

FRONT LINES



"We were everywhere"

With so much at stake, ONA and our members gave it our all in the lead-up to the provincial election. What happens now?

ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION
85 Grenville St., Ste. 400 - Toronto ON M5S 3A2

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FRONTLINES

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ONA is the union representing 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals and more than 18,000 nursing student affiliates providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry.

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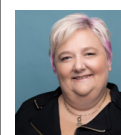
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Breaking Point

I am writing to all of you because I am sure many of you are at your breaking points. This never-ending pandemic is continuing to impose impossible demands upon you, and the discouragement you feel must be overwhelming.

At the beginning of the pandemic, our society held you up with love and support. We referred to you as our “heroes.” However, it would seem despite your heroic efforts that continue today, you are no longer receiving the same love, support and appreciation. Even worse, the political leadership has failed to provide you with the resources, policies and monetary compensation that would lessen the catastrophic burden that is now upon you.

I personally would like to thank the health-care workers who gave my dad an additional 17 years of life by fixing his damaged heart. My dad was a proud WWII veteran who was a “hero,” and he would be proud to call all of you the same.

I thank you for fixing my broken bones, stitching up my wounds and keeping all the cancers and other horrible diseases at bay in my friends and family.



HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

We'd love to hear from you!
Send your comments
to the *Front Lines* editor at
frontlines@ona.org.

There is no greater contribution to humankind than the preservation of life. You are life givers, you are selfless, and you are compassionate in the face of unthinkable adversity. Your brilliant minds continue to innovate to keep the rest of us healthy and alive.

However, as you face the greatest challenge of your entire career, it will be your perseverance that will become your greatest attribute. The majority of your fellow citizens are so very grateful for your heroic efforts, and I am confident they would agree with every word in this letter.

With gratitude,
JANE CLEGG



As Seen on TV

Your recent commercials advocating for a government that will repair the broken health-care system are most effective. Great job! Please continue to inform the public in as many ways as possible from your unique and lived experiences and perspectives.

Thank you to all your nurses and health-care professionals for their excellent work always, but especially during this pandemic. YOU ARE APPRECIATED! But we know you deserve much more respect and action to improve the many areas which you feel need more funding, etc.

CAROLYN JOHNSTON



Sticker Shock

We have just received our government licence plate sticker refund and wish to donate it to where the funds should have gone in the first place – to the nurses of Ontario!

We fully support ONA in its campaign to repeal Bill 124 and have written to our MPP and Premier Ford to say as much.

To make it clear, neither of us are nurses nor is anyone in our family.

Sincerely,
PAMELA AND ROBERT EDWARDS

Events and Observances



The following are key happenings and commemorative dates until the next issue, which we are acknowledging and/or celebrating provincially (and you can do so locally). Please note that due to COVID-19, these events may be cancelled or held in different ways.

- ▶ **August – September:** Continuing Pride events
- ▶ **September 5:** Labour Day
- ▶ **September 13-15:** Board of Directors Meeting
- ▶ **September 30:** National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- ▶ **October:** National Occupational Therapy Month
Women's History Month
- ▶ **October 2-8:** Mental Illness Awareness Week
- ▶ **October 10:** World Mental Health Day
- ▶ **October 23-29:** National Respiratory Therapist Week



Check ona.org for more information

From ONA President
Chronique de la présidente, AIIO
CATHRYN HOY, RN



Follow Cathryn at twitter.com/CathrynOna

It's the Same Government, but I'm the Same President

AN INTERESTING THING HAPPENED while I was speaking to ONA Local leaders and members at the Provincial Coordinators Meeting, just days after the June 2nd provincial election.

I received a message on my cell phone, which I had to share with the room: "Hi Cathryn, it's Doug Ford. Please call me back."

Well, you can bet I did and that I will be calling him many, many times in the months and years to come. In fact, I fully intend to be like a dog with a bone. After all, it was my social media post earlier this year that "Premier Ford refuses to meet with nurses and health-care professionals" that went viral and suddenly spurred a change of heart on his part.

While I am extremely disappointed and angry that the Ontario political landscape looks a whole lot like it did before the provincial election, leaving us with the same majority government that trampled all over the workplace and union rights of our nurses and health-care professionals, I am also the same President, we are the same Board, and you are the same members.

That means we will not sit back quietly while the Ford government makes reckless decisions that disrespect us and undermine our value; affect our ability to provide quality care to our patients, residents and clients; and threaten our cherished public health-care system. We can't have one more nurse or health-care professional leave due to extreme burnout and disgust when we are already officially 22,000 nurses short in this province (but I estimate the number to be closer to 30,000). Just because the election is over, doesn't mean the fight is.

But make no mistake, we have our work cut out for us. And by us, I mean all of us together. Because our *Nurses Vote* provincial election campaign, which I hope you will read about in the cover story, showed us beyond a shadow of a doubt the power of solidarity and all of us coming together as one strong force. In all my years at ONA, I have never seen our members so engaged and politically active, as you challenged the candidates and ensured the public knew the cold hard truth about our health-care system. And it worked. The majority of Ontarians did not vote for the Conservatives.

When I returned Premier Ford's call, I said I will give him a short reprieve while he gets his Cabinet in place, but I have no

intention of letting him off the hook after that. I'm requesting regular meetings where I can share the experiences and realities of nurses and health-care professionals first-hand, so please keep sending me your stories! They are so powerful. After all, as highly educated and skilled professionals, you are the experts. I will do my best to work with the Premier, but he needs to hear what we're saying and understand your roles. And if he won't listen, I know the media will. They never stop calling for ONA's comments, and you can bet the Board and I have a lot to say!

While Premier Ford seemed to dangle us a carrot after the election, stating to the media that it might be time to look at wage increases for nurses and some other public sector workers in light of soaring inflation, I have learned that what he says and what he does – calling us heroes while implementing the wage suppressing Bill 124 in the first place, for example – are generally not the same thing.

Still, I am hopeful. Hopeful because of the collective action I witnessed from our members during the election campaign (and continue to witness every day). And hopeful because I am clearly on the Premier's radar – and his speed dial! Together, we will get through to him!

C'est le même gouvernement, mais je suis la même présidente également

UNE CHOSE INTÉRESSANTE S'EST PRODUITE pendant que je discutais avec les dirigeants et les membres des sections locales de l'Association des infirmières et infirmiers de l'Ontario (AIIO) lors de la réunion des coordonnateurs provinciaux, quelques jours seulement après les élections provinciales du 2 juin. J'ai reçu un message sur mon téléphone cellulaire, que j'ai dû partager avec la salle : « Bonjour, Cathryn, c'est Doug Ford. Rappelez-moi s'il vous plaît. »

Eh bien, vous pouvez parier que je l'ai fait et que je le rappellerai sans doute de nombreuses fois au cours des mois et des années à venir. En fait, j'ai pleinement l'intention d'être tenace et persistante. Après tout, c'est mon message sur les médias sociaux, publié plus tôt cette année, et intitulé « Premier Ford refuses to meet with nurses and health-care professionals (Le premier ministre Ford refuse de rencontrer les infirmières, les infirmiers et les professionnels de la santé) », qui est devenu viral et qui a soudainement suscité un changement d'attitude de sa part.

Bien que je sois extrêmement déçue et furieuse que le paysage politique de l'Ontario ressemble beaucoup à ce qu'il était avant les élections provinciales, nous laissons avec le même gouvernement majoritaire qui a piétiné les droits syndicaux et le milieu de travail de

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From ONA First Vice-President
Chronique de la première vice-présidente, AIO
ANGELA PREOCANIN, RN



Follow Angela at twitter.com/4angiepreocanin

So, You Want to Get Involved?

IN MY ROLE AS FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT with the portfolio of Local political action, one of the questions I get increasingly asked by our members is *how can I get involved in the work of my union?*

Inspired by the spectacular rallies you have seen in the news, the game-changing wins you are achieving in your workplaces and the motivational words of your provincial and Local leaders, more and more of you want to get in on the action. And with our provincial election secondees (see the cover story) reporting that a few members still think that ONA is just provincial leaders and staff in offices who are there whenever you need help, this is very encouraging to hear!

The fact is we *are* always there when you need help, but we need you to be there too! The actions of the Ford government and our employers have required nurses and health-care professionals to organize and mobilize on workplace and province-wide issues like never before.

And how do you do that? A good place to start is with your Bargaining Unit President (if you don't know who that is, go to ona.org/bup). Ask how you can help with their mobilizing work. Do they have a political action committee that you can join? Our Local leaders are always looking for members to step up to the plate and will gladly welcome you!

If you don't quite want that level of commitment right away, there is so much you can do as you test the waters. Keep on top of your Local and Bargaining Unit activities by following them on social media, reading their emails, checking your ONA boards and attending their meetings. Sign and share petitions they are circulating, talk to your family and friends about the issues you face, write letters to the editor of your local newspapers to educate the public. Any little thing you do is engagement – I guarantee you'll be hooked! – and it absolutely makes a difference.

Because that's another question I get asked. *Can I, as one person, make the change I want to see?* Absolutely! If you as that one person joins another person, and so on and so on, we soon have a collective and a movement – and that's when real change happens.

Your Board is so committed to mobilizing our members that we recently added a fourth Board Committee. The Provincial Political Action Committee is comprised of front-

line members, who will help identify province-wide trends on workplace or political issues that affect nurses, health-care professionals, your patients, residents, clients and communities; recommend short- and long-term political action plans to address those issues; and work actively with Board members, Local Coordinators and staff to implement approved plans on a regional basis. Membership interest in the committee was high, which is very telling, and it was exceedingly difficult to narrow down. This is a committee that is going to do incredible and meaningful work, and as chair, I'm very excited to get it up and running.

A couple of years ago, ONA also created a member mobilizer position, and because more Locals are taking on their own campaigns to effect change and empower their members than ever before, we will be adding another position. Contact our dedicated mobilizers at cgrintake@ona.org. They are only too happy to help! And, of course, the Board and I are here to assist with your advocacy efforts as well and are only a phone call away – and that's a phone call I always love to receive!

As one secondee so eloquently put it, ONA is not just *your* union or *my* union. It's you. It's me. It's all of us together.

Voulez-vous donc y participer?

DANS MON RÔLE DE PREMIÈRE VICE-PRÉSIDENTE chargée du portefeuille de l'action politique des sections locales, l'une des questions que me posent de plus en plus nos membres est la suivante : *Comment puis-je participer au travail de mon syndicat?*

Inspirés par les rassemblements spectaculaires que vous avez vus dans les nouvelles, les victoires révolutionnaires qui changent la donne dans vos milieux de travail et les paroles motivantes de vos dirigeants provinciaux et locaux, vous êtes de plus en plus nombreux à vouloir participer à l'action. Et comme les personnes détachées aux élections provinciales (voir l'article de couverture) nous ont rapporté que quelques membres pensent encore que l'AIO se résume aux dirigeants provinciaux et au personnel des bureaux qui sont là chaque fois que vous avez besoin d'aide, il est très encourageant de l'entendre!

En fait, nous sommes toujours là lorsque vous avez besoin d'aide, mais nous avons besoin de vous également! Les mesures prises par le gouvernement Ford et nos employeurs ont obligé les infirmières, les infirmiers et les professionnels de la santé à s'organiser et à se mobiliser comme jamais auparavant sur des questions touchant le milieu de travail et sur l'ensemble de la province.

Comment y arriver? Le président de votre unité de négociation est un bon point de départ (si vous ne savez pas de qui il s'agit, visitez ona.org/bup). Demandez-lui comment vous pouvez l'aider dans son

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MEMBERS GET LOUD!

MAY 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**Nursing
Week
2022**

Nursing Week 2022: Members Explain “Why I Fight”

You certainly told it like it is this Nursing Week.

While we saw more Locals return to in-person lunches, galas and other celebratory gatherings to acknowledge all you do for the people of this province, we also asked you on social media to share why you fight, tying in with our Nursing Week theme, *Dedicated to Care. Fighting for Change.*

And did you ever! This issue of *Front Lines* contains just a sampling of those responses in your own words, including a few of the 10 winners of a \$20 Tim Horton's gift card (but really, they were all winners!) We will endeavour to publish the rest in upcoming issues, so don't be disappointed if you don't see your story here.

“This was a significant Nursing Week in many ways,” said ONA President Cathryn Hoy. “We chose to both celebrate our profession and advocate for the changes we desperately need. While we continued to deal with a devastating pandemic and regressive government legislation, we echo the outpouring of gratitude and kindness the public, your patients and their families, and many organizations have shown to nurses and health-care professionals. We hope that helped lift your spirits during these difficult days, and that you were able to pause and reflect this Nursing Week, even for just a moment, on the critical importance of your role in our health-care system.”



ONA member Sarah Ellis stands in front of a poster containing photos of 30 nurses from the Haldimand War Memorial Hospital holding signs that when read in succession create a story about their pandemic experiences. “Nurses encountered limitations on supplies,” said Bargaining Unit President Kathryn Stengel, who, along with Vice-President Heather Herkimer, wrote a piece for Nursing Week in their local newspaper. “Patients testing positive for COVID-19 needed higher levels of treatment. No visitors required virtual electronic visits, adding to a nurse's responsibilities. Many self-isolated from their families to prevent exposing them to the virus. Miraculously, nurses rose to the challenge and demonstrated flexibility to adapt and overcome these hurdles. We honour our nurses who continue to fight on the front lines. They deserve to be celebrated for their work, but more importantly, for treating our community clients like their own family.”



#WhyIFight is for social determinants of health. Health care is about housing, safe water, living wages, racial disparities, accessibility and much more. #WhyIFight is for better care. Ontario has the worst RN-to-population ratio in Canada. #WhyIFight is for the care our patients deserve.

Karen McCoy



Almost 30 years ago (December 1992) I graduated to become a nurse. I was proud and oh so eager to save the world! I give a valiant attempt to do this every day.

This is our third year in a pandemic and nurses are tired. We try our best to give our best care to every patient every time. Please be patient with us. We are understaffed, overworked and scared!

This Nursing Week we are focusing on advocacy for Ontarians and their health-care system. Let's hope our system improves and nurses get the break they need.

Pauli Beadman-Genier



#WhyIFight: Access to quality health care, which reflects a core value of caring for one another. It takes strong nurses to stand up to a system that has lost its way. I want to be part of the force that stands up for those in need. Advocating and challenging the system requires solidarity.

Doug Bell



Three years into this pandemic, we continue to try to give our best, day in and day out. But it is getting harder and harder. We are short-staffed and overworked every single day. This Nursing Week, we are fighting for changes to health care and improved working conditions.

Monic Parent



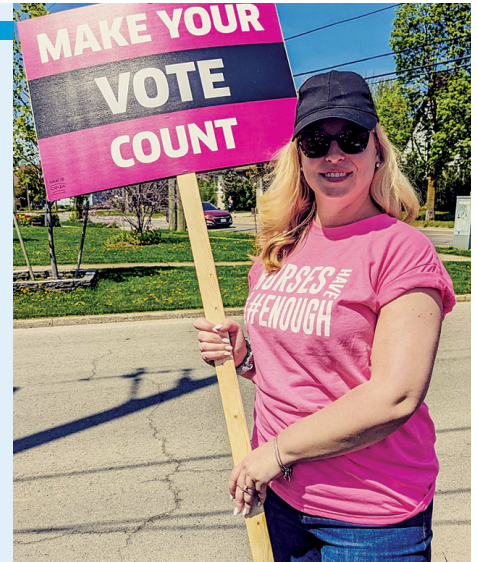
I am a registered nurse.

I have worked the last two-and-a-half years in a COVID-19 intensive care unit. Many days, I have been fearful and anxious going into work, not knowing what my working environment will look like – if I might be pulled to another floor or if I will have a good team to lead inexperienced staff. I have seen many people die and have held iPads so their families could say goodbye, all while hearing that COVID-19 isn't real.

But I continue to go into work because I love being a nurse. I love learning, working alongside highly skilled and educated colleagues, and caring for people the way I would want my family cared for.

But I continue to fight because you never know when you will be the one who needs health care and someone to advocate for you. But when you do, I want everyone to be able to access the best care possible and for it to be publicly funded.

Rachael Cooke



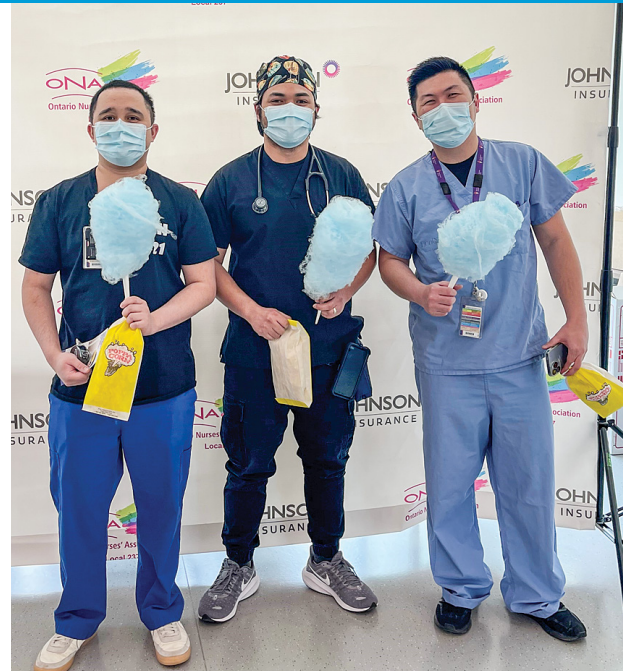
Local Gives Nurses “Sweet” Thank You

Appreciation. That's what Local 237 wanted their members to feel this Nursing Week.

“Our members look forward to our Nursing Week celebration every year – and this year more than ever,” said Local 237 Vice-President Sonia Batista. “We had a very difficult two years with the pandemic and now with the ongoing nursing crisis and workload issues, it was nice to have a day to just feel appreciated and to recognize our struggles. So, with the leadership of our Local Coordinator Helen Watling, we put together a day to honour and celebrate our nurses and the important role they play in our Local.”

To do so, Watling reached out to the community and received donated gifts, which were raffled off for the members while local businesses also provided gifts to show their support and appreciation. Representatives from the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan and Johnson Inc., the benefit plan for members, set up displays to talk to members and hand out small gifts, and the outgoing and incoming ONA Labour Relations Officers were on hand to engage with members. The Local also involved nursing students, who helped with set up at both sites of Mckenzie Health, while “getting some exposure on the work of a union,” noted Batista.

“A sweet treat always goes a long way, so we had a popcorn and cotton candy station. We budget for a Nursing Week gift every



year and this year we decided to hand out umbrellas engraved with the word “NURSE” and some definitions of a nurse and our Local logo. Members always feel appreciated and supported by our Local.”

“One but mighty:” Sole Hospital NP does a Little Bit of Everything

ONA member Marie Greer-King had a very personal reason for wanting to become a nurse practitioner (NP).

“I wanted to be closer to my family and there were no full-time RN jobs in my small town at the time,” she said. “And I wanted more autonomy to make my own decisions and use my skills. I always wanted to help people. Early on, I did a co-op and thought I wanted to be a doctor, but I quickly realized the person who spends the most time at the bedside is the nurse.”

And as the sole NP in her small-town hospital, where she has worked for 10 years, that couldn't be truer.

“I work primarily in the emergency department (ED) four afternoons a week, and the pre-natal clinic one day a week. Then I work in the mental health inpatient unit one day a week, which leaves one day for miscellaneous. For example, this morning was for catch-up and I gave some COVID-19 vaccines. I often find I do a little bit of everything each day because, as the only NP, I get pulled away. It's not unusual for me to multi-task, but that's what all nurses do.



“I like knowing I've made a small difference in people's lives – on their best days, their happiest and sometimes their worst,” said NP Marie Greer-King. “When somebody who doesn't normally get care trusts you and wants to know what you have to say, it's very rewarding.”

« With the move towards Ontario Health Teams, we need to change our thinking that we're not hospital-, primary health care-, community health care centre- or home care-based. We're all part of a continuum of care and need to ensure those transitions are happening smoothly and that the funding is following the patient. »»

— Marie Greer-King, NP

Probably one of the most significant challenges is that there's nobody to cover me because there's no additional funding for another NP. They get by without me, but it can increase workloads in other areas as I'm normally running all over the hospital.”

For that reason, Greer-King, who was not re-deployed during the pandemic but attended a mass vaccine clinic to bring back information to the hospital, has advocated to be involved at various levels, including the Hospital Association Committee and the Medical Association Committee, to provide the NP perspective.

“I could be on every single committee because I work all over, but I have to draw the line. I usually say, ‘if it's pertinent to NP practice or my practice, I'd like to give my two cents,’ but I don't need to be at every single meeting. They do value what I have to say and ask my opinion. Sometimes you don't feel you have much say as one, but I'm mighty.”

While Greer-King works to her full scope at her hospital (the only thing she doesn't do is admit or discharge because there is no current mechanism in place to cover calls overnight), she noted that educating physicians, nurses, patients and other members of the public about what she can and can't do as an NP is common.

“I think the mark of a good professional is being able to articulate what your scope is, even to patients,” she explained. “After I chatted to one patient about some of his concerns, he said, ‘so, when am I going to see the real person?’ I answered, ‘I *am* the real person, and I'm here to help you.’ A lot of people say to me, ‘you're between a nurse and a doctor,’ and I reply, ‘no, I consider myself a nurse first and foremost – a nurse with additional education and training and experience.’

I am not a doctor, nor do I want to be one. It's surprising how many people still don't know the scope of practice of an NP."

That's something she would like to change, noting all NPs have a role to play in that.

"We've been talking about how to get out the word about the value added from the care an NP can provide as part of our strategic plan at the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, where I am the secretary on the board. ONA is working hard in this area too, advocating on our behalf with the government. NPs need to be active in these organizations to educate people. Reach out to your Bargaining Unit President and Local Coordinator to find out about union activities and how you can get involved. It doesn't need to be onerous, but these activities are important. I went to ONA's Region 5 Area Coordinators Conference this past February and did a little presentation about what an NP is. It was very well received, and a fellow member said, 'I didn't realize an NP could do that!'"

These conversations also take place during meetings of ONA's NP Focus Group, which Greer-King joined because as the only NP in her Bargaining Unit, "sometimes you feel like your voice gets a bit lost. But I also know that it takes two to make agreements. A few years ago, I sat on in on an arbitration where we got a starting wage for the NP wage grid. Every little piece of language, whether it's a Letter of Understanding or mentioning that NPs exist in the Bargaining Unit is a badge of honour to say, 'an NP works here or is part of this team.' All those wins, no matter how small, add up."

Nursing Now Awards Recipient Proud to be Internationally Educated Nurse

"A constant learner," that's how the nurse practitioner (NP) recipient of the 2022 Nursing Now Ontario Awards describes herself.

ONA member Guangxia Meng, who began her nursing career in Tianjin, China, has been working at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket for the past 18 years, currently in its Stroke Prevention Clinic. Her colleagues call her hardworking, dedicated and knowledgeable.

"I am a constant learner who continues to advance my career through education to improve patient care," she said.

In fact, she graduated with top honours from the Master of Nursing program at the University of Toronto in 2014 and was given the opportunity to fast track to PhD. So, while working full-time, Meng is currently a PhD candidate in the University of Waterloo's Public Health and Health System program. Her thesis will focus on patients' perspectives of virtual care to determine whether a hybrid model of care will work post-pandemic.

The awards, a joint endeavour of ONA, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN),



celebrate contributions made by nurses to nursing practice and the health and well-being of Ontarians by honouring one NP, one RN and one RPN (the RN and RPN recipients are not ONA members). The response was

overwhelming, with more than 400 nominations received.

Initially drawn to nursing when one of her teachers recognized her natural tendency to help others and encouraged her to attend nursing school, Meng, who was given the award at a special ceremony during Nursing Week attended by Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, said she is proud to be an internationally educated nurse and loves the work she does in collaboration with her colleagues, which she describes as "a well-oiled machine."

In addition to being an NP, student and mentor, Meng is also a wife and mother of two boys. She said she is proud of all her roles.

"I do think I work really hard, but it's a special honour," she stated, noting that the nursing profession is full of possibilities. "As long as you want it, there's an opportunity for you."

With information from the Nursing Now Ontario Awards Committee.



PODCAST

TELLING ONTARIANS THE TRUTH WITH ONA!

Listen in as ONA President Cathryn Hoy and First Vice-President Angela Preocanin discuss the state of the health-care profession – and tell Ontarians the truth about what's happening to their health-care system. They also update members on how their union is fighting to improve their work lives and care for all Ontarians.

ona.org/about-ona/podcast/

Member Named Woman of Excellence

Nurse. Mentor. Advocate. Business owner. ONA member Marlene Schaap Kuri really does it all.

And it's for that reason she has been given a prestigious Woman of Excellence Award in the health, science and technology category by her local May Court Club.

"It's such an honour," she said. "My name was submitted in 2020, but we all know what happened then, and I just forgot. I got quite busy with my work, and when they called me during March Break, I thought, *oh, they're just saying I didn't get the nomination*. And then they said I won! They told me I fall under all the categories of the award because there's volunteerism and business. But I think they're really showcasing the nursing part of me."

And that nursing part began when Schaap Kuri graduated with Honours from the University of Windsor and found work at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance 37 years ago, where she has been focused on mental health and addictions for the past 22 years.

"I'm really glad I chose to be a nurse, as it really was the best decision," she said. "Since then, I've been an inpatient psychiatry nurse, a geriatric mental health outpatient nurse, a nurse clinician, a mental health advanced practice nurse, a televideo nurse and a mental health pre-assessment nurse. I'm the one who does the referral to see the psychiatrist. I pride myself because we have no wait times, not even a week. You're not going to beat that anywhere in the province. I triage every referral, and if you're in crisis, you're going to go through emergency. We're not a crisis clinic, but we're going to get you in soon. I continuously use all of my advanced practice nursing."

With all that experience, it's no wonder that Schaap Kuri is also a mentor, noting "there's a mentorship program for staff at my hospital and I have taken on countless fourth-year students from the University of Windsor, precepted them and helped them find employment here. I'm nice, but I'm tough."

Something else she is? An advocate.

"I like to give back, so I have sat on umpteen boards, including Lambton-Kent Canadian Mental Health Association for mental health and children. That is my love. Next was the Chatham-Kent Children's Services Foundation Board [now known as Linck, Child Youth and Family Services], where I was President, Vice-President and Treasurer. And now I'm the President of the Ridge KIDS Day Care Chatham-Kent."



"I've always been a nurse and could have gone anywhere, but I stayed in Chatham-Kent because I love this community," said member Marlene Schaap Kuri, RN, who received a Woman of Excellence Award on June 3. "I wanted to provide care, but I also care for the land. I'm the luckiest person ever to be able to do both."

As if that wasn't enough, there's even more! A self-proclaimed "farm girl," Schaap Kuri and her husband own 700 acres of farmland in Chatham-Kent that they rent out.

"I'm a member of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and I take as much of a hands-on approach with my farming as I do with my patients. We grow wheat, beans, corn and a premium crop of sugar beets that we ship to Michigan. People rent our land or share crop it, but if there's a problem, I'm there. I know every part of the *Drainage Act* of Ontario because if you don't then you have no business operating a farm. We have to be very respectful of the land. Since 2010, we are also shareholders with two land solar panels that generate renewable energy production."

With that much on her plate, it's hard to image how she manages it all. But for Schaap Kuri, who noted she is active in ONA and has her Bargaining Unit President "on speed dial," there is one secret: "I'm extremely organized. If you give me a task, I'm going to finish it."

While Schaap Kuri, who also holds a Master of Science in Psychology, is planning to retire from nursing this summer, that's not about to slow her down.

"I have Advanced Standing and completed seven courses towards my PhD in Psychology," she said. "I need six more courses, but I might just do that when I retire. It's needling at me, and I need to finish it. I have a very good nurse friend, who has written a lot of books, including one for children about the pandemic. She's asked me to co-author with her, so I might also do that. You have to have goals to chomp away at everyday. But I will miss being a nurse. Nursing does that to a person. Once you are a nurse, you are always a nurse."



WHAT ARE YOU GETTING LOUD ABOUT ON THE FRONT LINES OR IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

SHARE IT WITH US!

Send your stories and photos to the Front Lines editor at frontlines@ona.org.





Interested in being on ONA's Central Negotiating Teams?

Want to be a part of something meaningful? Calls for nominations for ONA's 2023 Central Negotiating Teams, which will bargain with the employer groups on behalf of members, commence in late summer, with elections taking place early this fall.

With collective agreements expiring in two sectors next year, here's what we are looking for:

- **The Hospital Central Negotiating Team** will be composed of one full-time and one part-time member with entitlements from each region in the province. Each member of the team will be elected from and by hospital sector members in their respective region.
- **The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Central Negotiating Team** will be composed of three VON members with entitlements. Each member of the team will be elected from and by members working in VON.

In addition, the ONA President, First Vice-President and Chief Administrative Officer will be ex-officio members of each team.

Members in the hospital and VON sectors are encouraged to check our website in the weeks to come for information on how to submit a nomination form, as well as the candidates running and how to place your vote.



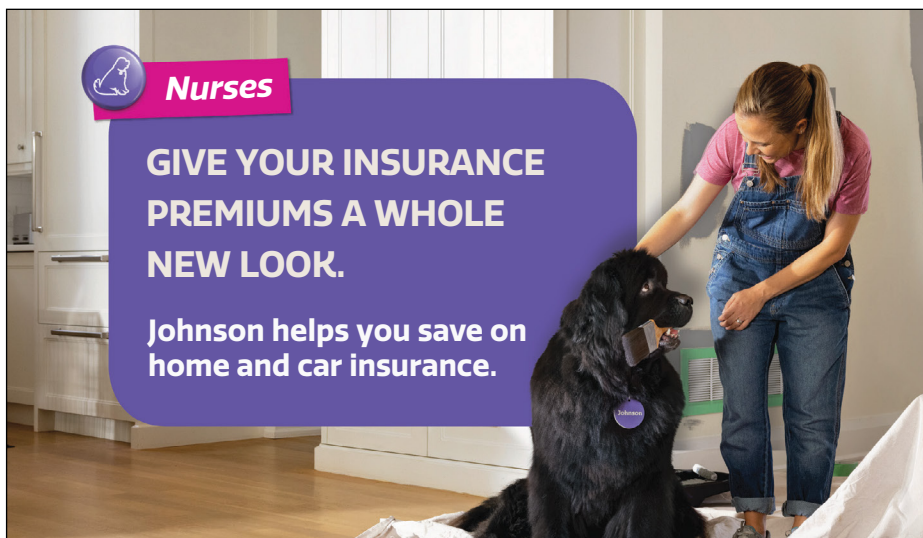
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Nurses

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, RN, holds the portfolio of human rights and equity.

“We all play a part:” ONA Releases Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Action Plan

ONA has released a four-year action plan that will help guide our union in addressing the ongoing racism and oppression that exists for so many members and in our society at large.

“The 2022-2026 Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan is the direct result of a call to action from our members, leaders and staff with lived experiences with intersectional forms of racism, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, discrimination and acts of exclusion,” said Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the portfolio of human rights and equity. “It contains actions that we can take, both individually and collectively, to bring about change because we can’t wait one more minute while so many continue to suffer. I have been very proud to help oversee this critical work, which aligns with ONA’s Strategic Plan, and is fully supported by the entire Board of Directors.”

How the Plan Came to be

“We recognize that the intersections of racism, gender, age, socio-economic status, housing, geographic location and other social determinants of health leave Black, Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized communities at increased risk of marginalization and diminished health outcomes within Ontario’s health-care system,” the action

plan states. “As an organization, ONA has traditionally used a human rights and equity approach to guide our work and underpin our belief that every member and employee has the right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace and the union. While this approach continues to be a core tenet of our work, we recognize that we need to use an ARAO approach to identify and address intersectional forms of racism and advance equity.”

An ARAO approach focuses on the different ways people from Black, Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized groups experience racism. Integrating this approach into ONA’s work will help us review our organizational structures, policies, procedures, practices and actions, and develop remedies and preventative measures.

What the Plan Says

The action plan contains seven priority areas and 32 action items that will guide us forward as we build our infrastructure, challenge systemic racism and strengthen internal capacity to integrate evidence-based ARAO practices into every level of ONA’s services, work environments, workplace culture and leadership (see box). But this is not a static plan; rather it changes over time based on known and unknown factors.

“The development of the ARAO Action Plan really was a team effort, involving members and staff,” noted Armstrong. “It was led by ONA’s Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group and our Lead Consultant, Tomee Elizabeth Sojourner-Campbell – and could not have come about without the expertise and insights of the Anti-Racism Advisory Team, which contains ONA members, and the staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. I thank them, along with all ONA members and staff, for your dedication to making the world a more inclusive place. We all play a part. I can’t wait to put this plan into action and continue to report back on where we are.” *An upcoming issue of Front Lines will contain additional information and interviews with key players on the ARAO Action Plan as this important work gets underway.*

THE 2022-2026 ARAO ACTION PLAN’S SEVEN PRIORITIES

- 1 Reconciliation
- 2 Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Education
- 3 Support for Indigenous, Black, Racialized and Historically Marginalized Members, Staff, Management and Elected Leadership
- 4 General Supports, Resources and Tools
- 5 Organizational Development and Operations
- 6 Representation Matters! Leadership
- 7 Leading Change – 2022 and Beyond



A summary of the action plan will be available at ona.org/hre

“We are supposed to do better,” Member Tells Community Solidarity Rally

When it came to speaking at the Community Solidarity Toronto rally to mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD), ONA member Ingrid Garrick wasn't about to let her nerves get in the way.

“When initially asked to speak, I was reluctant because I have paralyzing stage fright and would rather work behind the scenes to effect change,” she said. “But I thought this was too important to pass up, believing that if you want something done, don't wait for someone else to do it. That day may never come. You could wait in perpetuity if everyone thinks the same way.”

During the rally, organized by Community Solidarity Toronto, community and labour groups with a common determination to build the city and region on the values of social, economic, racial and climate justice, converged at the Toronto Courthouse to protest the rise of hate and racism. They then joined with the Migrant Rights Network for a combined march through the downtown streets.

The event was held the day before IDERD, marked on March 21, which was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) in 1966 to commemorate the 1960 tragedy in Sharpsville, South Africa in which police killed 69 people who were peacefully demonstrating against apartheid.

“Despite my nerves and with the support of the rally organizers and crowd, I was able to describe the challenges faced by the BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and People of Colour] community from the perspective of a Black leader within the medical establishment,” noted Garrick. “I also spoke about gender-based inequity



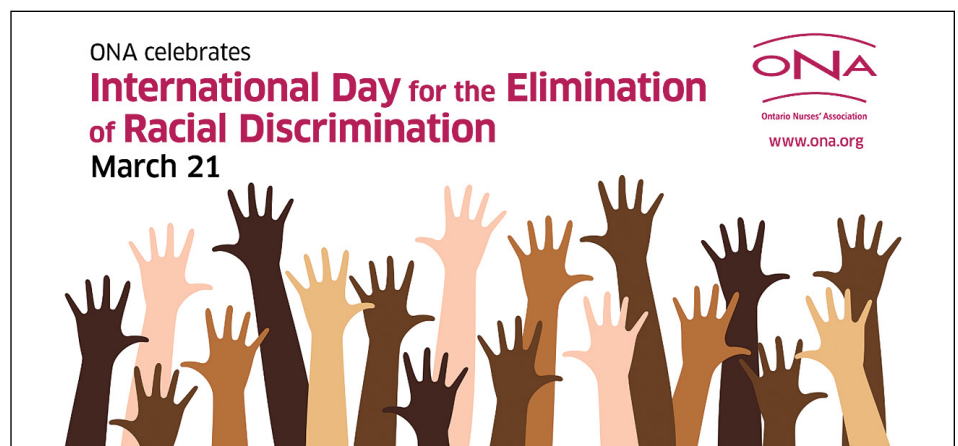
“If you want something done, don't wait for someone else to do it,” said ONA member Ingrid Garrick, RN. “That day may never come.”

and the disparity in wages nurses must contend with as a result of Bill 124, put in place by this government. It was enlightening to hear the plight of seasonal workers and immigrants who suffer the same disparities, all based on their race, colour, religion and place of origin. Racism is a real problem in this society and health care. Research proves it and the statistics are clear: the worse outcomes are reserved for Black and Indigenous patients.”

The UN 2022 IDERD theme, *Voices for Action against racism*, highlighted the dire need for that to change, focusing on the importance of strengthened, meaningful and safe public participation and representation in all areas of decision-making.

“Acknowledging the discrimination BIPOC face in Canada is important on this day, but this is a year-round commitment for ONA,” added Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the portfolio of human rights and equity. “Each and every day, we must work together towards a better, more inclusive world. I implore members to challenge racism, discrimination and oppression in all its forms. And I thank members like Ingrid for continuing to bring these serious issues to the forefront.”

Garrick concurred, noting that “these issues operate in silence and remain so if not for rallies like the one I attended. This is Canada, and we are supposed to do better.”



We all have a “hand” in acknowledging and addressing discrimination, racism and oppression, as ONA's new poster and shareables clearly show.

Regressive Bills Affecting Pay Equity Rights, Equal Pay Day Shows

ONA used Equal Pay Day as another opportunity to bring public awareness to the discriminatory practices of the Ford government.

Equal Pay Day was acknowledged in Canada on April 12 this year to symbolize how far into the following year the average woman must work to earn what the average man earned the entire previous year.

At an emergency news conference hosted by the Equal Pay Coalition, of which ONA is a member, on April 7, ONA President Cathryn Hoy spoke about the government's attack on pay equity rights with Bill 106, an omnibus bill rushed through the legislature (see page 16), and called for the repeal of wage-suppressing and discriminatory Bill 124.

"Nurses will not be silent," she began. "Just like with Bill 124, Bill 106 violates ONA members' right to free collective bargaining and undermines their pay equity rights guaranteed by section 15 of the *Charter*, which we had affirmed by the Supreme Court. Years and years of work. Back in 2010, ONA, along with SEIU Healthcare, launched a pay equity legal challenge against for-profit nursing homes to denounce the



Nurses and health-care professionals have shown up every day of the pandemic and never let Ontarians down," ONA President Cathryn Hoy told a media conference on equal pay, where she denounced Bills 106 and 124. "And this is how they are being treated?"

systemic racism, sexism and discrimination that our members face in their workplaces every day. It took the pandemic for the government to finally act and announce a general wage increase for personal support workers. Now we learn that this pandemic pay increase is being made permanent – but at the expense of court-won pay equity for these very same health-care workers."

Making matters worse, the government has left nurses and health-care professionals behind with no wage increases, she added, noting it has done nothing but exacerbate the nursing shortage.

"Today I am calling on Premier Ford to stop the interference with our union and *Charter* equality rights with Bill 106. Repeal Bill 124. Only then will we be able to retain nurses and health workers. And only then will Ontarians have access to the quality care that they need and deserve."

The news conference came on the heels of a new Environics Research poll commissioned by the Coalition, which revealed that 85 per cent of Ontarians think it is important the government does more to promote women's economic equality. When asked about policy solutions, 88 per cent stated decent wages for women working in publicly funded care work, and community and social services were important, with 60 per cent saying, "very important."

"Ontario voters care about women's economic equality," noted Equal Pay Coalition Co-Chair Jan Borowy. "They want to see strong policies that support women's ability to access decent work, not stealth attempts to undermine their labour rights."

IWD Urges Everyone to "Break the Bias" against Women

ONA celebrates

International Women's Day

March 8



Under the theme, *Break the Bias*, ONA was proud to recognize the achievements and honour the struggles of all women on International Women's Day this past March 8. While ONA has had successes in this area, the statistics are sobering. The 2022 State of Gender Pay Gap Report shows that the uncontrolled gender pay gap is 82 cents for every \$1 that men make, noting that while the pay equity gap is closing over time, it's at a glacial speed. The report further states that "due to the economic turmoil of COVID-19, women – especially women of colour – have disproportionately faced unemployment at higher rates than other years." Closer to home, as of 2021, the gender pay gap for full- and part-time employees is 0.89, according to Statistics Canada, which means women make 89 cents for every dollar men do. "Together, we must continue to raise our voices to improve women's working lives," noted ONA President Cathryn Hoy.

ONA Endorses Decent Work Report

ONA has lent our support to a new report documenting how government inaction on workplace protections is undermining Ontario's pandemic recovery and abandoning workers.

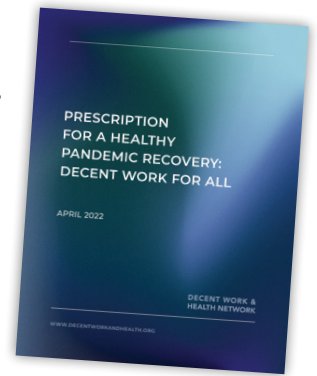
Prescriptions for a Healthy Recovery: Decent Work for all, prepared by the Decent Work and Health Network, states that workers are still relying on paid sick days through the Worker Income Protection Benefit, which provides just three days to stretch over 468 days, and is set to expire in July. Throughout the pandemic, ONA has repeatedly called for 10 permanent paid sick days, plus 14 additional days during public health outbreaks.

Making matters worse, lack of just cause protection from wrongful dismissal and precarious immigration status undermines workers' ability to access paid sick days, the report states. Evidence shows that racialized workers are more likely to report being punished or fired for taking sick leave. The situation is worse for migrants, particularly those on employer-restricted work permits for whom job loss also means homelessness, inability to work at another job, and deportation.

"The evidence in this report clearly shows that the government's failure to improve working conditions has

widened existing health inequities," said Dr. David Fisman, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Toronto. "The lack of paid sick days and precarious work have been major contributors to disease spread since the get-go. If people can't stay home when they're sick, and can't speak up about unsafe work conditions for fear of job loss, that is going to pour gasoline on the fire in terms of disease spread."

The report concludes with evidence-based recommendations to improve working conditions as an urgent matter of public health, including raising the minimum wage to \$20 an hour; equal pay for equal work so that part-time, contract and temporary workers receive the same pay as their full-time coworkers; at least 10 permanent paid sick days; full and permanent immigration status for all; and just cause protection.



Read the full report at
decentworkandhealth.org/endorse_report

Together Again in Pride!

After a two-year absence due to pandemic restrictions, ONA is excited that in-person Pride parades and other events are proceeding this summer.

We're so excited, in fact, that we made the theme of our eye-catching Pride poster and shareables this year *Together in Person. Together In Pride!* We encourage you to download them from our website and share widely.

"Everyone has the right to dignity and equal treatment on the job, and no one believes that more than ONA," said Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the portfolio of human rights and equity. "We are committed

to recognizing and supporting the diversity of our members and staff, and to join in the fight against discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation and/or gender identity."

In the next issue of *Front Lines*, we will showcase ONA's involvement in the Toronto Pride Parade, the biggest in the country and one of the largest in the world, in all its glorious colours. But now it's your turn. What did you do to mark the return of in-person Pride events? We would love to hear and maybe see a photo or two, which may be featured in an upcoming issue. Please let us know at frontlines@ona.org.



See more at ona.org/pride



« Attending a Pride event is just one way we can support and show solidarity to our LGBTQI2S members, many of whom experience discrimination and harassment. »»

– Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, RN, who holds the portfolio of human rights and equity



QUEEN'S PARK UPDATE



Read ONA submissions at



ona.org/submissions

No Provincial Budget Passed

While Queen's Park was in session from February 22 to April 28 before adjourning for the provincial election, the Ford government waited until the very end to introduce their 2022 Budget.

However, they did not pass the legislation and instead it was considered by many to be a de facto re-election platform. The budget was largely comprised of previously announced programs.

ONA made a number of recommendations in our pre-budget submission to stabilize the health-care system, including the urgent need to improve the working conditions of nurses and health-care professionals and maximize retention of existing workers. Unfortunately, these were largely ignored.

At press time, Queen's Park watchers expected Premier Ford to call the legislature to session in the summer to introduce an updated budget and get it passed before the summer break. Premier Ford committed to bringing back the same budget as was tabled in April, with minor tweaks to reflect new promises made on the campaign trail.

Throughout the previous legislative session, the Ford government came under frequent criticism for its failure to repeal Bill 124. In fact, ONA Region 4 Vice-President Erin Ariss's remarks about Bill 124 at an Ontario Health Coalition event were quoted by the Official Opposition during debate.

Bill 106 Undermines Pay Equity Rights

The Ford government rushed through very concerning legislation (Bill 106) this past April that impacts your pay equity rights.

ONA strongly opposed this legislation and President Cathryn Hoy appeared at the Committee hearings to speak out against this bill. She also joined the Equal Pay Coalition for a press conference at Queen's Park against the bill (see page 14), and ONA put in a formal submission.

This legislation violates the right to free collective bargaining,

undermines pay equity by allowing the government to deem "pandemic pay" increases towards court-ordered pay equity remedies, does not repeal Bill 124, but instead allows the government to unilaterally impose enhanced compensation for a few unknown employee groups, is not consistent with SARS Commission recommendations, does not enshrine the precautionary principle, and may not be consistent with the *Human Rights Code*.

Despite uniform opposition from ONA, other unions, women's advocates and other parties, the government passed this legislation without amendment.

Bill 195 Orders Revoked

As of April 27, the redeployment orders established in Bill 195 have come to an end and will not be extended.

Employers cannot rely on Bill 195 to redeploy, reassign, change the schedule of work or shift assignments, defer or cancel vacation, absences or other leaves, or employ extra staff without complying with the provisions of the collective agreement and relevant statutes.

Ontario Last in Health-care Spending

On April 6, the Financial Accountability Office (an independent financial watchdog) reported that Ontario ranks last in Canada in program spending per person, with the least amount in health spending.

Specifically, Ontario spends \$536 less per person on health care than the average Canadian province, it noted. The Financial Accountability



Office also reported that Ontario is not planning to keep its spending in line with population growth and inflation, projecting a further decline in spending per Ontarian in real dollars.



WSIB Increase Under Consideration

Before the election, the province directed the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) to explore an increase in compensation, raising benefits through WSIB up to 90 per cent of the worker's pre-accident take home pay.

The *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* would need to be amended to set a new compensation rate. Any proposed change would have to occur in the new legislative session.

ONA continues to advocate strongly for enhanced benefits and payments to injured workers, including a stronger focus on the compensation and rehabilitation of the many front-line workers who have sustained mental and physical illness arising out of the pandemic.

Child Care Deal Reached with Feds

Ontario is the last province to reach a deal to participate in the federal \$10-a-day child care agreement.

The deal, reached on March 28, will be retroactive to April 1, 2022 and will see families receive an initial 25 per cent reduction in fees, with a further reduction to 50 per cent of current fee levels in December 2022.

ONA supports this child care deal; however, we continue to raise the need for the availability of child care during non-standard hours. This would enable our members working late or night shifts greater access to child care.

Regrettably, the deal establishes a wage floor of \$18 per hour for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), which is significantly below the ECE demand for \$25 per hour. In addition, the deal grandfathers in a significant expansion of for-profit child care centres.

News reports indicate that despite Ford's promises that rebates would be mailed out starting in May, most families in Ontario won't see any savings until late fall.



DID YOU KNOW?



Nurses have more than a 1 in 3 chance of being disabled before 65 years.

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References
1 "ACCAP – Consumer Information – A Guide to Disability Insurance," Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association. <http://clhia.uberflip.com/i/199350-a-guide-to-disability-insurance>

“We were everywhere”

With so much at stake, ONA and our members gave it our all in the lead-up to the provincial election. What happens now?



One thing is for sure, it wasn't for a lack of trying. With so much on the line – including regressive and discriminatory legislation, such as Bill 124, that disrespects our members; a nursing shortage that is growing worse by the day; increased workplace stress, burnout and violence; and a woefully underfunded health-care system threatened by privatization – ONA and our members gave it our all in the lead-up to the June provincial election to help bring about change.

“While we are faced with another Ford majority government, and all the uncertainty that brings, nothing can take away from the incredible efforts our members put forth during the

Ready to rally! Our social media post from the Toronto May Day rally featuring the cover photo on this issue – “Hey, @Fordnation, in case there was any confusion about what Ontario nurses want from this government, we made a giant sign for you” – was ONA's most liked and tweeted one ever!

election campaign – and long before,” said ONA President Cathryn Hoy. “The Board and I have taken your issues directly to Premier Ford and participated in countless election events to spread ONA's key messages. But it was the work of our members on the ground level that brought those issues right to your communities and to your candidates. You kept the focus on health care during this election and that's something we can all be proud of.”

« I'm inspired to continue this work, engage my community into change and hold these politicians accountable. This is just one step in the long journey we must take together. »

– Region 3 secondee
Shelly Ormsby

Nurses Vote

In April, ONA launched our most ambitious and comprehensive election campaign to date, *Nurses Vote*, with the selection of 20 dedicated members, referred to as secondees, from all five regions. Working with their Regional Vice-Presidents and ONA staff, the secondees participated in a week-long training session they highly rated, followed by targeted engagement work back in their regions, involving thousands of other members. The goal of the campaign was to educate members, politicians and the public on ONA's key priorities (see box) and to encourage them to vote for health care.

"With everything that's gone wrong with health care and our social system in the last few years especially, I saw this secondment as a chance for change," said Region 2 secondee Dana Young, one of our health-care professionals. "It was an amazing opportunity to connect with people and help inform them so they could get out and vote."

"The government has legislation in place that puts us and our patients at risk," added Region 5 secondee Karen Boutilier, who works in long-term care, a sector particularly ravaged by COVID-19. "We're 68,000 members strong and had to stand up together. No one is going to do this for us."

To support this work, ONA created a visually stunning *Nurses Vote* website (ona.org/vote) containing indispensable resources on the election issues, our

priorities, a Ford government timeline, an activist kit and party platforms. We sent email blasts to our members and a broadcast voicemail message from Hoy. We launched a powerful *Fighting for Change* advertising campaign, featuring our own members, which included television, radio, print and social media ads. We included an informative election brochure with *Front Lines*. And we were all over the media, appearing in more than 160 election-related stories and blog posts.

"We didn't say no to any media requests – not one – and your Board was out there at every turn, speaking out about the serious situations members face every day on the job as the government continues to disrespect and undervalue you," said First Vice-President Angela Preocanin. "We were everywhere. And by taking collective action, such as writing letters to the editors of your local newspapers, talking to your colleagues, families and friends, and attending rallies and all-candidates' meetings – to name but a few – so too were all of you."

ONA Priorities This Election – and Beyond

- 1 Repeal Bill 124
- 2 End the nurse staffing crisis
- 3 Improve working conditions
- 4 Ensure fairness through a social determinants of health lens
- 5 Keep health care public



"We cannot join this amazing march because we are caring for our patients, but my colleagues and I fully support you," said Local 97 member Christina Aykler when the May Day rally made a brief stop in front of Toronto General Hospital. "We are all facing the same challenges in health care...and how did the government honour and acknowledge our tireless work? With Bill 124. This is one of the reasons so many nurses and health-care professionals are throwing up their hands and leaving. We stand with you as you march to Queen's Park to demand respect!"



Hot pink was the colour of the day when ONA President Cathryn Hoy, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin, Region 4 Vice-President Erin Ariss, ONA members and supporters marched outside St. Catharines Conservative candidate Sal Sorrento's campaign office. The rally, which made front page news, was spearheaded by Region 4 secondee Rachael Cooke, "who had all this momentum going and we just hopped onto her wagon," said fellow secondee Alicia Chhin. "We had almost 100 people there!"

Rallying for Change

Nowhere was that more apparent than at those rallies, spearheaded by members throughout the province, including 15 on May 1 alone in support of the Ontario Federation of Labour's Day of Action. Decked out in hard-to-miss hot pink shirts and carrying signs demanding that Bill 124 be repealed – including a giant banner at the Toronto rally – members, joined by our allies, so instrumental to our campaign, marched outside their MPPs' constituency offices, workplaces, Queen's Park and other prominent locations to demand better.

"I'm thrilled with the amount of members who volunteered and came out on a Sunday," said Local 124 Coordinator Donna Oliver, whose political action group joined other Region 3



"As (Nepean) MPP Lisa MacLeod held the autism program portfolio when the Conservatives made cuts to the program, we rallied outside her office with the autism group from Ottawa," noted Local 83 Grievance Officer Sandy McEwen, emphasizing the importance of working with allies on like-minded goals.

"Half of us started the day at (Kanata-Carleton) MPP Merilee Fullerton's office and half at (then Ottawa West) MPP Jeremy Roberts' office before converging at MPP MacLeod's. While no MPPs talked to us, we had good public support, with horns honking and a few passersby stopping to discuss."



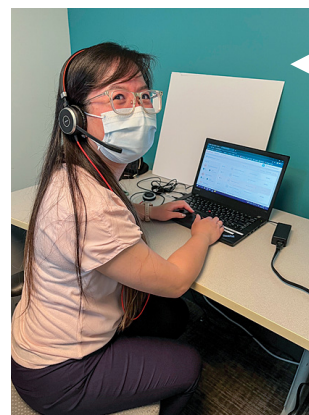
"We attended many rallies during the election campaign and spoke out," noted Region 5 seconddee Karen Boutilier, seen here with fellow seconddee Jo-Dee Brown and Windsor West MPP Lisa Gretzky. "I had no problem phoning candidates before, but to actually talk about the issues at a rally? The secondment and education/training from ONA gave me the confidence to say, 'you can do this and your voice does matter.' Now I have built a relationship with my MPP and will make sure that promises made are kept."

Locals in handing out t-shirts, food, noisemakers and loot bags for members' children at the Toronto May Day rally, one of the largest in ONA's history with hundreds of members in attendance, including many bussed in thanks to Local 34 Coordinator Ann Scott. "We're happy to be part of a movement that is trying to make a difference and create change."

Meeting the Candidates

While many candidates marched with us, we also went directly to them. In fact, our secondees and members took part in more than 40 candidate meetings, including with all major party leaders, and spoke at several of their events.

"There are two ridings in Thunder Bay, and the Labour Council and the Injured Workers organized to meet the candidates on two separate nights," said Region 1



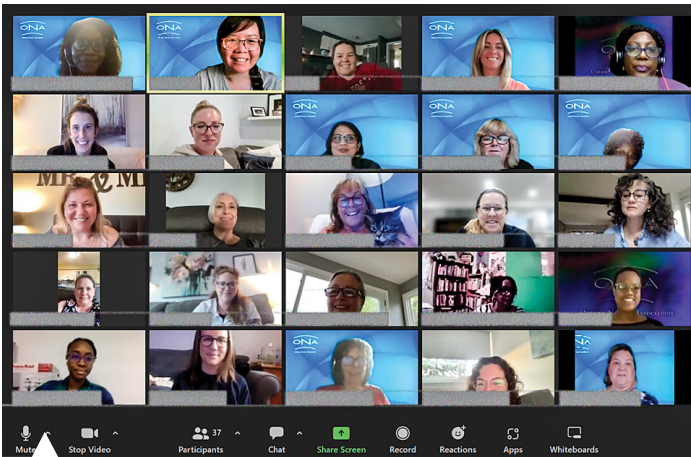
"We averaged about 60 to 80 calls each per two-hour shift and I've had more than 500 actual conversations with members," Region 4 seconddee Alicia Chhin said about the phone banks, a key part of ONA's *Nurses Vote* campaign, staffed by dozens of members. "I was nervous at first, but soon got into a rhythm, and many members I called thanked me. For the most part, they agreed with ONA's priorities."



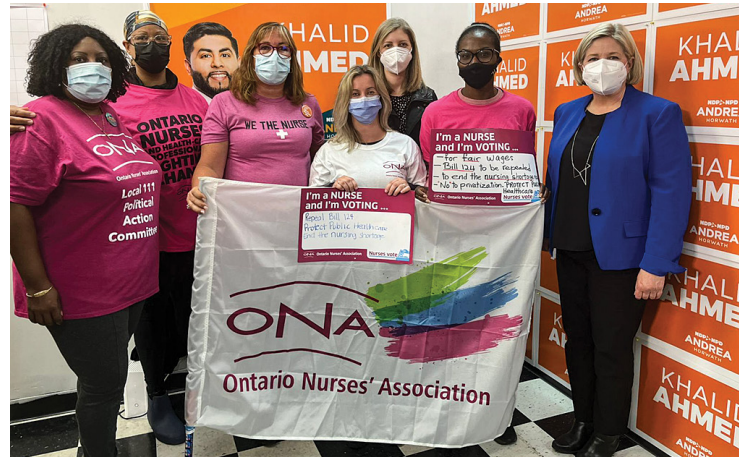
Recycling a banner she made for a previous election, Diane Parker, the sole seconddee from Region 1 (seen here with her activist-in-training grandson Dylan), was instrumental in planning a May Day rally in Thunder Bay. "The rally was supposed to end up at Waverley Park, but it just poured, so we had to move it inside the OPSEU building. I spoke about ONA's priorities and said, 'Ford calls us heroes, and that's how he treats us? With Bill 124?' Many people came up to me afterwards to thank me and ask questions."



While members were busy planning their own local events, the Board of Directors was hard at work provincially throughout the election campaign. ONA President Cathryn Hoy, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin and other members of the Board spoke at numerous NDP media conferences and other candidate events about the dire situation burned-out and fed-up nurses and health-care professionals face and the urgent need for change.



“Our region held a Zoom debate watching party, where members could discuss what the politicians were talking about – or not talking about,” said Region 3 secondree Shelly Ormsby, also seen here with fellow secondrees, members and (then) NDP Leader Andrea Horwath. “I thought if we can have this great discussion, why don’t we do it for the returns as well? So, we held a Zoom returns watch party, which we opened up to all regions. Everyone was disappointed as it wasn’t the outcome we wanted. But just coming together and talking about where we go from here and how we will continue this movement allowed us to have some healing and closure.”



secondree Diane Parker. “I attended both and asked every candidate to address all five of ONA’s priorities. Afterwards, people came up to thank me.”

“I have never organized an event before, but I was going to a lot of ridings within Ottawa and knew I wanted to hold a roundtable with the candidates,” added Region 2 secondree Cheshta Sharma. “I reached out to candidates from each party, booked the Nepean Sportsplex and invited members to come. It took a lot of planning. Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson opened the discussion and asked the candidates questions, and I spoke. We had a decent turnout, and I received an overwhelmingly positive response. One of my primary goals of this secondment was to reach out to candidates, talk to them directly and bring those messages back to our members, so they knew what those candidates stood for.”

While our secondrees reported that most NDP, Liberal and Green party candidates generally wanted to hear the stories of nurses and health-care professionals, the Premier and his MPPs were not as receptive. But that didn’t stop our members.

“If you just sit back, it’s never going to do you any good. We need you to stand up and fight. The union is you. The union is me. It’s all of us together.”

— Region 5 secondree Karen Boutilier

In Kitchener, approximately 90 members from Region 4 crashed Premier Ford’s media event – after only learning about it the night before! And when Region 3 secondrees Shelly Ormsby and Sandra Campbell learned that he was in their area, they decided to try and ask him some tough questions.

“When I arrived at the address provided, I noticed Premier Ford’s bus was leaving,” said Ormsby. “I felt a little defeated, but being a nurse, I knew we had to keep trying. Sandra drove in one direction, I drove around the area, and his bus was spotted at the local mall. We decided to dress as ‘citizens,’ giving no indication that we were health-care workers. We walked to the bus and the opportunity presented itself to

speak to him. Sandra asked if he is repealing Bill 124, and I pointed out that building hospitals and opening beds are one thing, but he needs nurses at the bedside. I then asked how we can be guaranteed he won't privatize our health-care system. He told us to check the numbers and moved on to other community members. But we had our say."

Conversations with Members

Ensuring our members were directly contacted about what was at stake during this election was a key component of our campaign, with secondees and member volunteers calling almost 41,000 members directly and engaging in close to 3,000 text messages.

"I called more than 1,000 members and had many meaningful discussions," said Parker, while Ormsby noted that "the phone banks were a great success. Many members answered, if not the first time we called, the second. They wanted to see things change as much as us. For the most part, everyone was receptive and listened to what we had to say."

"Members felt my union is calling me rather than me having to touch base with them," added Boutilier. "My long-term care home was in an outbreak, and I couldn't go in, so I called and texted every single one of my members. Having one-on-one conversations was the highlight of the secondment because during the height of COVID-19, we were lucky if we could say hello to each other, let alone talk. But I was having 20- to 30-minute conversations with hundreds of members."

Young focused her conversations heavily on our vote pledge, an initiative whereby members signed a card committing to vote on ONA's shared priorities, with the pledges tallied on our website.

"It was a good opportunity to have discussions about why we wanted them to vote: that they're voting for healthy communities and workplaces, and public health care. We used it as a tool to take to candidates and say we're all voting for this, are you listening to our stories? I also collected selfies of members holding signs, 'I'm a nurse and I'm voting for public health care' or whatever they wanted to add. Those were posted to ONA's social media."



In what she calls a "fluke," Region 2 secondee Cheshta Sharma met Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, who was participating in a local candidate's event that she happened to be attending. "I didn't get a chance to say much because there were a lot of people who wanted to take pictures with him," she said. "But I told him I'm representing nurses and wanted him to know our health-care system is not fine and has not been handled well. We need to take some serious steps to correct this. He replied he knows how serious it is and that we need changes."



ONA's powerful television, radio, social media and print advertisements made it clear that nurses and health-care professionals are advocating for their patients, residents and clients and "Fighting for Change."

Difference Made!

The work of our members throughout the election campaign was impressive. Take a look:

- 40** secondee meetings with candidates
- 100** phone banks hosted
- 199** volunteer phone bank shifts filled
- 40,963** calls made to members
- 6,849** phone conversations
- 15,620** members texted
- 2,834** text interactions
- 1,510** pledges signed
- 57,335** members reached with a voice message from ONA President Cathryn Hoy



NDP leader Andrea Horwath stopped to talk to ONA secondees and members at a special NDP brunch to honour front-line workers during the provincial election. "We were asked to stand behind Andrea while she answered all the media questions, and then she came to the tables," said Region 2 secondee Dana Young, third from left. "There was a lot of ONA representation, and other unions representing many workers were in attendance. It was a very positive experience."

Online Presence

In fact, social media played a prominent role in the campaign, with the secondees noting it was their number one way of engaging members and others in election happenings in their regions.

"My role was really around social media," said Region 4 secondee Alicia Chhin. "I started the Region 4 Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts during my first week of the secondment. We got a lot of interaction and engagement online, not just from members, but our communities and other organizations working towards better health care. It's been really rewarding, and I think members enjoyed having that live interaction with ONA."

Still, as successful as they were, the phone banks and social media posts didn't stop members from having face-to-face conversations.

"We went to all units in my workplace and spoke to members during breaks about what was important this election, and if they were onboard with our campaign," said Sharma. "When I met with someone, I encouraged them to take a stand for what they believe in and not sit on the sidelines. You must participate in the things that you and your community want to change."

Making an Impact

While the government didn't change on election day, with Doug Ford retaining

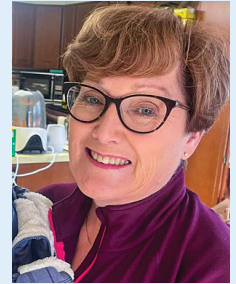
his majority, there is no question our *Nurses Vote* campaign made an impact. In fact, ONA was active in eight of the 10 ridings decided by fewer than 1,000 votes. And despite talk in the media of a "strong" majority, the Conservatives received the support of just over 40 per cent of voters (and only 17.7 per cent of all eligible voters due to low voter turnout). That means 60 per cent voted against them.

"It's simply not the case that a majority of Ontarians supported this government's re-election," stated Hoy. "But here's what is true: Three other major parties committed to repealing Bill 124 and shifted their messaging during the campaign to focus on health care. And more than 53 per cent of Ontarians voted for those parties. There is no question that is thanks to your work mobilizing others. You made that happen. So, while I am angry we must deal with four more years of this government, I am incredibly inspired at how you changed the narrative."

"We absolutely did make a difference because we reached out to our members, they know we were fighting and they wanted to fight with us," added Boutilier, while Region 3 secondee Yvonne O'Reilly noted, "the work we've done has not gone unnoticed. I received messages from members after the election thanking me and ONA for everything. My knowledge is continuing to grow, and I will delve deeper into politics."

Going Local: Member Sways Councils on Bill 24

When it comes to getting Bill 124 repealed, our members are leaving no stone unturned!



Region 5 secondee Marylee Lee explains how she successfully approached her local councils to pass motions to put pressure on the provincial government to overturn the repressive legislation. *I wanted to get involved to raise awareness on how unfairly nurses have been treated by the Ford government as well as the erosion of our health-care system.*

I followed ONA's plan and a proposal by staff and submitted it along with a letter to my local municipal councils. I was pleasantly surprised how they responded and how easy it was to do. I suppose the old adage that if you don't ask, you won't get is true.

I have served my own community in various volunteer endeavors and have been respected for the time and effort I put in. So perhaps that may have swayed our local councils somewhat. But I also think we have had issues with recruitment and funding for various health-care initiatives that have eroded the quality of care in our community. Perhaps our local governments see this too, and the last thing they want is nurses disappearing here and a further erosion of health care in smaller communities.

She's not the only one who found the secondment a tremendous learning experience, with Chhin stating, "it changed my focus and mindset away from just politics to our future and our children's future," while Region 3 secondee Helene Bernard explained that "I learned the power of words and how to use them. But I also learned that our passion is not enough, it's knowing how to advocate and mobilize."

"I'm not the same person after this experience," concurred Sharma. "I was never political before, but my perspective has changed. It's important that we continue this fight and get our message out. I've built connections with all these people across my hospital, region and province. Our members now know that ONA is doing all this work behind the scenes and were appreciative. They want to join the fight because they want better wages and working conditions."

We are the Union

And that solidarity is imperative as we continue to navigate a Ford government.

"Despite the heartbreak of this election, there is hope," said Hoy. "Our members came together like never before to build the kind of province they want to see. I can't thank you enough for talking about the issues and stepping out of your comfort zones. But we must continue to harness that power moving forward. We must continue to advocate for our patients, residents and clients and tell Ontarians the truth about what is really going on with our health-care system. We must continue to rally, lobby and demand what is right and fair. We can't be silent for a moment! The Board is committed to increasing our political action and mobilizing work. In fact, I have already been in touch with Mr. Ford to request regular meetings once his Cabinet is set up to share your stories. I hope I can also count on you to fight in your own communities."

"Meeting the candidates showed me that they're just a person, and how much power we have to reach out to them when we have concerns," said Sharma. "You should be able to book a meeting to talk to them and hold them accountable. This is not just about being an activist, it's about being a leader in your community, your workplaces – wherever you want to see change. ONA is not just a group of people sitting behind desks who protect us when we need it. Our members are the union, and we need to stand together, participate, get our colleagues onboard and work together

as a team. With this government, we must be louder than ever before until Bill 124 is repealed, we are respected, and we get what we deserve."

Region 2 secondee Chinyere Okoro couldn't agree more, noting, "that through this secondment, I learned about the influence of high participation, and so while we are disappointed by the results, we must keep going and create an even stronger union. The work has just begun. We have almost 1,500 days until the next provincial election, and it will take all of us working together to make a difference in 2026. Let's not end this here."

"Defeat is not an option:" Local Puts Emphasis on Political Action



No matter how tough it gets, Local 6 Coordinator Jane Penciner is definitely not a quitter. Here, she explains how her Local and members made the election a priority. *Under the Ford government, nurses and health-care professionals have suffered significantly during the pandemic. Local 6 members were looking to take action, so we decided to increase our Local political action budget and created a political action and communications representative position. We increased our communications on political issues relevant to our membership this year as we approached the election.*

We chose May 19 – after Nursing Week and before the election – to hold a rally on the bridge at our hospital site. Our goal was to make the public aware of the government's plan to prioritize health care and to protest Bill 124. Ford called us heroes in one breath but took away our right to freely bargain in the next.

We advertised through social media, a chat group and handed out flyers during Nursing Week to entice staff to come out during their lunch break and picket with us. While many members let us know their units were short-staffed and they could not get away, we were interviewed and on the news, so we felt we achieved our goal.

Our vision at Local 6 is to effect the change you are looking for and never give up. Defeat is not an option.



PLM Focuses on Collective Action

With a provincial election on the horizon, ONA knew our recent Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) needed to focus heavily on one thing: ensuring members have the tools they need to become politically active like never before.

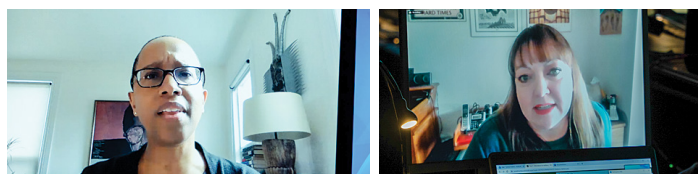
During the PLM, held virtually from March 23-24, hundreds of leaders and members came together to listen to updates from the Board of Directors and other speakers on the work of the union, including where we are with our five-year Strategic Plan (see page 26); what and how we communicate to members at all levels; and our critical diversity, equity and inclusivity work. They also broke into sector sessions to discuss their shared realities and the current forces working against them.

But it was ONA's recent lobbying efforts against a government that continues to dismiss the serious concerns of nurses and health-care professionals, and our members' need to collectively fight for our shared priorities that dominated the meeting.

"Over the past few years, the government has made it virtually impossible to make positive change," began ONA President Cathryn Hoy. "They have no interest in collaboration. Yet, it is our collective work and bold determination that inspires me to continue to push our issues, to make noise and to ensure that our demands are heard loud and clear. We are in the media every day. But we all have a part to play in telling it like it is."

And during the day-long interactive education session, *Provincial Election 2022: Building a Collective Vision in Health-care Delivery*, that's exactly what delegates learned. Staff provided an overview of ONA's Election Plan, including concrete actions they can apply in their Bargaining Units and encouraged the use of a Vision Map, a tool to start having conversations with members about what is at stake in this election (see cover story).

"Every member votes in an election for a government that works for them, their patients and their community," said Member Mobilizer Stacey Papernick. "But only when they think change is possible will they exercise their collective power to vote – and when large numbers vote together for something they want to see change, that is when change is made. There are 500 people in this Zoom room. If you go back and get five members involved, you will have increased your



Bargaining Unit power to 2,500. If they do the same, you will have thousands of members voting in this election. The plan to win is simple – and when you have a winning plan you can just feel it."

That was echoed by guest speaker Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, who highlighted the misgivings of the Ford government, including allowing for-profit homes to take millions in profits each month during the pandemic while ignoring the lack of staffing, beds and minimum standards of care plaguing the health-care system.

"We have to tell Ontarians that we can't have this going forward," she said. "We can't accept the notion that we can get more for less in health care. We are wealthier than when we built the system, but Ontario funds at the lowest rate in Canada. All your ways of engaging members are very sound. To win, they need to know there is a fight."

Kiké Roach, Unifor National Chair in Social Justice and Democracy, concurred, adding, "now is the time to come together to strengthen bonds within your membership and your external contacts. When we're informed and organized, we can win real victories. It's too dangerous to leave politics to politicians. We need to hear your voices. You have the authority, credibility, expertise and trust of the vast majority of people."

ONA District Teams Align with Regions

ONA has made significant changes to our organizational structure to better align services for our members.

This change is in response to two priorities in ONA's Strategic Plan: *Members Supported* (specifically action #6, which reads, "Enhance the labour relations service so that all Bargaining Unit representatives have enough of this highly valued support to serve their members effectively") and *Our Work, for You* (specifically action #20, which reads: "Develop a collaborative leadership framework that clarifies roles and processes for how ONA's Board of Directors and Senior Executive Team work together for our members").

Most notable to members is that ONA's four District Service Teams – South, North, West and East – have become five Regional Teams to align with ONA's five regions. Servicing Labour Relations Officers and Labour Relations Assistants from each Regional Team will directly support members in that region (see map on this page).

Because there is no ONA regional office between Kingston and our provincial office in downtown Toronto, we will also be opening one in Port Hope later this summer. That regional office, which joins our 10

others, will better service members in this rapidly expanding area.

As well, as our members' needs grow, so too will our staff. More staff are being hired in specialized areas, including long-term disability, labour relations, communications and government relations.

"All these changes are based on your input to ensure your union remains strong, relevant and viable," said ONA President Cathryn Hoy. "The challenges you face never end – and we must continuously adapt to address that."



What Region am I in?

Good question! Use this handy map to find out.

ONA also has an online interactive map that allows members to sort, select and learn about their Bargaining Unit and/or Local and employer. Each "pin," essentially a marker on the map, provides real-time information about the workplace location, which means it's up to date based on ONA data.



Access the map at ona.org/map

Where are We with the Strategic Plan?

In 2021, ONA launched an ambitious Strategic Plan to guide the work of our union for the next five years. Now, several months later, you might be wondering where things stand.

The plan, approved by Local leaders at the Biennial Convention last November, spells out 22 strategic actions our union will undertake under six priority areas – *Members Informed*, *Members Supported*, *Stronger Bargaining Units*, *Telling Ontarians the Truth*, *Everyone Included*, and *Our Work, for You* – which were determined through consultations with more than 3,200 members and staff via focus groups, surveys and one-on-one interviews. The goal of the plan is to meet the opportunities and challenges before us and ensure ONA is there for you and future generations of nurses and health-care professionals, defending your rights and advocating for what matters the most.

While we continue to provide the high-quality services you expect, behind the scenes, we are also improving important components of

that work, guided by the Strategic Plan. Staff leads worked intensively over several months to develop Multi-Year Action Plans. These plans were refined and presented to the Board of Directors for further feedback, as was an Accountability Framework developed by a working group of ONA's Quality Committee. The framework is a tool that will help us to track progress, and guide us to adjust course where needed. The framework and plans were approved by the Board and presented at the June Provincial Coordinators Meeting.

We encourage all members to familiarize yourselves with the Strategic Plan, available in both official languages at ona.org/stratplan.

ONA in the News

From Kenora to Windsor and everywhere in between, ONA is always in the news! In this new Front Lines section, we will showcase just how much.

ONA was cited a total of **149** times in the news from **March 1- May 31**, with the most common topics being Bill 124, the nursing shortage and workplace violence:

66 newspapers | **29** radio stations | **33** television stations | **21** online news sources

Three ONA-written opinion editorials and **three** letters to the editor by Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong and ONA members were published.



ONA Instrumental During Pandemic, Nursing Scholarship Winners Say

In our continuing series, *Front Lines* is featuring the names and pictures of the recipients of the 2021 ONA Nursing Student Scholarship, along with snippets from their winning essays on “The Importance of the Ontario Nurses’ Association for Nurses.”



Read the full essays at
ona.org/students



JACLYN FINNEY:
Daughter-in-law of
Tammy Finney from
Local 3, Peterborough
Regional Health
Centre

We are all aware of what

a monumental time this has been. Not only has the world gained a new appreciation for nurses and health-care professionals, but also for the unions that continue to strive for their well-being. ONA has always been instrumental in providing support for their members, which includes educating their members, striving for equality and advocating for human rights. However, what makes ONA stand out is their push for progress.



CHANPREET SANDHU: Daughter of
Navjot Sandhu from Local 68, Humber
River Hospital

With a shortage of PPE and ICU beds at maximum capacity, the knowledge of my mother going to work filled me with anxiety. She took all measures to help save the lives

of others, but who will protect hers? It is unions like ONA that take proactive steps to ensure the safety of my mother. ONA stands with my mother so she can continue to deliver high-quality care with the knowledge that her voice is being heard. The union took affirmative action to establish new measures during the pandemic to guarantee the protection of nurses across Ontario.

Nursing Student Brochure Available

Have a nursing student in your professional or personal life? ONA has updated our student brochure, *Nursing Students: ONA is Here for You*, filled with information on how our union assists nursing students with their issues, along with a summary of the multitude of services we provide.



Find it at ona.org/students





HEALTH AND SAFETY



Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington, RN, holds the portfolio of occupational health and safety.

Caucuses Highlight Importance of Strong Pandemic, Respiratory Protection Plans

ONA's Health and Safety Caucuses, held in each region throughout May, provided critical tools to help members advocate for stronger and more robust pandemic plans and respiratory protection programs.

"The COVID-19 pandemic continues to increase many health and safety issues that put our members at risk," Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington, who holds the portfolio of occupational health and safety, said in introducing the Caucus under the theme, *Pandemic Planning and Respiratory Protection: An Employer's Duty and a Worker's Right to Participate*. "A lack of pandemic planning and access to respiratory protections have been key concerns that have plagued our members throughout this pandemic. Strong and well-functioning Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) are a critical component in keeping our members safe as we navigate the hazards imposed on them. When JHSCs are not functioning, workers are at risk."



Part of that work is advocating with the employer for a pandemic plan, which should include the pre-pandemic phase, the active phase (when the virus is present), and the recovery phase.

"The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* gives workers the ability to participate in the development of pandemic preparedness, and the JHSC the function to identify situations that may be a source of danger or hazard to workers, such as COVID-19," said Health and Safety Specialist Michael Benoit. "The JHSC also has the power to obtain information from the employer regarding the identification of potential or existing hazards and issue recommendations. If you are requesting that information, the employer has the duty to provide it."

However, it is important to note that the creation and implementation of a pandemic plan is an employer responsibility and the JHSC's review of the plan does not transfer that liability to the committee, he added. ONA has developed a checklist to assist members assess their employers' pandemic plan, which includes looking for clear direction on training and education, communication and PPE policies/programs, hygiene and staffing.

In fact, JHSC reps should be heavily involved in the creation and ultimate implementation of all policies that impact their health and safety, stressed staff Litigators Nicholas Baxter and Lori Harreman.

"ONA Litigation gets involved when employers are not doing what they should to keep workers safe even

More than 400 members took part in the Health and Safety Caucuses – our highest attendance ever!



ONA Health and Safety Specialist Michael Benoit



OHCA Occupational Hygienist Todd Irick



Canadian Standards Association Vice-Chair Simon Smith

when we voice our concerns," said Baxter. "That's when you take that issue forward, bring it to ONA and from that process, there are enforcement mechanisms we can apply to get the desired change."

"The two primary routes are filing grievances through the collective agreement and going to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development through the complaint process," added Harreman. "If we don't agree with what the Ministry inspector concludes, we can appeal their orders to the

Ontario Labour Relations Board. We consider a number of factors when determining which door to pick. But the earlier you involve Litigation, together with your Labour Relations Officer, Health and Safety Specialist, the JHSC, and the entire team on the ground, the sooner we are all on the same page strategizing on an issue coming up. And the more we talk to each other, the more effective we can be.”

Five guest speakers from the Public Services Health and Safety Association and the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) rounded out the day, addressing the Canadian Standards Association Respiratory Protection Standards, legislation relevant to respiratory protection programs, hazard identification, the hierarchy of controls, and how to advocate for better respiratory protections and programs from employers and the government.

“There are several operating principles for JHSC reps if they want to be part of a knowledge activist approach to health and safety,” said OHCOW Occupational Hygienist John Oudyk. “Do your research, making sure you have the info you need; do more than go to meetings – mobilize your influence, listen to your members and get them behind you; listen to authority and build trust, but don’t be afraid to take them to task; be honest and carry through with your ideas; be assertive; don’t just point out problems, but the solutions needed to push your agenda ahead; and use Ministry inspections and the law strategically.”

“I want to thank you for all your hard work and dedication to our members,” concluded Warrington.

“It was so meaningful,” Member Says of Speaking at Day of Mourning Event

For Local 80 Coordinator Serge Ganzburg, speaking at the Day of Mourning event in downtown Toronto was “a meaningful opportunity to share and listen to others.”

National Day of Mourning, acknowledged on April 28, commemorates those injured, made ill or killed due to preventable work-related issues while calling for action to eliminate hazardous working conditions. At ONA, we remember members Nelia Laroza and Tecla Lin, who died of SARS while caring for their patients, Lori Dupont, who was murdered by a colleague in her hospital, and Brian Beattie, who tragically lost his life to COVID-19.

Special commemorative events took place across the country, including at Toronto’s Larry Sefton Park where Ganzburg joined several other union, injured worker and community groups, along with supportive local politicians.

“I strongly believe safety is non-negotiable and no one should ever be subject to cutting corners,” he said. “As health-care professionals, we see the outcomes of such shortcuts in our trauma units and will advocate for safety from every corner and every stage, including this one. I spoke at the Day of Mourning event because the public needs to know.”

During his five-minute speech, Ganzburg touched not only on the physical threats nurses and health-care professionals face every day on the job, but the stress and burnout they continue to experience more than two years into a pandemic in chronically understaffed workplaces.

“COVID’s unprecedented circumstances have increased the risk of PTSD, depression, substance misuse and even suicide among nurses and health-care professionals,” he said, noting that a Statistics Canada mental health study found that seven in 10 health-care workers reported worsening mental health during the pandemic.

Because of that, the government, employers, unions and associations must work together on increasing the level of mental health supports for nurses and health-care professionals, including improving access to mental health training and enhanced coping strategies, and implementing evidence-based return-to-work programs for workers, he added.

“But the most important thing we can do is fix the conditions that are contributing to this situation in the first place. We must put in place policies that improve health-care staffing and ensures the right skill mix. We cannot be silent anymore.”



Region 3 Vice-President DJ Sanderson also spoke at a Day of Mourning event in York region. As well, the *Toronto Star* published a strongly-worded opinion editorial from ONA President Cathryn Hoy reflecting on the ongoing struggles of nurses and health-care professionals on this somber day.

“On the Day of Mourning, I call on governments, employers, unions and associations to adequately address mental health conditions in workers once and for all,” said Local 80 Coordinator Serge Ganzburg, who spoke at an event in Toronto.

Crown Drops all but Two Workplace Safety Charges Against Southlake

ONA is appalled that three of the five latest charges against Southlake Regional Health Centre for failing to keep their staff safe have been quietly withdrawn by the Crown.

The hospital faced five charges and its CEO Arden Krystal one charge for violations of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* in connection with several incidents that took place in October and December 2020, including one involving an ONA member, who was injured while caring for a patient with a known history of violent behaviours.

“While a thorough investigation led the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to charge the workplace and, in a first, the CEO herself, most of the charges have been dropped with no explanation,” said ONA President Cathryn Hoy. “When it comes to their health and safety, staff deserve answers. If they aren’t safe, neither are those under their care.”

Two charges, including one regarding the lack of reliable personal workplace violence alarms for staff members, remain. There have been incidents in which staff have tried to activate their personal alarms to summon help in a critical situation, only to have them not function.

This is not the first time Southlake has been charged. The hospital pleaded guilty in 2020 to two of nine counts of violating the *OHSA* stemming from a 2019 incident when an RN and security guard were attacked in the emergency department and adult inpatient mental health unit. In a plea deal, the other seven charges were dropped. ONA called the \$80,000 fine a slap on the wrist, noting the penalties must be much more severe to change the culture in health care.

“Being charged a second time in two years with nearly identical offences proves the fine did absolutely nothing to compel Southlake to make adequate changes, and having most of the latest charges dropped will only reinforce that,” concluded Hoy. “A very strong message must be sent to this employer and every other one in the province: If you do not provide a safe environment for your staff, you will face severe consequences. We will never stop advocating for that.”

« To say this employer has an abysmal record of complying with the law would be a gross understatement, and our members and other staff have been subjected to horrific workplace violence as a result. »»

— ONA President Cathryn Hoy, RN

Filed a Claim with the WSIB for Psychological Injury? Your Feedback is Needed!



ONA is endorsing a research study on nurses’ experiences filing psychological injury claims with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), particularly regarding PTSD or chronic stress, and we encourage applicable members to participate.

Participation in the study, being led by Shoshana Deutsh, a PhD Candidate in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Cornell University, is confidential and anonymous. You will be asked to participate in a 30- to 60-minute interview about your experiences with the WSIB process. Interviews will close on **September 30, 2022**.

If interested, please contact Deutsh at (647) 268-4919, smd338@cornell.edu or by filling out a contact form at <https://docs.google.com/forms>.

ARE YOU A REGISTERED NURSE?

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Chronique de la
présidente, AIIO
CATHRYN HOY, RN



SUITE DE LA PAGE 4

nos infirmières et de nos infirmiers du service des soins de la santé, je suis toujours la même présidente, nous sommes le même conseil d'administration, et vous êtes les mêmes membres.

Cela signifie que nous ne resterons pas les bras croisés pendant que le gouvernement Ford prend des décisions imprudentes qui nous manquent de respect et qui minent notre valeur, qui nuisent à notre capacité de fournir des soins de qualité à nos patients, à nos résidents et à nos clients, et qui menacent notre précieux système public de soins de santé. Nous ne pouvons pas laisser une infirmière, un infirmier ou un professionnel de la santé de plus partir à cause d'un épuisement professionnel et d'un dégoût extrêmes, alors qu'il nous manque officiellement 22 000 infirmières et infirmiers dans cette province (mais j'estime qu'il en manque près de 30 000).

Ce n'est pas parce que les élections sont terminées que la lutte est terminée. Mais ne vous y trompez pas, nous avons du pain sur la planche. Et par nous, je veux dire nous tous ensemble. Parce que notre campagne électorale provinciale *Nurses Vote (Les infirmières et infirmiers votent)*, dont j'espère que vous lirez le compte-rendu dans l'article de couverture, nous a montré sans l'ombre d'un doute le pouvoir de la solidarité et le rassemblement de tous en une seule force. Au cours de toutes les années que j'ai passées à l'AIIO, je n'ai jamais vu nos membres aussi engagés et politiquement actifs, alors que vous avez mis au défi les candidats et veillé à ce que le public connaisse la dure vérité sur notre système de santé. Et cela a fonctionné. La majorité des Ontariens n'ont pas voté pour les conservateurs.

Lorsque j'ai rappelé le premier ministre Ford, je lui ai dit que je lui accorderais un court répit le temps qu'il mette son Cabinet en place, mais je n'avais pas l'intention de le laisser s'en tirer après. Je demande des réunions régulières où je peux partager directement les expériences et les réalités des infirmières, des infirmiers et des professionnels de la santé de première ligne, alors continuez à m'envoyer vos histoires! Elles sont tellement puissantes. Après tout, en tant que professionnels hautement éduqués et qualifiés, vous êtes les experts. Je ferai de mon mieux pour travailler avec le premier ministre, mais il doit entendre ce que nous disons et comprendre vos rôles. Et s'il ne veut pas écouter, je sais que les médias le feront. Ils ne cessent de réclamer les commentaires de l'AIIO, et vous pouvez être certains que le conseil d'administration et moi avons beaucoup à dire!

Alors que le premier ministre Ford semblait nous persuader en nous offrant des récompenses après les élections, déclarant aux médias qu'il serait peut-être temps d'envisager des augmentations de salaire pour les infirmières et les infirmiers et d'autres travailleurs du secteur public, compte tenu de l'inflation vertigineuse, j'ai appris que ce qu'il dit et ce qu'il fait – nous qualifier de héros tout en mettant en œuvre le projet de loi 124 qui supprime les salaires, par exemple – ne sont généralement pas la même chose.

Malgré tout, je suis optimiste. J'ai de l'espoir en raison de l'action collective dont j'ai été témoin de la part de nos membres pendant la campagne électorale (et dont je suis témoin chaque jour). Et j'ai de l'espoir, parce que je suis clairement dans la ligne de mire du premier ministre – et dans sa liste de numéros abrégés! Ensemble, nous réussirons à le rejoindre et à lui faire comprendre!



Suivez Cathryn at twitter.com/CathrynOna



Chronique de la première
vice-présidente, AIIO
ANGELA PREOCANIN, RN



SUITE DE LA PAGE 5

travail de mobilisation. A-t-il un comité d'action politique auquel vous pouvez vous joindre? Les dirigeants de nos sections locales sont toujours à la recherche de membres prêts à s'engager et à relever des défis, et ils vous accueilleront avec plaisir!

Si vous ne souhaitez pas vous engager tout de suite à ce niveau, vous pouvez faire beaucoup plus en tâtant le terrain. Tenez-vous au courant des activités de votre section locale et de votre unité de négociation en les suivant sur les médias sociaux, en lisant leurs courriels, en consultant les conseils d'administration de l'AIIO et en assistant à leurs réunions. Signez et partagez les pétitions qu'ils font circuler, parlez à votre famille et à vos amis des problèmes auxquels vous faites face, écrivez des lettres au rédacteur en chef de vos journaux locaux pour en informer le public. Chaque petite chose que vous faites est un engagement – je vous garantis que vous y serez accroché! – et cela fait toute la différence.

Parce que c'est une autre question que l'on me pose. Puis-je, en tant que personne, apporter le changement que je souhaite réaliser? Sans aucun doute! Si vous vous joignez à une autre personne, et ainsi de suite, nous aurons rapidement un collectif et un mouvement – et c'est là que le vrai changement se produit.

Votre conseil d'administration est si déterminé à mobiliser ses membres que nous avons récemment ajouté un quatrième comité au conseil. Il s'agit du comité provincial d'action politique, composé de membres de première ligne qui aideront à repérer les tendances provinciales sur les enjeux politiques liés au milieu de travail et qui touchent les infirmières, les infirmiers, les professionnels de la santé, vos patients, les résidents, les clients et les collectivités, à recommander des plans d'action politique à court et à long termes pour régler ces problèmes et à travailler activement avec les membres du conseil d'administration, les coordonnateurs locaux et le personnel afin de mettre en œuvre les plans approuvés à l'échelle régionale.

L'intérêt des membres à l'égard du comité était élevé, ce qui est très révélateur, et il était extrêmement difficile de le restreindre. C'est un comité qui fera un travail incroyable et significatif, et en tant que présidente, je suis très enthousiaste à l'idée de le mettre sur pied et de le faire fonctionner.

Il y a quelques années, l'AIIO a également créé un poste de mobilisateur des membres, et comme les sections locales sont plus nombreuses que jamais à mener leurs propres campagnes pour apporter des changements et habiliter leurs membres, nous ajouterons un autre poste. Communiquez avec nos mobilisateurs dévoués à cgrintake@ona.org. Ils seront très heureux de vous aider! Et, bien sûr, le conseil d'administration et moi-même sommes là pour vous aider dans vos efforts de défense des intérêts et nous ne sommes qu'à un coup de fil de vous – et c'est un appel que j'aime toujours recevoir!

Comme l'a si bien dit une personne qui a été détachée, l'AIIO n'est pas seulement votre syndicat ou le mien. C'est vous. C'est moi. C'est nous tous ensemble.



Suivez Angela at twitter.com/4angiepreocanin



EDUCATION



Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson, RN, holds the portfolio of education

▶▶▶ FROM THE INSIDE...

Membership Education Team: Providing Information When and How You Need it

In our continuing series on how ONA's many staff teams support our members' work, we turn our attention to the Membership Education Team.

If there's one thing the pandemic taught us, it's how adaptable ONA and our members are – and nowhere has that been more evident than with our robust education program.

Traditionally comprised of in-person workshops, lecturettes, eLearning, webinars, townhalls and videos, ONA education shifted to a digital format during the past two years, in a move that members embraced and is expected to remain even when the pandemic is over.

"The digital world is the way of the future for us because we have an opportunity to reach more members," said Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson, who holds the portfolio for education. "But when we feel a workshop would be better delivered in person, we will. For example, if you're doing team building, it's probably better for it to be in person. There's so much value in face-to-face collaboration."

ONA's education program, free to members and student affiliates, is

thanks to our highly-skilled Member Education (ME) Team – with the support of other staff, where needed. Consisting of Manager Tammy Lowe, a Labour Relations Officer (LRO) education prime in each of our five regions and two support staff, the team provides a core union service that many members don't even know exists.

"It often falls on the backs of Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents to inform them," said Lowe, who meets regularly with Robinson. "We know our members are tired and burned out, and education is just one more thing. But we hope they take advantage of our offerings, as they are valuable tools and resources on the work of the union."

That might be an understatement. Here is an overview of our impressive education program.

Workshops and Lecturettes

Want to learn more about the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*? We



have workshop for that! How to fill out your Professional Responsibility Workload Reporting Form? We've got that covered too! In fact, ONA currently offers 37 workshops and lecturettes on a variety of topics, all of which are listed in our education brochure, updated annually. Programs specify their target audience (Local executive, front-line members, or all).

Workshops are delivered by ME Team LROs, with a co-facilitator and/or subject matter expert from another team, if needed. LROs can generally deliver any of the sessions, but Lowe noted some have topics they specialize in or are particularly passionate about.

"All workshops have been designed by the team LROs at some point," she said. "Sometimes they are based on the needs of the Bargaining Units or topics from the Board, but for the most part,

Why ONA Education?

The benefits of participating in ONA education are endless, and include:

- Gaining a better understanding of how the collective agreement and government legislation impacts your work lives.
- Understanding ONA's governance structure.
- Developing skills to take on union leadership roles.
- Helping satisfy your obligations under the College of Nurses of Ontario's Quality Assurance Program.



"I'm excited about our digital education because we're reaching more members," said Member Education Team Manager Tammy Lowe, RN. "It allows flexibility as there is no requirement to leave family and communities, and I don't think a lot of our members will be comfortable travelling any time soon."

we're maintaining and upgrading our current workshops. Because the LROs are facilitating them, they know when something needs to be updated."

At the beginning of each year, Locals submit education plans for their executive and members to ONA based on the education brochure, and the ME Team LROs then coordinate the scheduling and components of the workshops.

"We also have Local education planning where Locals plan a series of workshops for the executive membership, which could include our Executive Skills series and Making it Count at Labour Management – to name a few," Lowe said. "There are pieces they do from a Local perspective, and we also offer workshops on the College of Nurses of Ontario and professional practice issues, for example. Local Coordinators may ask for a specific date to attach education to membership meetings to get them engaged, and our goal is to accommodate that."

While workshops, which are largely interactive, run from one to two days, ONA also offers half-day education and lecturettes, much shorter sessions – sometimes two hours or less.

Our Information Technology (IT) educator Clark Allore also provides

education on ONA's IT applications (i.e. Outlook, OneDrive, Access ONA, etc.).

Future of eLearning

Because it's not always possible for members to attend workshops or lecturettes, ONA also provides a unique eLearning program, which allows members to complete an online course at their own time and pace from wherever they want.

Our eLearning platform is currently under revision, with five core courses expected to be launched later this summer, and more slated for the future. The ME Team is also reviewing our videos to ensure they are up to date and relevant to our members' ever-changing needs.

"It's been an opportunity to start looking at different eLearnings to meet our members where they are at," said Lowe. "There are core courses that will always need to be there and refreshed on a regular basis, but we want to give members something different as well, so they want to return to the platform often."

Each eLearning course allows members to stop at any point or repeat a section, with questions and exercises throughout. After passing a final quiz, members can download and print a certificate.

Provincial Meetings

The ME Team is also heavily involved in education at our provincial meetings, including Provincial Leadership Meetings, Provincial Coordinators Meetings, Health and Safety/Human Rights and Equity Caucuses, Biennial Conventions and Leadership Summits.

"The upcoming Leadership Summit, for example, will provide a labour studies certificate," noted Lowe. "While Queen's University is primarily delivering the education, the ME LROs will ensure it's customized to our members, and will be there to assist with delivery."

"Bringing someone who's never been to a provincial meeting is also an educational experience because we're giving them fresh information, whether it's about a contract or a grievance or an Independent Assessment Committee," added Robinson. "There's always an opportunity to broaden our members' knowledge on what ONA provides."

Going Forward

After each workshop, members are encouraged to complete an evaluation form, and the ME Team is always open to suggestions to improve content.

"The Quality Committee and I also vet any important changes to curriculum," said Robinson. "There are members on that committee, so we have a membership lens on changes that need to be made, updating the various education we have, and creating new programs."

"Part of ONA's Strategic Plan is that we need to know there's value added in our education," concluded Lowe. "We can pull the stats to see which sessions are more popular, and we're going to the Area Coordinators Conferences this fall to see where our members are at. There's no point offering something if they don't want it. And if there is a session we're not offering enough, we will increase that. The needs of our members guide this work."

How to Access ONA Education

Now that you've read all about our exciting education offerings, we're hoping you'll want to get in on the action!

Here's how:

- Register online via Access ONA at <https://access.ona.org/login/>.
- Click on Workshop Calendar.
- Choose your topic.
- Scroll to the bottom to register.
- It's that easy!

(Note: Reimbursement for meals, accommodation, salary or travel may be paid based on budget as determined by Local policy. Please contact your Local Coordinator for approval in advance of the workshop.)



FOR YOUR BENEFIT

For more on HOOPP



Visit [hoopp.com](https://www.hoopp.com)

Members' Pension Plan Strong, Stable

The Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP), the pension plan of the majority of ONA members, has released its 2021 results – and despite the turmoil of the past two-plus years, they are impressive.

The results show that HOOPP's funded status at the end of last year remained at a very strong 120 per cent, which means for every dollar of current or future pensions that HOOPP owes its members, there is \$1.20 on hand.

By successfully navigating another year of challenges in the economy related to the ongoing effects of the pandemic, HOOPP's in-house investment team produced a positive rate of return in 2021 of 11.28 per cent. Net assets reached \$114.4 billion, up from \$104 billion at the end of 2020, while the plan's 10-year annualized return is 11.06 per cent.

"The result is a strong return and funded status that help make the plan secure for the long-term benefit of the health-care workers of Ontario," said HOOPP President and CEO Jeff Wendling. "HOOPP will continue to purposefully and thoughtfully diversify our portfolio through allocations to a wide array of strategies, including building on our successes in private markets. Our strong performance record puts us in a good position to seek opportunities that will safeguard our members' pensions, now and into the future."

In fact, the most recent report from CEM Benchmarking shows that based on a global dataset of 218 pension funds, HOOPP's 10-year net returns were in the top 10 per cent and its 10-year net value-added was the second highest. HOOPP's value-added return for 2021 was 2.69 per cent, among the highest in the plan's history.

"As if this isn't reassuring enough, HOOPP's Board of Trustees granted a benefit improvement in 2021 to increase lifetime benefits for active members, including ONA members," added ONA President Cathryn Hoy. "In addition, a full cost of living adjustment was granted in 2021 and again in 2022 to help retired members keep up with the cost of inflation. This is true peace of mind for our members when their tough days on the front lines of our health-care system are done."



YOUR PENSION AT A GLANCE

120 per cent:	HOOPP's funded status, meaning that for every dollar owed in pensions, it has \$1.20 on hand
11.28 per cent:	Positive rate of return in 2021
\$114.4 billion:	Net assets at the end of 2020
11.06 per cent:	10-year annualized return

HOOPP expanded its long-standing commitment to sustainable investing with the goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions in its portfolio by 2050.

Pension Plan Key to Attracting, Retaining Employees, HOOPP Survey Shows

A “retirement first” approach to workplace benefits may be the key to attracting and retaining employees, a new report shows.

The Value of a Good Pension: The business case for good workplace plans, prepared by the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) and Common Wealth, a financial technology company that provides group retirement plans to small businesses, not-for-profits, professional associations and unions, takes a comprehensive look at how employers can better serve both their employees and bottom line by offering retirement savings plans. Noting that employers commonly consider retirement benefits as something to be added only after health benefits and other employee perks are in place, the report makes a strong case “for putting retirement benefits in early as part of a total compensation package.”

In fact, many employers interviewed for the survey said if they did not offer retirement benefits, they would be significantly less attractive to prospective hires, a fact confirmed by other recent research, including HOOPP’s 2021 Canadian Employer Pension Survey (see Winter 2022 *Front Lines*, page 35). That report found that retirement benefits rank higher than benefits such as health and dental when it comes to attracting and retaining employees, with 85 per cent of employers that offer retirement benefits noting they are important in helping with the stress management of employees.

“Workers in high-quality plans can take home thousands of dollars more in pay each year without sacrificing their retirement security,” added Steven McCormick, HOOPP Senior



Vice-President, Plan Operations, echoing the report’s finding that when an employer offers a Canada-model pension plan rather than none at all, a worker can increase their available pay for other non-retirement uses by an average of 69 per cent. “Employees are happier and more focused on their day-to-day work, knowing their retirement is secure, and employers can enjoy improved productivity and staff retention.”

69 per cent

Amount a worker can increase their available pay for other non-retirement uses when an employer offers a Canada-model pension plan

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR PENSION? JOIN A SEMINAR!

Ready to retire or just dreaming about the day? There’s a HOOPP seminar for that!

The seminars, which run throughout the year, are available for all active members on the following topics:

- ▶ **HOOPP Overview:** Learn about your pension, including key features of the plan.
- ▶ **HOOPP Connect:** Find out how to navigate your personal account online and use the pension estimator.
- ▶ **Getting Retirement Ready:** Learn about the steps to prepare for retirement, the value of your pension and how to maximize it.

All seminars, which include a question-and-answer session, will be virtual until HOOPP deems it safe to hold them in person again.



Learn more and register at hoopp.com/members/pension-seminars





The future of nursing

It's a painful irony that the dedication of nurses and health-care professionals has led some to undervalue us and take us for granted. Now, devastating staff shortages have eroded the quality of patient care in this province. We've been fighting hard to prevent this situation, which was fully avoidable. It's discouraging that our voices have been ignored, but it hasn't stopped us, because no matter how tough things are, nurses and health-care professionals know we can always count on each other. We're standing together for our patients and our profession - and we won't back down.

keepnursingstrong.ca

ONA
Ontario Nurses' Association