

I want to assure each and every one of you working in long-term care that you have ONA's ongoing support and we will continue our efforts to keep you and your residents as safe as possible throughout this pandemic.

The past couple of days have been shocking with revelations from the report of Canada's Armed Forces of the deplorable conditions and care they have witnessed in the five long-term care homes to which they have been deployed.

At the same time, I know many of us are not shocked that conditions in these homes – and others – have deteriorated. We know – and along with you – have raised the alarm for decades about the serious issues in long-term care. Rest assured, we will never stop in our efforts to motivate our decision-makers to fix them. I want you to know that daily, ONA and I continue to work diligently and tirelessly on your behalf to effect real and lasting change. Sometimes this work is behind the scenes, on our legal strategies, in court and at arbitration, or in public forums, such as the media spotlight.

So many of you, our dedicated members, have been infected by COVID-19. We know that you have been striving to keep your residents safe while also being concerned for your own safety, as well as the safety of your families and your fellow nurses and health-care professionals.

As the government rolls out its plans to take control of four of the five facilities in the military report, as well as three others, more information will become available. It is important for you to know that while the management of your home may change, ONA still represents you. Your collective agreement, as amended by the Emergency Orders, is still in place. Know that ONA has your back.

ONA will also be fully engaged in the commission of inquiry that the government is planning to set up in July. We will be reaching out to some of our members for additional information and support as we represent your interests in the inquiry.

Keep up the good fight. Don't lose hope. While it may have taken the military to bring these issues back into the spotlight, we are determined to never rest until our members and residents are safe and secure at last.

Please do not hesitate to raise any issues with your Labour Relations Officer or Bargaining Unit President. We are here to help and to support you.

In solidarity,

Vicki McKenna, RN

ONA President