Board also welcomed new Region 4 Vice-President Grace Pierias, who won the by-election to fill Erin's former position. Pierias, who was the Local 75 Vice-President at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, attended this Board meeting as an observer, and assumed her new role on the Board on July 1, 2023.

### ONA FIRST V-P ACCLAIMED TO CFNU LEADERSHIP POSITION

The Board was delighted to hear that ONA First Vice-President Angela Preocanin was acclaimed Secretary-Treasurer for the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) at their June Biennial Convention. Linda Silas was acclaimed as President for her 21<sup>st</sup> year. ONA looks forward to the insight Preocanin can provide in her CFNU position. She will continue to serve concurrently as ONA's First Vice-President.

### BOARD PORTFOLIO CHANGES

As announced and shared with membership at the June Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM), the Board approved the following changes to their portfolios, commencing July 1:

- Vice-President Region 1 Dawn Armstrong: Education
- Vice-President Region 2 Bernie Robinson: Local Finance
- Vice-President Region 3 Karen McKay-Eden: Human Rights and Equity
- Vice-President Region 4 Grace Pierias: Health and Safety
- Vice-President Region 5 Alan Warrington: Labour Relations

### STRATEGIC PLAN

ONA is now entering its third phase of the strategic plan. This phase will develop interim **measurement and reporting systems** for the Multi-Year Action Plan and Accountability Framework, our two key deliverables from Phase II. This will enhance ONA's ability to assess whether our work is achieving our goals. From this, we will streamline the work within the organization as we focus on common goals. As such, the Board reviewed and accepted the following recommendations/motions.

1. That the Board supports the role of the Quality of Service to Members Committee in the measurement and reporting on ONA's strategic plan, as outlined in the Accountability Framework Planning and Implementation Guide.
2. That the Board supports conducting a membership survey every two years, launched at the Biennial, for the chief purpose of collecting data and reporting on member-related measures in ONA's Accountability Framework. These results will be released at the following Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM), including any other relevant data collected on the measures from January to December of the prior year. For those PLMs that do not follow a Biennial, the strategic plan report will include any relevant interim data (e.g., sector or service surveys) collected for the reporting period of January to December of the prior year.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the June 13-15 Board of Directors meeting will be available at [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org) once approved.

## BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Board heard reports from the following committees, Quality of Service to Members, Enterprise Risk Management and Finance, Governance and Nominations, and Political Action. A high-level summary of the work of each committee is included here:

### ► Quality of Service to Members Committee

This committee focuses on ways to improve service to members across the organization, including enhancing communication and making all ONA services accessible. For example:

- ONA social media engagement has increased by 30 per cent. The number of published ONA posts is up by 135 per cent across all platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The ONA private member-only Facebook group has grown by 35 per cent since the end of May 2022.
- Staff have supported several Locals to build new websites or modernize and update existing websites. Additional support is being planned for other Locals.
- ONA has developed a rapid response strategy outlining the internal process for responding to emerging events, such as government announcements.
- ONA has commenced initiatives to develop and implement our anti-racism plan. An Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Toolkit is being developed in conjunction with education for leaders and members in 2023. A needs assessment is currently underway to determine how our members' learning can be supported.
- A retiree connect is being planned for Sept. 14 this year to discuss opportunities for ONA retiree engagement.

### ► Enterprise Risk Management and Finance Committee

The work of this committee is to assess the level of risk associated with ONA activities/services and to recommend mitigation strategies. This committee also receives regular financial updates from the Chief Financial Officer. Priorities identified by this committee include:

- A travel policy for staff, managers and the senior executive team will be created and vetted through the committee.
- The committee is working on an emergency response guideline for events. Currently, ONA has been using

the guidelines set out by the venues where we host functions.

- Concerns have been raised about cyber security at the Local level. While ONA has been providing Local Executives with accounts (access to OneDrive/email address), there are a fair number of Executives who continue to use their personal email accounts and/or do not have access to a laptop or desktop (they conduct ONA business on their cellphones).

### ► Governance and Nominations Committee

The following are activities undertaken by this committee:

- The committee's revisions to the provincial Nursing Week Advisory Team mandate were accepted by the Board. Planning is underway for Nursing Week 2024 with additional tools and a more streamlined process. The front-line members on this team will have more involvement and greater opportunities to assist in decision-making.
- The committee is looking into the role of the Local Treasurer, including the challenges and turnover rate, and seeking ways to assist the Treasurers.
- A new resource document, *Transfer of Bargaining Units between Chartered Local Associations (CLA)*, was presented to the committee. The intent is to support the Board and its consideration and decision-making regarding transfers of Bargaining Units among Locals.

### ► Political Action Committee

- The Political Action Committee (PAC) had its second meeting on June 1. Member representatives worked with their regional Vice-Presidents to begin to map the engagement of Local leaders in their regions.
- The mandate of this committee states that each member representative will "work actively with Board members, staff and Local Coordinators (LC) to implement approved political action plans on a regional basis." Before that can be accomplished, each member representative will need to have a better understanding of where mobilizing and organizing is already happening in the Locals in their region, and where there is a need to increase participation.
- The second part of the meeting focused on how to have conversations to start to build each region's capacity to mobilize, organize and to prepare for implementing province-wide action plans.
- The next meeting of the committee is September 13.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

► The Board reviewed updated recommendations from the Governance and Nominations Committee based on the feedback received from leaders at the May Area Coordinator Conferences. An updated document was to be presented at the June PCM. Any additional amendments from membership must be sent to the Chief Executive Officer by August 4, 2023.

## POLICY UPDATES

The Board looked at the housekeeping policy review performed by the committee on Sections 1 to 9 of the Policy Manual. In addition to the housekeeping changes, the following policies were approved by the Board:

- Policy 10.1 – Nursing Home Central Negotiating Team Mandate
- Policy 14.2 – Signing of Grievance Settlements
- Policy 26.2 – Accounting Software for Local Treasurers
- Policy 26.16 – Failure to Meet Financial Accountabilities

These updated policies will be sent to leaders and can be viewed through Access ONA.

## PROVINCIAL ELECTION TEAM

- The Board received a report from the Provincial Election Team, which met on April 19, 2023 to debrief the provincial president by-election. The team supports the proposed constitutional amendment to expand their powers to ensure fair elections. They also support reducing the election period to 60 days and adding a provision to clarify the authority and process to hold mid-term elections for vacancies.
- The Governance and Nominations Committee will be reviewing the Provincial Election Policy with a focus on roles and responsibilities of the Election Team.

## MEMBER TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The Board approved the following updated Tip Sheets and Guide:

- OHSA At a Glance
- Tip Sheet – Staying Safe at Work: What to Do When You See a Safety Hazard
- Tips for Escalating Unresolved Health and Safety Concerns to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Skills Development

- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) – A Guide for ONA Members
- Tip Sheet – Second Injury and Enhancement Fund.

## DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

The following were approved by the Board:

- \$10,000 donation to the Broadbent Institute for 2023 and 2024.
- \$5,000 sponsorship of Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable EDI Conference.
- \$7,000 sponsorship of Toronto Caribana Festival.
- \$2,500 donation to OFL Human Rights Conference – Defenders of 2SLGBTQIA+ Human Rights.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

The regional reports are contained in the Board materials. The following are just a sampling of what is going in the regions. The most significant challenge appears to be coping with staffing shortages.

► **Region 1:** Many health units report the ending of contract positions created specifically to deal with COVID-19. Members are becoming increasingly resentful of high agency usage and are especially frustrated when agency nurses do not come with the skill set required. Employers are hiring students/externs in various capacities to assist with summer workloads and in trying to cope with staffing shortages. Many employers are using the New Grad Guarantee (NGG) initiative to hire and retain nurses, and skill-mix changes are being implemented to address RN shortages, particularly in the nursing home sector. A Facebook page created by the Local 46 Coordinator (Sault Area Hospital) has increased member engagement with over 75 per cent of members signed on. Thunder Bay Regional is at pre-Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) on 2B. The employer is using the “global nursing crisis” as the excuse for poor staffing.

► **Region 2:** Grievance meetings, negotiations and arbitration hearings continue in-person and via technology. The recent allocation of emergency services in the Minden/Haliburton community has sparked public outcry. Unfortunately, the proposed plan to amalgamate these hospital emergency rooms is moving forward. The assigned Labour Relations Officer (LRO) continues

to keep a close eye on the issue to ensure members are well supported. The private surgical service based out of the Ottawa Hospital is being closely monitored by Local leadership and by the assigned LRO. Front-line staffing shortages continue to impact all sectors throughout the region. Rural long-term care facilities and hospitals continue to be hit the hardest. LROs are monitoring quality of care issues that may arise with the increased use of Agency nurses. The trend continues for premium pay, overtime, discipline, re-assignment/layoff, Bargaining Unit work and scheduling grievances being filed. There is some traction being gained in getting employers to recognize foreign-trained nursing experience and placing members correctly on the pay grid. Professional Practice is actively engaged in many of the Bargaining Units in the region. There are several IACs that will be proceeding to hearing, including Campbellford Memorial, Kingston Health Sciences and Winchester and District Hospital, to name a few. Members are continually encouraged to complete workload report forms.

- **Region 3:** Unanimous appreciation has been conveyed for the continuation of the Hospital Contract Action Team (HCAT) town halls. Implementation of third-party apps for absences and staffing is causing many concerns. Employers are insisting on placements under the NGG, including specialty areas such as ED, ICU, NICU and Birthing Units. Bargaining Units are holding to a firm **NO**. Most employers are in violation of the letter of understanding (LOU) re. commitment to equity, diversity and inclusivity. Pre-booking of agency staff is still occurring at increasingly high volumes. Grievance volumes have increased in all facilities relating to a trend in unreasonable workplace occupational health policies. Disability caseworkers are overriding treating physician statements, requesting intrusive information they are not entitled to, forcing members back to work too soon, and failing to accommodate. Short-term disability is at an all-time high in most facilities. All leaders report regressive proposals from employers during Local negotiations. University Health Network is reporting that 50 per cent of nurses working in their ICUs have less than two years' experience as a nurse. The hospital is onboarding 14 new grads a week into ICUs, setting new grads up to fail and then reporting them to the CNO.

- **Region 4:** Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) report significant increases in workload. Members are not filling out professional responsibility workload forms for fear of reprisal. HCCSSs have not received notice on their role within the Ontario Health Teams. There are thousands of vacancies in the hospital sector across this region. Leaders continue to express concerns about cyber bullying and psychological violence targeted toward our Bargaining Unit leadership. More than one Local Treasurer is retiring this year, leaving some Locals without a Treasurer. Niagara Health Systems (NHS) is reducing hours at the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre. Seven ONA members will be offered early retirement. There are presently 100 vacancies at NHS. Professional practice concerns are reported throughout the region, across all sectors, and many Bargaining Units have several professional practice files in pre-IAC. Agency nursing in long-term care and home care have significantly reduced membership counts, making it difficult to recruit Bargaining Unit Presidents.

- **Region 5:** There is possible strike action ahead this month at Rapids Family Health Team in Sarnia, which has proceeded to conciliation with the employer. There is continued agency usage in this region. There is an increase in Bargaining Units' need for ONA services, including labour relations, professional practice, health and safety and return to work (RTW)/accommodation. This is creating significant challenges for some Bargaining Unit Presidents where there aren't reps in those areas. We have many new Local executives throughout the region. RTW/accommodation is posing a significant challenge for some Bargaining Unit Presidents, especially where little to no other reps exist or can be recruited. We need to work with Locals to ascertain strategies to address this issue. With upcoming Local elections, there is significant concern as some leaders are hinting at not running and there is little to no succession planning.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

### ► Communications

- **ONA Branding:** Research and consultation work on this project continues with our partner, STIFF, and is moving along respecting the project timeline, approved at the April 2022 Board meeting. The

research phase continues with data review from the strategic plan, and interviews with selected individuals from all stakeholder groups. A presentation to Local Coordinators was provided at the June PCM. The plan is to unveil the new branding at the Biennial Convention November.

- **Nursing Week:** Upon review by the Board's Governance and Nominations Committee, the mandate for the provincial Nursing Week Advisory Team has been revised to include a total of three two-hour meetings yearly, and a one-year term of service for the front-line members on the team. The Board will determine the member representatives each year at the June Board meeting. Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington will chair the team. Planning for 2024 has begun. During Nursing Week 2023, ONA President Erin Ariss and First Vice-President Angela Preocanin travelled to seven locations around the province to meet ONA members in their workplaces and attend events. It was especially moving as it was the first time since the COVID-19 lockdowns that ONA members held in-person events without having to stand a safe six-feet apart. The theme for 2023 tied into our 50<sup>th</sup>-year celebrations, "*Lasting Impact, Forging Our Future.*"
- **ONA Advertising Campaign:** Our superb ad campaigns continue. We launched *Nurses Talk Truth* in May 2023 with ads in bus shelters, newspapers and magazines, as well as three weeks of animated social media ads on Facebook. People see and comment on these ads that hit the nail squarely on the head in terms of public messaging and what we want the public and Doug Ford to know. The campaign included an emailer, "*Demand Change – Nurses Talk Truth.*"
  - See our print and animated social media ads at [nursestalktruth.ca/](http://nursestalktruth.ca/).
- **Media:** The first quarter of 2023 saw ONA in the news 360 times, including through opinion editorials and letters to the editor. As of mid-May, second-quarter media hits reached a total of more than 200. ONA bargaining with the OHA and the union's series of escalating actions on behalf of our hospital sector members continued to dominate the news coverage of ONA through the spring, along with the arbitrator's decision re. the Bill 124 reopener clause for hospitals.

In addition, ONA's comments on Bill 60 – Doug Ford's health-care privatization legislation – appeared in print, electronic and tv/radio media in all corners of Ontario. Nursing Week received broad, sustained coverage throughout the week.

- **Podcast:** The latest ONA podcast recording was May 23 and focused on ONA protests, arbitration and the election for a new ONA provincial president. You can hear the podcast on our website [here](#).
- **Website – [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org):** We have pages for all of our campaigns, packed with information and explaining how members can participate in our actions. We have scrolling headlines for all major events/news impacting our members, such as the release of the hospital arbitration decisions, Bill 124 and the launch of our Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) initiative directed at diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Social Media:** We saw a great deal of growth on our social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We continue to see net growth in followers on Facebook, where ONA has historically had the largest following, and even stronger growth on Twitter. Our April 5 *Time's Up* "die-in" protest in downtown Toronto dominated as our most engaged-with posts on all three social platforms.

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- **Privatization Legislation Fast-Track:** The Ontario Legislature reconvened on February 21 and immediately went to work passing legislation to deregulate nursing and further privatize health care. Their first piece of legislation was the introduction of Bill 160, the *Your Health Act, 2023*, supporting the government's plan to privatize the delivery of hospital care, including certain surgeries and diagnostics. ONA provided a written submission and First Vice-President Angela Preocanin appeared at the standing committee hearing at Queen's Park to present ONA's feedback on Bill 160. The government also passed the 2023-24 budget, as well as omnibus education legislation, which will make it easier for the government to sell off school land and for businesses to hire 16-year-olds to work in "apprenticeships" instead of attending high school.



## MOBILIZING/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

► **Fighting Back!:** Since last fall, ONA members have been joining together to continue the fight against the Ford government's further privatization efforts, as well as any workplace plans or policies that erode care and put our patients, residents and clients at risk. There is so much going on at ONA these days, and so much more to do! We are patient advocates and the protectors of our health-care system, and our members are FIGHTING BACK and WINNING! Organizing to build power is how we win on the issues that matter most to our members and the public.

► **Joint Health-Care Union Anti-Privatization Campaign:** Over the past six months, we have joined forces with OPSEU, CUPE, Unifor and SEIU Healthcare to launch a joint health-care union anti-privatization campaign. This is a historic alliance for ONA and our labour family. Our goal is to sound the alarm on Premier Doug Ford's privatization schemes. Across the province, five work locations have been chosen for actions because of the crossover of all five unions in most of the facilities. Each group is working at the local level as a Joint Union Action Committee (JUAC) with representatives of each of the unions present in the facility.

► **ONA's Hospital Contract Action Team (HCAT):** ONA led a series of decentralized hospital action initiatives to build power in workplaces across the province, to engage our members in political action, and to win on our bargaining demands for a contract that will keep nurses and health-care professionals working in this province. The first action was the "Sticker-Up Unity Day" on Feb. 2, where we wore stickers displaying our core message of better staffing, better care and better wages. We asked our members to share their photos wearing the stickers and to show their support on social media. Next, on Feb. 23, we held a series of All-Out Pickets at workplaces and MPP offices across the province – 40 locations in all! Members, who turned out by the hundreds and braved the snow and cold, called for better staffing, better care and better wages. This incredible show of power helped increase member mobilizing capacity across the province and set the stage for our third and final action – our March 2 All-Out Shutdown Day and march on Queen's Park.

Our members travelled from across the province to participate in this phenomenal show of force. The feedback is that our members loved the activities ignited by HCAT and can't wait to see more.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

► The Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team was busy preparing for Pride. Toronto Pride this year was June 23-25, with the parade taking place on Sunday, June 25. ONA's theme was **ONA at 50: Speaking up and Staying Proud**. For us, it is about advocacy, staying part of a movement, speaking up for the movement and staying strong for the movement! We also wanted to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our ONA contingent had a blast!

► Our theme for the Caucus in November is: *Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion and Creating Equitable Communities*. Our focus will be on how ONA as an organization and our members, as RNs and health-care professionals, can assist with our own communities and workplaces.

► We have a confirmed keynote speaker – Cathy Crowe, CM – a long-time Canadian "street nurse", educator, author, social justice activist and filmmaker, specializing in advocacy for the homeless in Canada. She is also a former ONA member!

## LABOUR RELATIONS

► **Grievance Activity:** ONA has filed over 2,200 grievances in 2023 as of June 9. There was an increase in the number of grievances filed in 2020 and 2021, not surprising, given the issues faced by membership related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the improper utilization of the Emergency Orders by employers. There were also fewer grievances resolved in 2021 and 2022, which also is consistent with the COVID-19 pandemic, employers' interpretation of the Emergency Orders, and refusal to meet to address labour relations issues. It is projected that ONA will file approximately 5,000 grievances this year as we currently have filed over 2,200 grievances as of early June 2023.

### OFL/CFNU/CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (CLC)

- **Enough is enough:** The campaign has been following a roadmap leading up to a province-wide action on June 3, 2023. For more information, see [OFL Enough is Enough campaign](#).

### CANADIAN FEDERATION OF NURSES UNIONS (CFNU)

- ONA sent a strong contingent to the CFNU Biennial Convention in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Fantastic discussions and education were held, not to mention a massive die-in and rally to protest privatization and to raise public awareness of the worsening shortage of nurses and health-care professionals. We were absolutely delighted when our First Vice-President Angela Preocanin was acclaimed Secretary-Treasurer for CFNU. Angela will concurrently continue in her ONA role. We wish her good luck at the national level!

### EXCITING EVENTS AHEAD FOR ONA MEMBERS

- **Biennial / 50<sup>th</sup> Celebrations:** Information on registration to come!
- **Premiums and ONA Boutique:** ONA premiums continue to be managed for both inhouse premiums and for the ONA Boutique. Minimum quantities of items are purchased for the ONA boutique so that items are sold and new items continually brought into the mix. The ONA Boutique provides access to regular ONA branded merchandise as well as Celebrate 50 merchandise. ONA has a rebate agreement with the vendor partner that gives us back five per cent on total sales each quarter.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held in September, 2023.

If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact ONA Provincial President Erin Ariss, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin or your regional Vice-President (contact information below). Current and past Board meeting highlights are available on our website [here](#).

**Board members for 2023:** Erin Ariss, Provincial President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison (#7755); Angela Preocanin, First Vice-President, Political Action/Professional Issues (#7707); Dawn Armstrong, Region 1, Education (#7706); Bernadette Robinson, Region 2, Local Finance (#7756); Karen McKay-Eden, Region 3, Human Rights and Equity (#7704); Grace Pierias, Region 4, Health and Safety (#7709); Alan Warrington, Region 5, Labour Relations (#7708). **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.