

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

ONA *Making Important Decisions for You!*

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, March 19-21, 2024.

THE BOARD HELD ITS OPENING MEETING OF 2024 to receive updates from ONA operations and to plan next steps.

FINANCE

The Board approved new procedures under Local Financial Policy, eliminating inconsistencies, redundant sections and providing more financial support for supplementary funded (SF) Locals. The Board received a presentation on ONA's Investment Strategy from representatives of our investment manager Connor, Clark and Lunn. Their performance was then reviewed with the Board by our investment consultant Jason Campbell of Eckler.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

An orientation session for all members of the committees was held on January 17.

QUALITY OF SERVICE TO MEMBERS COMMITTEE

► The level of engagement with our first Members' Survey – which was open for two months – surpassed expectations with total responses exceeding our bargaining survey in 2022. Strong engagement from across all regions, sectors and professional designations was achieved. The committee reviewed survey results at its February meeting and will now seek feedback from leaders. The survey results will be an important source of data for this committee as it considers priorities for the 2024-2027 term.

ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

► The work of this committee is to assess the various risks ONA faces and to recommend mitigation strategies. The committee spent a significant amount of time discussing Policy 8.9 – Computer Equipment and Account Usage Guidelines. Several risks and mitigation measures were identified such as managing and maintaining digital files, the security and use of email communications and paper files. The committee reached consensus that the policy is best broken up into individual policies and that subject matter experts are needed to support risk mitigation efforts on these issues.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

► The committee continues to review the member policy manual, suggesting changes and bringing them to the Board of Directors as recommendations. Policies that have a labour relations lens will be referred to the new Labour Relations Committee for review and next steps. The committee is developing policies and processes to support Constitutional changes arising from the Biennial Convention and will also review the Guide to Leadership Competencies and Accountabilities.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

► The committee will be bringing to the Board a recommendation for a province-wide political action plan. This ONA plan would be a two-and-a-half-year campaign, implemented in phases from fall 2024 until June 2026. The campaign would incorporate the next round of hospital bargaining in March 2025 and nursing homes bargaining, and it will form the basis of ONA's provincial election campaign demands leading into June 2026. The committee identified safe staffing and anti-privatization as the top issues for our members.

POLICY UPDATES

- The following policies were approved by the Board:
- Policy 10.1 – Board Committee Mandates
 - Policy 10.1 – Provincial Election Committee Mandate
 - Policy 16.16 – Member Discipline
 - Policy 26.14 – Security Fund – Establishment and Use of Monies
- The Board also approved an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Advocacy 101 Toolkit, and a Tip Sheet, "Taking on Microaggressions – Considerations." The

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the March Board of Directors meeting will be available at www.ona.org once approved.

revised policies will be provided to leaders in This Week @ ONA, and can also be found under “Executive Content” in [Access ONA](#).

DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

- ▶ The following were approved by the Board:
 - Donation of \$10,000 to the Canadian Health Coalition.
 - Donation of \$500 to the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter’s Fundraiser.
 - Sponsorship of \$4,000 for the Nurse Practitioners’ Association of Ontario’s Annual Conference being held September 25-27 in Toronto.
 - Partner Sponsorship of \$10,000 for the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) Evening for Equality taking place April 23.
 - Wellness Sponsorship of \$5,000 for the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable EDI Leadership Conference being held June 6 in Milton.
 - Sponsorship of 2024 Toronto Caribbean Carnival – Toronto Revellers Back Truck Wrap package – total cost \$10,400.
 - Sponsorship of \$3,000 for 2024 Carnival North.
 - Donation of \$1,000 for the 2024 Mayworks Festival of Working People & the Arts.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Some significant themes in all regions continue to involve short staffing, agency use and workplace violence. Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) are being reported to the College of Nurses of Ontario and many are being exploited and not offered proper orientation.

- ▶ **Region 1:** While many nursing homes have been able to recruit staff and are no longer using agency nurses, smaller hospitals have continued to rely on agency; employers continue to accommodate agency over regular staff. Small hospitals have hired nurse practitioners for ERs to assist with patient demands. At North Bay Regional Health Centre, widespread replacement of RN positions with RPNs is occurring. The message from management is “right classification for the right patient.”
- ▶ **Region 2:** Preparing is happening for Independent Assessment Committee investigations in several Bargaining Units and workload issues are rampant.

Agency nurses are being used for many full-time positions due to staffing shortages. Last April’s cyber attacks in the Region continue to cause payroll issues and grievances have been referred to arbitration.

- ▶ **Region 3:** Issues with dual dues that caused members to choose between employers are now resolved. There has been an increase in failure to accommodate and denial of short-term and long-term disability. Employers appear to be managing short staffing through denial of sick time. One employer is denying vacation and not meeting the *Employment Standards Act*. One unit has eight RNs who have had no vacation granted for a year. There is a “revolving door” of new grads.
- ▶ **Region 4:** HCCSS concerns raised about future/merger. Privatization and standardization are key concerns. Team-based models in hospitals are being implemented across the region. ONA is pushing back with workload forms, professional practice and engagement with the mobilizing team. At Muskoka-Algonquin Healthcare, intense work is ongoing. A letter was drafted with ONA demands and was signed by more than 80 per cent of our members at MAHC.
- ▶ **Region 5:** There are continuous rolling closures of emergency departments. Leadership turnover and servicing staff changes make for some stressful situations, difficulty with relationship/work process continuity. The early engagement of Professional Practice Specialists appears to be welcome. Layoff notices in public health units were very disconcerting for members. Planned mergers in public health are also contributing to anxiety and fear as very little information is being shared by employers. Windsor Regional Hospital has significant health and safety issues around improper radiation exposures related to faulty equipment, lack of training and non-compliance with individual radiation badge use.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ **Email/eBulletins:** ONA launched two new email newsletters: Beyond Equity, on human rights and equity, and Learning Links on education. We will investigate creating a new email newsletter to highlight labour relations and contract administration, and an email newsletter for Local Treasurers.

- ▶ **Media relations:** A 12-month review of ONA's media showed that we outperform comparator organizations. ONA received the highest proportion of media at more than 40 per cent, compared to CUPE at 30 per cent. RNAO received only nine per cent.
- ▶ **Social media:** ONA's Facebook page had an increase in impressions of 838 per cent and 7.9-million impressions on our posts. The downward trend on Twitter/X continues.
- ▶ **ONA website and Local websites:** Traffic was lower in the fourth quarter, but engagement held steady. We have begun redesigning the ONA website and ONA-administered Local websites. High-level page design templates have been approved and are in the development stage.
- ▶ **Nursing Week:** Our website has been updated with things our leaders and members need to plan for Nursing Week, including a digital planning guide and a link to a special promotional item shop: [ONA Nursing Week 2024](#).
- ▶ **ONA Advertising Campaign:** This successful campaign continued in January with an inside cover ad in Hospital News magazine. Additional videos will be filmed, and advertising is planned for the coming months. ONA will continue to advertise broadly and to speak publicly about the shortage of nurses and health-care professionals, and the provincial government's expansion of for-profit services. See: [nursestalktruth.ca](#).

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The 43rd Parliament's first session was adjourned prematurely and resumed on February 20. The following bills are of special interest to ONA members:

- ▶ **Bill 124, *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*:** On February 12, the Court of Appeal for Ontario ruled Bill 124, the wage-suppression legislation, to be unconstitutional, and upheld the lower court's decision.
- ▶ **Bill 151, *The Improving Real Estate Management Act*:** This bill, which gives the Minister of Infrastructure oversight of properties belonging to Public Health Ontario, Ontario Health and Ontario Health atHome, was discussed at the Standing Committee on Social Policy on February 20.

- ▶ **Bill 135, *The Convenient Care at Home Act*:** This bill, which expanded the role of client service provider companies in home and community care, received Royal Assent in December 2023. We expect to see an expanded role of for-profit service providers. ONA is working with other health-care unions to plan upcoming events to raise awareness about the chaos for access to home care services.
- ▶ **Bill 144, *The Healthcare Staffing Agencies Act*:** ONA worked with the Ontario NDP to draft this legislation, introduced on October 31, 2023, by Health Critic France Gélinas and MPP Wayne Gates. The legislation requires communities with more than 8,000 residents to develop plans to limit spending on health-care agencies.
- ▶ **Auditor General of Ontario 2023 Annual Report:** On December 6, the Auditor General of Ontario released its 2023 Annual Report, which assessed value-for-money audits of Ontario's public-sector. The report found that nursing agencies contributed to staffing shortages at public hospitals.

MEMBER MOBILIZING/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

- ▶ **Biennial Convention Education:** Member mobilizers worked with the Membership Education Team to develop half-day education, entitled "Strengthening our Union through Intergenerational Solidarity," during the week of the Biennial Convention.
- ▶ **Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM):** Building on the Biennial education session, the PLM workshop in March, also called "Strengthening our Union through Intergenerational Solidarity," focussed on developing membership skills in a new tool created by member mobilizers and campaign staff.
- ▶ **ONA members show support at OCHU/CUPE, Unifor and SEIU Healthcare hospital workers' rally** On February 6, ONA members, leaders and staff participated in a rally organized by OCHU/CUPE, Unifor and SEIU Healthcare. The Toronto rally was to support hospital bargaining for the other unions' workers. ONA members from other sectors joined in demanding the Ontario Hospital Association give fair contracts to the workers, including safe staffing ratios.

MEMBER EDUCATION

- ▶ **Health and Safety Caucus** The Health and Safety Caucus dates have been set and the topic is “Preventing and Responding to Violence Related Incidents in the Workplace.”
- ▶ **Spring 2024 Leadership Summit - Hilton, Niagara Falls, April 22-26:** ONA planned a one-time event for a Spring Leadership Summit. This stems from feedback received from our advanced Local leaders, in alignment with ONA’s strategic plan.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY (HRE)

- ▶ More than 460 members attended the HRE Caucus, with over 157 completing an evaluation. About 90 per cent of respondents were either very or extremely satisfied with the caucus; 86 per cent felt that the communities of support were a very or extremely valuable segment; 83 per cent felt that our guest speakers outlined the importance and impact of social justice work; 93 per cent were either very or extremely satisfied with the segment where our members and leaders shared their voices and journeys. HRE launched an expression of interest to recruit four new members to the HRE team, including an ally member. The team developed a member toolkit which includes the team’s mandate, guide, commemorative dates and more. The HRE Book Club will be entering its third year. Along with ONA’s renewed brand, the Book Club wants to renew engagement with members. There will be a new points program with an opportunity to win a prize.

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION (ARAO)

- ▶ In 2024, the permanent ARAO team will begin and will be transitioning from a working group to a team and look forward to integrating our work throughout the organization and our membership.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- ▶ The roll out of the process improvement plan (PIP) and file transfers is nearing completion with only a few outlying files remaining to be transferred over from Labour Relations Officers to the Professional Practice Specialists (PPS). With the PPS now receiving workload forms directly from Bargaining Unit leaders, the team has identified a significant need for additional communication and ongoing education related to the

change in process and accountabilities. The complexity of files is increasing, thus requiring collaboration and a multi-pronged approach among many different teams across ONA to formulate a plan and action that best represents the members’ needs.

- ▶ **Professional Practice Settlements include Health Sciences North 5 N Cardiac Medical Unit:** An agreement was signed to resolve workloads back to September 2022. Achievements include improvements to recruitment, an increase in equipment and supplies, and increased staffing on transcatheter aortic valve implantation days.
- ▶ **Cambridge Memorial Hospital Emergency Department:** Achievements include increasing baseline staffing to include three 12-hour RN positions in a 24-hour period. The addition of a supernumerary clinical scholar was added until at least March 31, 2024. Charge nurse (CN) and triage training.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ▶ **Providence Care Centre:** A COVID-19 grievance arose when the employer had discontinued access to N95s. A settlement was achieved with the employer agreeing to ensure that members are not denied permission to access, nor prevented from physically accessing PPE.
- ▶ **London Health Sciences Centre:** In September, a Code Silver was called, and it became evident that the Code Silver policies and procedures are dysfunctional. On January 1, another violent incident including a weapons threat occurred and a Code Silver was not called. The Ministry of Labour was called and made four orders.
- ▶ **Halton Health:** A patient was not checked for weapons upon transfer from another unit. They had a lighter and set their bedding and room on fire. This patient, as well as several other patients, were difficult to remove and required upwards of 15 staff. At the time of this incident, management was aware that staffing was an issue and there have been ongoing concerns about the staff mix. Following the incident, several were treated for smoke inhalation injuries. Reports and updates to the JHSC about this incident have been slow.

LABOUR RELATIONS

- ▶ A continuous two-year review cycle is being implemented to review direction to ensure staff use the most up-to-date positions and guidance while also

having a historical knowledge base. Labour relations direction currently under review include:

- Direction re emergency leave under the ESA and ONA Collective Agreements.
- Seniority, service and benefits while taking emergency leave, as defined in the *Employment Standards Act*.
- ESA severance pay for members terminated for disability.
- Labour relations strategy re RN/RPN scope issues in elimination of positions and layoff situations.

► An updated Hospital Contract Interpretation Manual for 2023-2025 was sent to Hospital Bargaining Unit Presidents and ONA Staff on January 29.

ONA RETIREES:

► **Retiree Network Advisory Team (RNAT) Expression of Interest:** ONA launched an online expression of interest form for those interested in joining our new RNAT. The RNAT is a network for ONA retirees to stay connected with our union and profession post-retirement.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held on June 18-20 in 2024

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 2024: 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.

Provincial Office • 85 Grenville St. • Toronto ON M5S 3A2
Tel: (416) 964-8833 • Toll-free: 1-800-387-5580 • Fax: (416) 964-8864 • Website: ona.org

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