

FRONT LINES



Happy Anniversary, ONA!

As our union marks a significant milestone, we take a look at where we've come and where we're going

We Win! Bill 124 Struck Down by the Courts P.10



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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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ONA MAIL



Happy Accident

I have in front of me a copy of the summer 2022

issue of *Front Lines*. I am not in the medical field, but it was delivered to the wrong address. My neighbour, who belongs to your association, is a nurse and it is her copy. I believe that there are no accidents, and everything happens for a reason.

My neighbour was picking up my mail while I underwent surgery. I got to see firsthand how dedicated nurses are. They arrived early for their shift and were introduced to me by the nurse ending the shift. So, they stayed for much longer than the 12 hours they were assigned. They were always cheerful and offered a word of encouragement. I could see how busy they were. I felt very special after surgery when a nurse was assigned to look after me and make sure I was comfortable while the anesthetic wore out.

I commend all nurses for their dedication and caring, and like my neighbour, even in their everyday lives away from their place of work.

In appreciation of all nurses, thank you.

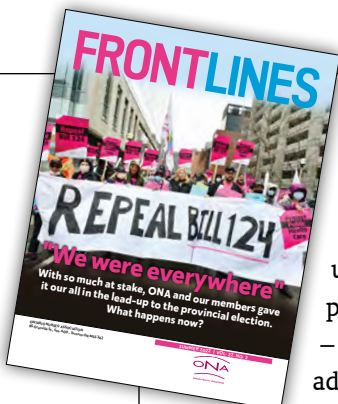
NORMAN DA COSTA



Cash Grab

I saw ONA's fantastic ad in the *Toronto Star*. Please print more!

Why is there no accountability by the province to outline where the money given by the federal government that is earmarked for health is actually spent?



It is an interesting question to pose when speaking about the lack of nurses, understaffing and the purposeful underfunding – all points in your ad. How much money is actually given to the

Ontario government for health? Do our leaders take the cash, do as they please with absolutely no responsibility and then tell us they need more and can only afford a one per cent wage increase a year (outrageous!) and all the other untruths?

Three members of our family had open heart surgery in the last year.

We are so grateful we live in Canada and sincerely want to thank all the nurses that cared for us from the ICU until home.

GIONILDA STOLEE



Sound of Silence

Just wanted to say your one-page ad in the *Toronto Star* was great!

Keep embarrassing the Health Minister and her boss as often as possible and maybe they will someday realize that there are thousands of medical staffers who could solve the health system issues if only they were given the opportunity.

BOB MULCASTER



HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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.

- ▶ **February:** Black History/Black Futures Month (see page 18)
- ▶ **February 28:** International Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day
- ▶ **March 6-12:** Social Work Week
- ▶ **March 8:** International Women's Day
- ▶ **March 20:** International Day of Francophonie
- ▶ **March 21:** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- ▶ **April:** Equal Pay Day (exact date TBD)
- ▶ **April 4-5:** ONA Provincial Leadership Meeting
- ▶ **April 7:** World Health Day
- ▶ **April 28:** Day of Mourning



Check ona.org for more information.

From Interim ONA President/
Region 2 Vice-President
De la présidente par intérim, AIIO/
Vice-présidente de la région 2
BERNIE ROBINSON, RN



Follow Bernie at twitter.com/BernieReg2VPONA.

Reason to Hope for Better Days to Come

THE FIRST THING YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED about this column is that I'm not the face you're used to seeing. As the ONA President has resigned for personal reasons (see page 26), I'm stepping in to assume those duties until a by-election takes place this spring. As a longtime member on the ONA Board of Directors, serving my third term as Region 2 Vice-President, and a Local leader for many years before that, I'm very willing and more than capable of joining with the rest of your dedicated Board in continuing to move your serious issues forward and addressing your challenges head on.

Nowhere has that been more apparent than our collective fight against the wage-suppressing Bill 124, which made its way to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice last fall (see page 10). We told the government from day one that this legislation interfered with our right to free collective bargaining, enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Premier Ford might not have listened, but the court certainly did, striking down this disrespectful bill.

While that's one hurdle overcome (for now, the government has announced its intent to appeal), sadly, there are others. Because while the Ford government hasn't gone away, its regressive anti-worker policies and legislation – Bill 124 is certainly not the only one – are definitely driving many of you away. In fact, latest numbers from the Canadian Institute for Health Information show the RN-to-population ratio has never been worse, giving Ontario the dubious distinction of being last of all provinces in the country (see page 30). And still the Health Minister denies the staffing crisis.

After almost three years, the virulent COVID-19 pandemic also rages on, leaving a trail of overworked, exhausted, burnt out, and quite often broken nurses and health-care professionals in its wake. On top of that, violence in the workplace continues to be a reality for many of you.

I don't want to give you the impression that it's all doom and gloom. Far from it. Our Bill 124 win has clearly shown us that. Because the fact is ONA has your back, and that absolutely means something. We are advocating on your behalf at every turn, and we do have reason to hope for better days to come.

We are continuing to take your issues to government tables and demanding to be heard. We are making impressive headway with your employers on your serious workload issues

through our unique professional responsibility complaint process. We have joined forces together and with our fellow unions like never before on common goals – and there is tremendous power in that. We will fight with everything we have to ensure our upcoming round of central bargaining in the hospital and Victorian Order of Nurses sectors result in contracts that respect the undeniable value you bring to our health-care system (see page 13).

Internally, we are working equally hard to make sure that the services we provide to you continue to be the very best they can today and into the future, guided by our strong Strategic Plan. And we are rolling out actions in our four-year Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan that we can take, both individually and collectively, to bring about much-needed change.

Here's something else to look forward to in 2023: it's ONA's 50th anniversary – and that's something to celebrate! So, please read the cover story and head to our website and special 50th anniversary hub to take a look at the plethora of material on our past, future – and everything in between! – and how you can get involved in this momentous occasion.

As we traverse this year, I know we will continue to address our challenges with determination, grace and solidarity, just as we have throughout our five decades.

Raison d'espérer des jours meilleurs

LA PREMIÈRE CHOSE QUE VOUS AVEZ PEUT-ÊTRE

REMARQUÉE au sujet de cette chronique, c'est que je ne suis pas celle que vous avez l'habitude de voir. Étant donné que la présidente de l'AIIO a démissionné pour des raisons personnelles (voir page 26), j'interviens pour assumer ces fonctions jusqu'à ce qu'une élection partielle ait lieu ce printemps. En tant que membre de longue date du conseil d'administration de l'AIIO servant mon troisième mandat à titre de vice-présidente de la région 2 et de responsable locale pendant de nombreuses années auparavant, je suis tout à fait disposée et tout à fait capable de me joindre au reste de votre conseil d'administration dévoué pour continuer de faire avancer la résolution de vos enjeux importants et d'attaquer de front vos défis.

Nulle part cela n'a été plus évident que dans le cadre de notre lutte collective contre le projet de loi 124 plafonnant les hausses salariales qui s'est rendu jusqu'à la cour supérieure de justice de l'Ontario l'automne dernier (voir page 10). Nous avons dit au gouvernement dès le départ que cette mesure législative violait notre droit

SUITE À LA PAGE 33



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



Follow Angela at twitter.com/4angiepreocanin.

We Really are Stronger Together!

FOR ME, THE ABSOLUTE BEST PART of being in a union is the incredible sense of solidarity I feel every time an issue that affects working people – and indeed all Ontarians – roars its ugly head. And never has that been more obvious, or important, than these past few months.

It's fair to say that with the Ford government trampling all over worker rights, we have increasingly joined forces with our fellow unions and other likeminded allies, including the Ontario Health Coalition, to push back.

You will see many examples of that in *Front Lines*, but I would like to highlight just three. You read in Bernie's column that we came together with our sisters and brothers in the labour movement to launch a Charter challenge on Bill 124 that finally came before the courts. We all sang the same tune about the unconstitutional nature of that legislation – and continued to do so – and look where we landed!

We joined those same unions in demanding a meeting with Health Minister Sylvia Jones to discuss comments she has made that leave us to believe without a shadow of a doubt that privatization of our cherished health-care system is on the horizon. At a subsequent media conference, we told the public that we need her and Premier Ford to listen to us because we have the solutions (see page 29).

We asked members to come out and support CUPE education workers when the Ford government enacted the notwithstanding clause and, through Bill 28, forced them back to work before they even went out and to accept their final insulting offer, completely circumventing the collective bargaining process (see page 6). Your presence at CUPE rallies throughout the province was overwhelming, and I know it lifted their spirits!

Why is this collective action important? Because when several unions and our hundreds of thousands of members come together, our combined voices are much harder to ignore. If not for that solidarity, Bill 124 would not have been deemed unconstitutional, and the Ford government never would have repealed Bill 28 and got back to the bargaining table. CUPE's struggle for fair pay and appropriate staffing levels was not unique to education workers. It's literally the struggle of all workers in the province.

But it's not just important to those workers. It's important to all Ontarians. Bill 124 has driven nurses and health-care

professionals away at alarming rates, so who will care for them? Our children need education workers in their schools if they are to thrive. If privatization gets into our system, we fear there will be no stopping it, meaning access to care will be largely based on ability to pay. And so, our fight is the fight for each and every person in this province.

I want to remind you that it's not just those of us in the ONA offices showing solidarity. It is – and absolutely must be – every one of you. That's what moves the pendulum, that's what makes positive change. And so, I strongly urge you to join the movement, whether that be participating in a local rally, wearing a button, displaying a lawn sign, talking to your family and friends about how these issues affect them, or writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to educate the public in general. It all counts!

We can't forget that CUPE and all our fellow unions have marched alongside us when we needed them most and will no doubt do so again in a heartbeat should the need arise. After all, today it was CUPE, but tomorrow it could be us.

Nous sommes vraiment plus forts ensemble!

POUR MOI, LA MEILLEURE RAISON DE FAIRE PARTIE d'un syndicat est l'incroyable sentiment de solidarité que je ressens chaque fois qu'un problème qui touche les travailleurs – et, en fait, tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes – surgit. Cela n'a jamais été aussi évident ou important qu'au cours des derniers mois.

Il est juste de dire qu'avec le gouvernement Ford qui bafoue les droits des travailleurs, nous avons de plus en plus uni nos forces à celles de nos collègues syndiqués et d'autres alliés aux vues similaires, y compris l'Ontario Health Coalition, pour riposter.

Vous en trouverez de nombreux exemples dans *Front Line*, mais j'aimerais en souligner trois. Vous avez lu dans la chronique de Bernie que nous nous sommes réunis avec nos sœurs et nos frères du mouvement syndical pour lancer une contestation du projet de loi 124 en vertu de la Charte qui a finalement été portée devant les tribunaux. Nous avons tous dit la même chose au sujet de la nature inconstitutionnelle de cette loi. Nous avons continué de le faire et regardez où cela nous a menés!

Nous nous sommes joints à ces mêmes syndicats pour exiger une rencontre avec la ministre de la Santé, Sylvia Jones, afin de discuter des commentaires qu'elle a faits et qui nous laissent croire sans l'ombre d'un doute que la privatisation de notre précieux système de santé se profile à l'horizon. Lors d'une conférence de presse subséquente, nous avons dit au

SUITE À LA PAGE 33





MEMBERS GET LOUD!

Members Walk in Solidarity with Education Workers

We're all in this together. That's the message ONA members wanted to make crystal clear during the recent struggle of CUPE education workers.

Education workers, some of whom were making only \$39,000/year, walked off the job in early November after negotiations broke down and the government passed Bill 28, using the notwithstanding clause. The legislation made it illegal for the union to strike, despite being in a legal position at the time, and imposed the government's final offer. CUPE members ended their job action after two days when the government promised to repeal Bill 28 and return to the bargaining table. While CUPE filed a five-day notice to strike the following week after making little progress on staffing issues (the two sides agreed on wages – 3.59 per cent for each year of a four-year deal), a settlement was reached the day before that was set to happen on November 20. CUPE members ratified it a couple weeks later.

CUPE Ontario School Board Council of Unions President Laura Walton spoke at ONA's Provincial Coordinators Meeting on November 1, urging members to join their fight for better working conditions and fair wages, noting that “building worker power and solidarity is how we will win. There is no union without workers. You are the union, and you have the ability to speak out.”

And speak out we did! While ONA sent a letter in support of education workers to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Education Steven Lecce, plastered our messages of solidarity all over social media and joined the galleries of the Ontario Legislature to ensure Bill 28 was rescinded, our members took up the call to join us, participating in mass rallies outside



the Ministry of Education and Queen's Park and at dozens of local rallies throughout the province. Many also signed CUPE's \$39,000 is not enough petition and displayed “I support education workers” signs (see page 7).

“I’m a parent and I want my children in school,” said Local 19 Coordinator Emily Webb (bottom right photo), who supported the rally at Lambton Kent School District with her two young children. “But I want them in a school that is safe, and has the appropriate staff, who are paid fairly for the important work they do. Our children are the future, and CUPE members are standing up and fighting for themselves and for so many who cannot. I will



stand with education workers today, tomorrow and the days to come! Their fight is our fight!”

“As ONA members, we need to stand in solidarity with our fellow union members to fight oppressive legislation such as Bill 28, which erodes the rights of workers,” added Local 6 Coordinator Jane Penciner (left in bottom left photo). “Together we are stronger, and our voices can be heard to bring the rights of workers to the attention of the public and pressure the Ford government to stop repressing worker rights.”

This page contains a few photos of this incredible show of solidarity. Head to our social media platforms for many more.

Solidarity Selfies!

Members who couldn't get to a CUPE rally were still able to demonstrate their support!

Holding special, "I support education workers" signs from ONA, members snapped selfies, many of which we shared on social media.

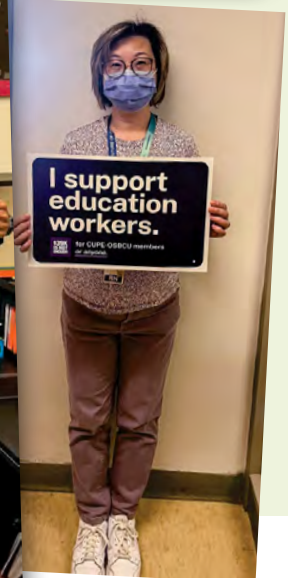
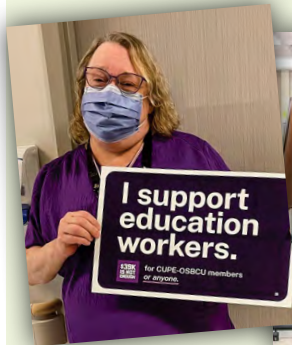
Local 111 Political Action Rep Sandra Campbell took it one step further, encouraging members who had come into the Local office for a recent Access ONA Day to check the accuracy of their information online and receive a gift for signing up, to also take selfies.

"The response was great!" she reported. "They were enthusiastic to show their solidarity by taking pictures with the signs to be posted on Local 111's Facebook page. Some member comments were that 'workers deserve decent wages' and that 'the Ford government needs to bargain in good faith.' We have been oppressed under Bill124 and our bargaining rights taken away, so CUPE's win is our win. Unions standing together are stronger together. We must be united in the fight against the injustices and unfairness of the Ford government. Local 111 will continue 'selfie campaigns' as a means of engaging members and personalizing their messages of support and solidarity."

Here are a few selfies from Local 111 and other members.

« **CUPE's win is our win.
Unions standing together
are stronger together.** »

— Local 111 Political Action Rep
Sandra Campbell, RN



Local 134 Coordinator Char Lameront, seen here (right in left photo) with an OPSEU nurse, met many wonderful people at a CUPE rally in Barrie, but one in particular – a woman in her 80s – stood out. "I was curious about why she came out and asked if she was retired from the education sector," Lameront explained. "She said 'no, although I have great grandchildren in school. But I'm not here because of them now. I'm here because when those children are adults, I want them to have better working conditions than I did or you have. This government is making decisions that are going to change the rights for workers and put us back many years. I felt I needed to come out to protect my future adult grandchildren's rights.'"

Home Away from Home: Member Pens Poem on Happier Times

Member Ingrid Somers has a very special way to help her remember better days.

“When I first started my career, it was with a group of nurses that I had grown to love and think of as part of my family,” said Somers, who has worked at a large urban hospital for 24 years. “We grew together both professionally and personally and were always there for each other. It was what the real nursing profession once was.”

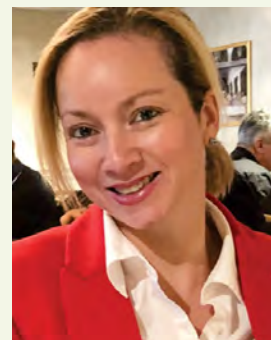
But then the COVID-19 pandemic came along.

“These past few years have been very trying with all the changes, and I’m sad to say the health-care system

is so much worse than it used to be. In these trying times, I often reflect back to the past and the wonderful memories I have working with my fellow co-workers and how happy I once was compared to my feelings today, which can be described as anger, frustration, stress, anxiety and overall defeat.”

To help cope, Somers said she found a creative outlet.

“I turned to writing as a way to express my feelings and thoughts. I wrote the poem *Home* (right) with the thoughts in my mind of how I used to feel coming to work and working with a wonderful set of nurses.”



Home

*Family but not blood
A family away from home
You watch each other grow
A friendship away from home
Through life’s trials and tribulations
A support away from home
Not blood but always family
A home away from home*

Nursing Week Around the Corner!



It’s almost that time again: time to celebrate all you do for Ontarians while acknowledging that you continue to face very serious challenges.

Nursing Week 2023 takes place from May 8-14, and we are already making plans! Our Nursing Week Team, comprised of members from each region (see sidebar), supported by staff and chaired by Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, is working hard on a

theme, bilingual poster, shareables and other exciting activities.

As last year, we want to strike a balance between honouring and celebrating the year-round commitments and achievements of RNs, NPs and RPNs while also appreciating that as the pandemic reaches the three-year mark you are beyond exhausted, regressive legislation has devalued your work and striped away your rights, sound health and safety protocols are

still not a reality in many of our workplaces, and incidents of violence continue to escalate.

We encourage you to also start thinking now about what you can do for Nursing Week. You’ll find lots of ideas, with more information to come in the weeks ahead, at ona.org/nursingweek.

MAY 2023						
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 2023

Your Nursing Week Team!

Region 1: Monique Storozuk, Local 46, Sault Area Hospitals.

Region 2: Patty O’Shaughnessy, Local 42, Cornwall Community Hospital.

Region 3: Lisa Romano, Local 97, University Health Network (Western and General sites).

Region 4: Amy Field, Local 75, St. Joseph’s Healthcare, Hamilton.

Region 5: Meeghan Pearson, Local 45, St. Joseph’s Health Care, London.

“Dangling in the Wind:” Members Share Stories on Impact of Staffing Crisis

We asked you to tell us your stories on the front lines as part of our latest *Nurses Fighting for Change* advertising campaign – and did you ever!

Throughout that powerful campaign, we continued to call out the Ford government for failing to address the crisis in health care, particularly the dire shortage of nurses and health-care professionals,

through a series of radio, social media and print ads, including in prominent publications such as *Hospital News* and the *Toronto Star*.

One component was asking members to share stories of how the staffing crisis is impacting your work, well-being and the quality of care you are able to provide, which we will use in future campaigns, send to the

Ford government, highlight on our campaign website, future reports, etc. Ontarians need to know the truth about what’s happening on the front lines of our health-care system and who better to tell them than you!

Here are just a few snippets of those shocking stories, which we are keeping anonymous:



For more on our campaign and to download our social media shareables, visit nursesfightingforchange.ca.

“I graduated in 1984 and have never seen things as bad as this. For the first time, we have multiple children and infants being held in the emergency department because we have no beds and/or nurses.”

“I go to work and give 110 per cent and still leave wishing I could have done more. Something needs to change. Not just for us as nurses – but for YOUR loved ones as our patients.”

“My hospital is running 100 per cent overcapacity. So now, this two-patient room is a three-patient room.”



“We often work short, with not enough time to truly give our clients and novice nurses the treatment and experiences they deserve. We are dangling in the wind with no one coming to help.”

“As a care coordinator, I often waitlist nursing services due to nursing shortages. This leaves patients with no other alternative but to access emergency departments for IV therapy, wound care, etc.”

“I did not go into nursing to nurse this way. I can’t recall when I last formed a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship or promoted health.”

“Some of our seasoned nurses got injured or physically harassed by patients, which could have been prevented if we had more nurses and security personnel on the unit. But due to staffing and budget problems, we are on our own.”

“Being expected to do a job with your hands tied behind your back. Being set up to fail. This is now the daily NORM, not just an isolated incident.”



QUEEN'S PARK UPDATE

« I declare... (Bill 124) to be void and of no effect. »

— Justice Markus Koehnen

We Win Together! Bill 124 Struck Down by the Courts



It was a day we have been collectively working towards for three years.

On November 29, just two-and-a-half months after our Bill 124 Charter challenge came before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Justice Markus Koehnen ruled the legislation unconstitutional and contrary to section 2(d) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Bill 124, introduced by the Ford government in June 2019 and made into law that November, limits total compensation to one per cent for each of three years for some public sector workers, including most ONA members. This, at a time when nurses and health-care professionals have sacrificed so much, including their own safety and time with their families, to help the province through the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

Almost immediately, ONA and our union counterparts launched a

Charter challenge against the bill, which came before the courts for two weeks starting on September 12, 2022. Drawing on the thousands of pages of evidence we filed, our legal team detailed how Bill 124 violates our rights, which are enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. They specifically highlighted the discriminatory nature of the bill, which targets female-dominated professionals, such as nurses and

teachers; that it has resulted in a significant pay cut when inflation is factored in; and how it interferes with our right to freely bargain and negotiate our compensation.

While Justice Koehnen did not find a violation of our equality rights under s.15, he said the law infringes on our rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, calling it “substantial interference.”

“(Bill 124) is not a reasonable limit on a right that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society,” Justice Koehnen ruled, noting he was bound by decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada that guarantee a constitutional right to collective bargaining. As a result, Bill 124 is “to be void and of no effect,” he said.

Our legal team worked hard on our Charter challenge, we met with Premier Ford countless times and, along with our union counterparts, kept this bill front and centre in the news, but there is no question that we could not have achieved this success without the collective action of each of you.

True Cost of Bill 124

Just two months before Bill 124 was struck down, the independent Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) released a report on Public Sector Employment and Compensation, estimating the bill would cost public sector employees \$8.4 billion by 2027.

The report also noted that vacancy rates in health care have nearly doubled since 2019, and at the status quo, nurses and health-care professionals would see their real wages go down 11 per cent over the next three years.

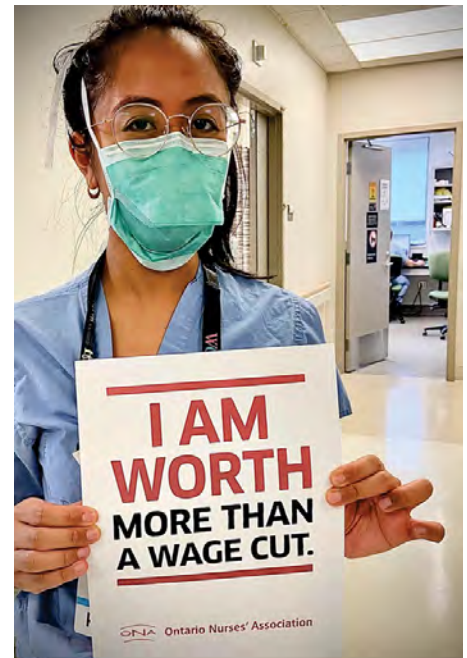
“Almost from the announcement of this despicable legislation, you came together like never before,” said Interim ONA President Bernie Robinson. “You held rallies. You met with your MPPs. You educated your family, friends and colleagues. You displayed lawn signs. The list is endless, as you came up with all kinds of creative ways to push back. You never gave up – not for one minute. This is not just a win for our union and all of you, it’s a win for all working people. I can’t think of a better way to kick off the celebration of ONA’s 50 years of advocacy than with one of our biggest successes ever. And we have all of you to thank for it.”

While the end of Bill 124 means that we will be able to reopen previous contracts affected by the bill to try and claim lost wage increases, we

are not out of the woods yet. Soon after the ruling came down, the Ford government announced its intent to appeal, meaning our fight continues.

“It’s extremely unfortunate that Premier Ford is once again wasting taxpayers’ money fighting against workers and our constitutionally protected rights,” added Robinson. “But I am optimistic we will win that fight too. We look forward to being able to return to the bargaining table and negotiating respectful and fair collective agreements that you so richly deserve.”

At press time, ONA was thoroughly reviewing the decision and will provide further information as needed.



Check our website for the latest at ona.org/about-bill-124.



Local 83 Coordinator Rachel Muir

Fall Economic Statement – No New Funding for Health Care

Despite having a \$2.1 billion surplus this year, the Ford government has chosen not to invest one more cent in public health care in the fall “mini budget.”

Announced on November 14, the Fall Economic Statement instead squanders public dollars on corporate giveaways, such as a five cent/litre cut to the gas tax, which will disproportionately favour large transport companies. This will cost the government \$1.2 billion, which is funding that could be used to end the health human resources crisis in our public health-care system.

Local 83 Coordinator Rachel Muir prepared a deputation on the Fall

Economic Statement, appearing virtually before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs at Queen’s Park.

“After 10 years of cuts to our real wages, nurses are struggling to make ends meet and trying to do more with less,” she said in a presentation filled with alarming statistics. “To see no new money invested in health care is negligent. Investing in RNs has been shown to result in better health outcomes, a reduction in mortality rates and long-term financial savings, but money continues to be spent on infrastructure and beds. But buildings and beds are only buildings and beds if there are no nurses at the bedside to provide care.”

Muir provided a list of solutions, including repealing Bill 124; tackling violence in all health-care settings; expanding funding and access to mental health services; returning and reintegrating nurses back into the workforce with fully funded late-career initiatives; increasing the number

of RN seats in Ontario’s colleges and universities; and improving financial supports for clinical placements.

“You haven’t tried those solutions yet,” she concluded. “There is no quick fix to this crisis, but let me tell you, private health care is not the answer.”



CNO Regulatory Reforms Approved

At the direction of the Minister of Health, the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) has made regulatory changes to allow internationally educated nurses (IEN) who have completed nursing education approved in another jurisdiction to temporarily register with the CNO and practise while going through the full registration process.

ONA
Members

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The changes would also allow for two failed exam attempts before revoking a temporary certificate, instead of the one attempt currently allowed. Temporary registered nurses have to be monitored by an NP, RN or RPN, leading to renewed calls from ONA for a plan to provide mentorship by late-career or recently retired nurses.

Bill 7 Goes into Effect

The Ford government's controversial law that requires alternate level of care (ALC) patients to be added to long-term care waitlists without their consent has now gone into effect.

As of last November 20, hospitals are required to charge ALC patients \$400 per day if they refuse to relocate to an available bed in a long-term care home even if they did not consent to adding the home to their list.

ONA continues to oppose this legislation and has reached out to the College of Nurses of Ontario and other regulatory colleges to clarify how it may impact regulatory requirements regarding consent.



Ontario NDP has New Leader

The Ontario NDP has a new leader: Davenport MPP Marit Stiles, who will assume the role effective early 2023.

A long-time community activist and former Toronto District School Board Trustee, MPP Stiles was the only candidate to put their name forward in the Ontario NDP's leadership race, following the resignation of former NDP Leader Andrea Horwath after the June provincial election. Marit's candidacy will be ratified by the party's membership through a vote this winter.

Marit also served as the National Director of Public Policy and Research for the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), where she worked to strengthen Canada's arts and cultural sector, and as a board member at the Toronto Foundation for Student Success.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Hospital, VON Central Negotiating Teams Elected, Bargaining to Commence

ONA members have chosen our new Hospital and Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Central Negotiating Teams and they are ready to bargain on your behalf!

During an election this past fall, members in the hospital and VON sectors chose the following representatives (some were acclaimed):

Hospitals

(full- and part-time representatives in all regions)

Region 1

- ▶ **Full-time:** Monique Storozuk, Local 46, Sault Area Hospital.
- ▶ **Part-time:** Jason Dupras, Local 20, North Bay Regional Health Centre (elected at fall Area Coordinators Conference).

Region 2

- ▶ **Full-time:** Rachel Muir, Local 83, The Ottawa Hospital.
- ▶ **Part-time:** Kate Magladry, Local 83, The Ottawa Hospital.

Region 3

- ▶ **Full-time:** Serge Ganzburg, Local 80, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.
- ▶ **Part-time:** Jane Penciner, Local 6, North York General Hospital (acclaimed).

Region 4

- ▶ **Full-time:** Laurie Rogers, Local 238, Halton Healthcare Services.
- ▶ **Part-time:** Elizabeth Audibert, Local 26, Niagara Health System (acclaimed).

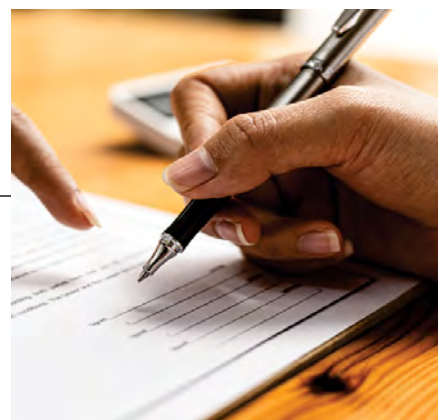
Region 5

- ▶ **Full-time:** John Lowe, Local 21, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (elected at November Provincial Coordinators Meeting).
- ▶ **Part-time:** Jo-Dee Brown, Local 8, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare.

VON

(three representatives in total)

- ▶ **Region 1:** Lucja Masoom, Local 14, VON Thunder Bay (acclaimed).
- ▶ **Region 3:** Lorna Thompson, Local 43, VON Toronto/York (acclaimed).
- ▶ **Region 4:** Tammy Bertrand, Local 7, VON Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk (acclaimed).



Current central collective agreements in both sectors expire on March 31, 2023. Following orientation for our new hospital team in mid-January, bargaining with the Ontario Hospital Association will get underway the weeks of January 20 and February 28, followed by mediation with Colin Johnston on March 1-2. Should it be necessary, arbitration with William Kaplan will take place from May 2-5.

Orientation of the VON team will be held March 14-16, with negotiations set for March 28-30 and arbitration, if necessary, on June 26.

ONA's negotiating priorities are based on member responses to our recent *Have Your Say* bargaining survey. Thanks to all of you who filled it out. We read and consider every single comment.



Read updates at ona.org/bargaining.

Emancipation Day Added to ONA's Commemorative Dates

The Board has overwhelmingly approved the addition of Emancipation Day on August 1 to the list of commemorative dates we observe each year.

Emancipation Day, unanimously voted by the House of Commons in March 2021, "commemorates the abolition of slavery across the British Empire in 1834 and brings awareness to the tragic fact that Black and Indigenous peoples were once enslaved on land that is now Canada," said Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the

portfolio of human rights and equity. "The Board deemed it critical to give this day the attention that it deserves, which is in line with ONA's steadfast commitment to fight against all forms of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination, and celebrate the strength and contributions of Black and Indigenous communities in our country."

ONA will recognize Emancipation Day by providing information about its origins and developing material, including posters and shareables, on our website at ona.org.

“There can be no reconciliation without truth,” Human Rights and Equity Caucus Learns

If we want reconciliation, we must learn Canada’s true history, delegates at ONA’s annual Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Caucus heard.

In keeping with the first priority of ONA’s Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan – *Reconciliation* – the Caucus, held both in-person and virtually on October 31, featured an array of inspiring Indigenous speakers under the theme, *Truth and Reconciliation: History, Healing and Hope*.

The day began bright and early with a Sunrise ceremony in the atrium of the Sheraton Centre hotel in downtown Toronto, led by Elder Gail Whitlow, alongside Indigenous singer/songwriter/activist/filmmaker Layla Staats, who also introduced a video Thanksgiving Blessing from Elder Frank Miller, and explained its relevance. Throughout the Caucus, she also provided musical interludes and two screenings of her powerful documentary, *Blood and Water*.

Heartfelt video greetings were shown from Canadian Medical Association President Dr. Alikia Lafontaine, the first Indigenous physician listed in the *Medical Post*’s 50 Most Powerful Doctors, and Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa, who urged delegates “to commit to learning as much as possible about the legacy of Indian residential schools and the related intergenerational trauma, the

treaties, Indigenous rights, sovereignty and our ways of life as we build a better future together. Indigenous educator and consultant Kelly Brownbill then reminded delegates that reconciliation starts with the truth.

“Too many of us were not taught the actual history of the colonization of what we now call Canada,” she began. “I have to ask you not just to learn something new, but to forget some of what you already knew, which isn’t accurate. We can’t participate until we have started with that truth. That history is hard, but we are not responsible for what happens before we show up. However, we are arriving at this time and place perfectly positioned to make a difference, to push that boulder just a little bit further up the hill. It behooves all of us to say, *I want to be part of change* because it’s not just Indigenous people who benefit when we fix these problems. Our whole society gets stronger.”

Director of Education for Nipissing First Nation Daniel Stevens provided an overview of the Indigenous treaty system in Canada, urging delegates to “read and learn about the treaties on the lands you are on, which might be one of the best things you can do as we move towards reconciliation. We signed treaties with the intention of eternity, and Canadians have a responsibility to do right by them.”



Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, RN



Indigenous educator and consultant Kelly Brownbill



Director of Education for Nipissing First Nation Daniel Stevens

And in his typical storytelling fashion, prize-winning author Darrel McLeod, whose book *Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age* was a recent selection of ONA’s HRE Book Club, outlined his own history, noting that “as someone who is marginalized when it comes to health care, nurses as allies changed my life.”

But perhaps the most touching moment of the Caucus came when ONA member Brittany Hertz, who sits on ONA’s Anti-Racism Advisory Team, shared for the very first time the painful story of her family’s involvement in the Sixties Scoop, the discrimination she has faced, and her personal journey to learn more about

« Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team members are determined activists who believe that workplace inequities can be solved by building relationships and spearheading action and that we are all stronger when we work together. I can’t thank them enough for their hard work and commitment. »

– Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the HRE portfolio



Elder Gail Whitlow and Indigenous singer/songwriter/activist/filmmaker Layla Staats at the Sunrise ceremony.

her culture – for which she received a standing ovation.

“I hope today inspires you to reflect on the truth about this country and the hardships Indigenous people face,” she said. “We as a country have made some progress in the past few years, and although it seems slow and imperfect at times, we are taking steps to get better. There has been a lot of shame and disappointment in what has happened, and it can be challenging for allies to navigate. I hope this glimpse of my story shows that it can also be challenging for Indigenous people to navigate.”

Communities of Support

A portion of the day was dedicated to our caucuses or traditional breakout sessions where five equity seeking groups – members who identify as Indigenous, Racialized members, members living with disabilities, Francophone members, and members from the LGBTQI2S+ community – along with our ally group, came together to discuss their issues and provide a report back. This year, delegates from each equity group were tasked with exploring their own Communities of Support, where those with or without lived experiences of marginalization,

« This meeting is an act of reconciliation, and I encourage all organizations to have these conversations while building a more positive path forward. »

– Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa

come together to find and offer support to each other. Our hope is that key messages from each caucus about how they see their own Communities of Support developing will help guide our Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan and our HRE work.

“ONA is committed to supporting Indigenous communities and our Indigenous members, and we all need to be part of moving this important work forward,” Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the HRE portfolio, said in bringing the Caucus to a close. “I encourage you to listen to those who are around you and reflect where we are as members and a union. We should always have on a human rights and equity lens in our work, in our communities and among family and friends. We can always learn new things from one another.”

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan Priority # 1: Reconciliation

The goal of this priority is for ONA to:

- Challenge anti-Indigenous racism.
- Build cultural competency and cultural safety.
- Support Indigenous members, elected leaders, staff and management.

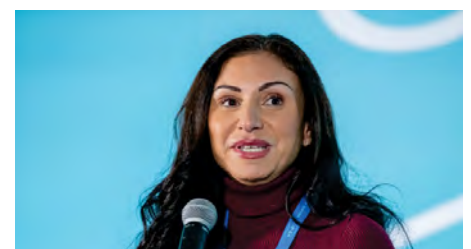
To do so, ONA will hire an Indigenous consultant as Lead Reconciliation Plan Consultant; develop a multi-year reconciliation plan; create an education program focused on decolonization and reconciliation; develop a communications strategy, tools and resources; and develop metrics to measure, monitor and evaluate the Reconciliation Plan.



Read our ARAO Action Plan summary in both English and French at ona.org/arao.



ARA Team member Britany Hertz, RN



HRE Team member Annie Mazmanian, RN

Worth a Thousand Words: Indigenous Artist Creates Stunning Piece for ONA

To help us acknowledge National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, ONA did things differently, commissioning an Indigenous artist to design a breathtaking illustration.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, acknowledged on September 30, is a day to recognize the intergenerational harm that residential schools caused to Indigenous families and communities, and to honour those who have been affected. We urged members and staff to take this opportunity to learn about and reflect on our past, present and how we can all meaningfully participate in reconciliation in Canada, while recognizing that this work must be done 365 days a year.

Following a suggestion by staff to commission an artist to create an illustration we could use as our poster and shareable to commemorate this day, Tsista Kennedy, a self-taught Anishinaabe Onyota'aka artist from Southern Ontario, was chosen. Kennedy creates original art pieces with ink on watercolor and sketchbook paper, and also digitally.

Here, in his own words, Kennedy explains the deep meaning behind his beautiful piece of art:

The bison is a common image I use in my artwork, and I often use it to portray healing, resiliency, and strength and



wellness. When the buffalo were brought to near extinction, we as Indigenous people struggled due to our diverse relationships with these animals, and the nourishment, shelter and tools they provided us. Since colonization began, both the bison and we as Indigenous people have maintained our strength and resiliency, and now we both are growing in numbers once again. Because of this, I wanted the bison to be a place for the past generations, the children and elders to rest upon.

The elder and children on the bison fit the theme of “remembering the children,” but also represent the children and elders of the present day who will pass on and receive the traditional knowledge our ancestors succeeded in passing down to us. The individuals on the far right looking at these children and the elder represent those that support the children and the elders in any way they can, ensuring that they are doing their part in the passing down of our culture, wellbeing and way of life. This is all connected by a medicine wheel, and some floral patterns in the top right corner, which to me represents new life, and continuity.



Download the poster and shareables at
ona.org/news-posts/2022-truth-and-reconciliation.

We Want to Hear from You!

Inspired by this transformative piece of art? Do you too have a creative way to tell your story and/or address the social injustices around you?

Perhaps you're a painter, a poet, a storyteller or someone who likes to plan and/or get involved in political action to demand a better world. If so, we want to

highlight your talent and engagement in *Front Lines* and possibly other venues, including at our annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus, to inspire other members.



Send your submissions to frontlines@ona.org.

Provide Status for All, ONA Members Demand

ONA members are standing in solidarity with migrant workers, undocumented people, students, families and refugees in demanding rights, regularization and status for all.

While the federal government has initiated planning for a regularization program thanks to decades of actions and campaigns, it's unclear how many undocumented migrants will be given equal rights. For that reason, the Migrant Rights Network organized a series of mass rallies across the country on September 18 – one day before Parliament returned – to keep up the pressure.

At the Toronto rally, several members and staff joined a large contingent in marching to the constituency office of federal Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland.

“Migrants who have come to Canada to improve life and obtain adequate work, deserve equality and help now to end closed work permits,” said ONA member and rally participant Sue Croxford.

The facts are sobering. More than 500,000 people are living in Canada without any valid immigration permits – a number that is increasing. In addition, 1.2 million people are on work, study or refugee claimant permits, most of whom have no opportunity to remain permanently in Canada. Undocumented people, migrant workers and refugees are being exploited in substandard working conditions as regressive immigration and labour laws restrict their agencies and leave them open to abuse. Lack of permanent resident status makes it difficult, and often impossible, for migrants to speak up for their rights.

And so, ONA and our members are doing it for them.

“Attending this rally was one way I could demonstrate being an ally for migrant rights,” stated ONA member Tanis Brown, who also brought her daughter Avery. “It was also a way I could show my gratitude for the workers before me that won the rights I have today.”

Fellow member Ingrid Garrick couldn't agree more, noting, “It is critical that we as unionists join forces to protect the rights of those groups in our society whose voices are ignored, who are being exploited and abused. We too experience the same pings of having our rights ignored and denied. What does it say about us if we sit back knowing what these undocumented workers face every day and do nothing to help them? Most are here working to support their families back home or escaping persecution in their own country. Walking in solidarity costs little but it means a great deal to them for us to



“I went to the day of action because I wanted to learn more about the issues faced by migrant workers,” said member Kate Edmond, seen here (standing, far right) at Toronto's Christie Pits Park with fellow members (back row) Sue Croxford, Tanis Brown (standing beside her daughter Avery), Ingrid Garrick and (front row) Melanie Spence. “At the rally, I heard from people who have suffered for not being able to seek health care, who have lived in fear of deportation, and who have worked in unregulated jobs involving unsafe working conditions. It was important for me to be there because as fellow workers we need to support one another.”

show up and support them; if nothing else, they know they're not alone in seeing the wrongs done to them.”

As a lead-up to the rally, ONA sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Sean Fraser asking them to fix an historic injustice by implementing a comprehensive regularization program.

“This is an important issue that directly affects ONA members because some of them do not have permanent resident status,” the letter states. “In fact, we raised this issue in both our union's federal and provincial organizing. Our public health members and hospital members have directly provided care for workers without permanent resident status and advocated for their access to health care. Some worked with migrant farmworkers during the pandemic testing and providing vaccines. Our members have voiced their concerns that migrant workers need to have permanent resident status, so that they receive the health care they need when they need it, and without risk of deportation.”

To read ONA's letter in its entirety and letters from other organizations, visit migrantrights.ca/organizational. To sign a petition on migrant rights, go to migrantrights.ca/take-action/.

Honouring Struggles and Contributions during Black History, Black Futures Month

During Black History, Black Futures Month (BH/BFM) and beyond, ONA is encouraging members to learn about the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and the issues they continue to face.

BH/BFM, acknowledged each February, was designated by the ONA Board of Directors in 2018

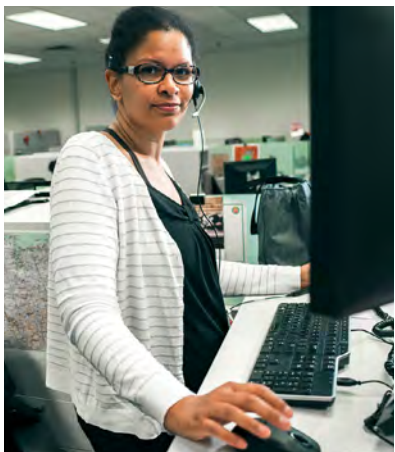
as one of our key human rights and equity (HRE) observances to recognize and honour the struggles of Black nurses and health-care professionals, and the pivotal role they play.

That was followed in June 2020 with our powerfully worded anti-racism position statement, *Beyond Good Intentions: Confronting Racial Discrimination through Solidarity*, and the release of our four-year Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan last summer, which contains 34 action items under seven priority areas (read a summary at ona.org/arao).

“Over the past three years, a long overdue conversation has been happening globally about racism,” said Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong, who holds the HRE portfolio. “Our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) members have told us they face many barriers within their workplaces: They are underrepresented in nursing leadership roles and specialty nursing areas and often face discrimination and racism. We must commit to educating ourselves and being a stronger voice and advocate for positive change at every opportunity, not just during Black History/Black Futures Month – but it’s a good place to start. We know we have a long road ahead of us, but I’m pleased to say we are well into that journey.”

In honour of BH/BFM, *Front Lines* is showcasing a conversation with three Black RNs at different points in their careers on the discrimination they have experienced and what still needs to be done.

In the weeks to come, you will find a plethora of information and material on our website, including a poster, shareables and a digital offering, to commemorate BH/BFM.



The Changemakers: Seasoned, Mid-Career and New Graduate RNs Share Experiences with Discrimination

They may be at different points in their nursing careers, but when it comes to addressing the discrimination and inequity around us, three RNs have similar goals.

“I have witnessed member-to-member discrimination and targeting, manager-to-member discrimination and patient-to-member discrimination,” said Ingrid Garrick, an RN for more than 20 years, while mid-career RN Lawson Sherwood, who recently joined ONA staff, added that “being a part of nursing, you don’t see a lot of people like me, even in school. There’s not really a voice in leadership that looks like me either.”

New graduate Hilda Oni concurred, noting that when she was a Canadian Nursing Students’ Association delegate representing her chapter school at the regional and national conferences, “I noticed there was an issue. Most of the speakers didn’t look like me and there wasn’t enough discussion on how health care considers equity, inclusion and diversity as a factor.”

But it was those difficult experiences that led these three RNs to want to effect change for the betterment of others.

“I’ve always been of the philosophy that it’s up to us to create change because you can’t wait for someone else to do it for you,” said Garrick. “I have been on a workplace diversity anti-racism committee for years. About 20 years ago, we tried to hang up a banner for Black History Month and were told we couldn’t because patients would be offended. We went from that to launching an anti-Black racism policy last year, and my employer has hired a group to do onboarding diversity education, which is profound. The committee still meets and consults – for example, we’ll review brochures and videos to make sure there is no unconscious bias. That is a huge change from where we started. It hasn’t been an easy road, but we kept pressing on.”

And it’s that kind of resilience that helped Sherwood and his fellow members bring about changes to his former emergency department as well.

“We worked with our union to do an independent assessment counsel, committing to increasing our staffing and fixing policies and procedures that were broken for a



Visit ona.org/black-history-black-futures-month.

long time. Being part of that and working with others in the profession and in my unit who knew things have changed has been rewarding – and our hospital is keeping up with it. It's a highlight for me to know that new nurses will have better supports because of the work that the nurses there now and ONA have done."

For Oni, her need to do something was sparked by the larger conversation about racism taking place in 2020.

"I was in a community health nursing class with my friends, and we discussed the concept of the social determinants of health and what that looks like from a nursing standpoint, advocating for marginalized communities. We talked about what we can do within our institutions to advocate for marginalized communities but also support Black nursing students. We created the Black Nursing Students Association, which allows Black nursing students to feel comforted, supported, seen and heard while also shedding light on the Black health-care disparities that exist within Canada. Through that, we created several workshops and received support from a variety of faculty and our dean to continue."

And continuing this critical anti-racism and anti-oppression work is key.

"I always use the analogy that if Rosa Parks didn't refuse to give up her seat, we would be further behind," said Garrick. "It's important for you to react and act when you see situations like that. A lot of times people need to be told something is inequitable because they don't automatically recognize it. The predominant makeup of leadership in both the union and at work was always White, there was no diversity, so sometimes they can't see where there is something wrong. It's very important to have people in leadership from diverse backgrounds because it's impossible for someone who



Ingrid Garrick, RN



Lawson Sherwood, RN



Hilda Oni, RN

has not had those experiences to know what it feels like and the need for change. There's hope that at least there is an acknowledgement of the problem."

"Things are changing for the better," agreed Sherwood. "I loved to see new nurses come in and have the support I didn't feel I had when I started off."

"Equity, diversity and inclusion is something that has needed to happen," concluded Oni. "Every year it gets a little bit better. Some people are receptive to it; others are not ready. But they need to understand these are people's lived experiences and everyone deserves to feel included in the workforce and heard in their organization. I'm the tip of the iceberg. There are some phenomenal Black nursing students and new graduates making changes."



View more on these changemakers at https://youtu.be/N_NsRIDwYIU.



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Happy Anniversary, ONA!

As our union marks a significant milestone, we take a look at where we've come and where we're going

It's a milestone 50 years in the making.

This October, ONA will mark five decades of steadfast advocacy and support – and we have started the celebrations early! Our Celebrate 50 Team, made up of members from each region, Region 4 Vice-President Erin Ariss, Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington and staff (see page 25) has chosen an eye-catching 50th anniversary logo and have been busily planning a year to remember for all members, culminating in our Biennial Convention in November.

“We know these are very difficult times, but we hope that our 50th anniversary provides a much-needed reprieve, even for just a little bit, as you reflect on what a difference our union and all members who have been and continue to be a part of it have made to our working conditions and the health care of all Ontarians,” said Interim ONA President Bernie Robinson. “Despite the challenging conditions under which you work and the disrespect you are constantly shown by the Ford government, you have never wavered on your commitment to your patients, residents and clients, your professions and your union throughout our 50 years – and that is absolutely worth celebrating.”



Marching for high quality patient care, it's what ONA members have always done.

Where We've Come

It was a late autumn day back in 1973 when 300 representatives from 85 independent nurses' associations converged at Toronto's Westbury Hotel to adopt a Constitution establishing a province-wide union for the purpose of collective bargaining for nurses by nurses. The following year, the Ontario Labour Relations Board approved ONA as a trade union, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Fifty Years of ONA Milestones

OCTOBER 1973: Reps of 85 independent nurses' associations converge to form ONA.

JANUARY 1980: ONA's Legal Expense Assistance Plan is established.

MAY 1987: Nursing Week is an event for ONA for the first time.

NOVEMBER 1991: ONA settles with the Ontario Nursing Homes Association on a first collective agreement for nurses in 46 homes.

NOVEMBER 2000: Members vote to affiliate with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions.

JULY 1974: ONA negotiates a contract for members in 41 hospitals providing wage increases from 33 to 50 per cent, based on an arbitration award for Ottawa Civic Hospital.

JULY 1977: Mount Sinai Hospital becomes the first Bargaining Unit to win the professional responsibility clause.

OCTOBER 1981: The O'Shea award finalizes the first collective agreement between ONA and the Ontario Hospital Association, covering 141 hospitals.

NOVEMBER 1992: ONA amends our Constitution to allow allied health personnel (now referred to as health-care professionals) to be included in our Bargaining Units.

MAY 1994: In a landmark human rights settlement, Northwestern General Hospital agrees to pay seven Black members \$320,000 and take steps to ensure a racism-free workplace.



Read more on ONA's 50th at ona.org/celebrate50.

And what a history it's been!

Right from our inception, ONA has been on the forefront of precedent-setting gains in areas such as health and safety, negotiations, and human rights and equity. The timeline at the bottom of these pages is just a sample of some of that work. We encourage you to go to our dedicated 50th anniversary hub in the weeks to come to read a comprehensive summary of our history, along with stories and videos of our key successes and those who helped make them happen.

The stage was set early when, in July 1974, ONA successfully negotiated a 10-month contract for members in 41 Ontario hospitals, providing significant wage increases, based on an arbitration award for Ottawa Civic Hospital. Just a few years later, in October 1981, the O'Shea award finalized the very first collective agreement between ONA and the Ontario Hospital Association, covering 141 hospitals.

Perhaps one of our biggest achievements in bargaining was the inclusion of a unique professional responsibility clause (PRC), which provides ONA members with a formal process to pursue with employers when they believe patient care is at risk due to unsafe staffing and other issues. In July 1977, Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto became the first Bargaining Unit to win the PRC in its contract. Two years later, an arbitrator awarded a PRC, available at more than 120 hospitals at that point, to Toronto General Hospital without having to prove a demonstrated need, stating that all ONA contracts should have it. In January 1980, Bonnechere Manor

in Renfrew became our first nursing home to be awarded this groundbreaking language. The PRC, which has expanded to other sectors over the years, is still in use today, and has resulted in far safer workplaces for both our members and those under your care.

Safety has, after all, always been one of ONA's top priorities – and we have made a tremendous impact. In 2003, long before COVID-19, there was SARS, which sickened our members and tragically claimed the lives of two of them, Tecla Linn and Nelia Laroza. In what may sound awfully familiar, ONA immediately informed members about the right to refuse unsafe work, as well as the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and procedures. We told the subsequent SARS Commission that the government must put in place adequate health and safety systems to protect nurses, using impact statements from our members to drive home the point. The final SARS report, in which our members figured prominently (just as they did in the 2021 final report of the Long-term Care COVID-19 Commission), demonstrated a clear understanding of the critical issues faced by nurses during the outbreak, calling for the use of the precautionary principle – or erring on the side of caution – when there is uncertainty about the transmission of a disease.

ONA was also instrumental in ensuring that the use of safety-engineered needles was cemented in law in 2007, and our strong voice at the Coroner's Inquest into the 2005 tragic murder of member Lori Dupont by a physician at Windsor's Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital, resulted in much-needed amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to strengthen worker safety.

In fact, throughout our 50-year history, we have played key roles in many inquests and commissions. We have provided submissions on government legislation. We have spoken in

SPRING 2003: The SARS outbreak has ONA in full advocacy.

SEPTEMBER 2003: ONA presents to the SARS Commission, and many of our recommendations are included in its final report.

AUGUST 2007: Years of lobbying pays off as the government announces that safety-engineered needles will become mandatory.

NOVEMBER 2005: Member Lori Dupont is murdered by a physician while working at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital, and ONA is a leading voice in the subsequent coroner's inquest.

NOVEMBER 2008: A student affiliate ONA membership classification is established for Ontario members of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association.

MARCH 2011: The Board approves central bargaining for 10 community care access centres (CCACs) for the first time.

JANUARY 2015: More than 3,000 members working for nine CCACs go on strike.

APRIL 2014: ONA wins a Charter challenge, allowing members who are forced to take "stress leave" or have a mental disorder arise or exacerbated due to expected, chronic or non-traumatic workplace events to make WSIB benefit claims.

SPRING 2015: ONA launches an initiative to further champion human rights and equity causes and highlight major observances.

SEPTEMBER 2015: ONA wins a landmark arbitration award in the lead case for a series of grievances challenging hospital vaccinate-or-mask policies.



The cornerstone is laid for ONA's new provincial office in Toronto and in 1986, staff move in.

the media at every turn. And we have won precedent-setting decisions at arbitration and in the courts on issues critical to our members, including hospital vaccinate-or-mask policies, pay equity, workers' compensation and, our latest, Bill 124.

"Many of our wins did not come easy – in fact, it often took tremendous perseverance on the part of ONA and our members to make them happen," noted First Vice-President Angela Preocanin. "But when things are tough,

our members show time and time again, that they are even tougher."

And where we see issues, we launch campaigns and release reports to educate the public, starting way back in 1977 with *Let Us Take Care!* to bring attention to the mismanagement of the Ontario health-care system. The advent of email, the internet, social media, text and phone blasts, podcasts and virtual gatherings over the years have made communications that much easier and timely, and we take full advantage.

« For the next generation of nurses and health-care professionals, I hope that ONA will be for you what it has been for me: a beacon of advocacy, support and strength that has helped me become the best nurse I can be. »»

– Celebrate 50 Team member
Karen Muller, RN

A core tenet of our union, on which we have never wavered, is that discrimination, harassment and racism have no place in our workplaces, union and society at large. ONA was behind a landmark human rights settlement in 1994 whereby Northwestern General Hospital agreed to pay seven Black nurses a total of \$320,000 and take steps to ensure a racism-free workplace. Subsequently, we created a provincial Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team, comprised of representatives from five equity groups mirroring the diversity of our membership, and the HRE Caucus they hold each year, always a popular event, promotes inclusivity. In 2015,

SPRING 2018: ONA is granted standing in the Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-term Care (LTC) Homes System.

JANUARY 2019: The Nurses' Health Program, an initiative of ONA and other nursing organizations, launches.

DECEMBER 2019: ONA is the first union, soon joined by many others, to launch a Charter challenge against wage-suppressing Bill 124.

SPRING 2020: As COVID-19 devastates LTC facilities, ONA demands residents and staff be protected.

JUNE 2020: The ONA Board approves a membership Anti-Racism Advisory Team and releases a powerful position statement on anti-racism.

SEPTEMBER 2018: ONA wins a second decision on the vaccinate-or-mask policy.

FEBRUARY 2019: ONA adds Black History Month (later renamed Black History/Black Futures Month) to its list of key human rights and equity observances.

JANUARY 2020: ONA raises concerns with the government over the emergence of COVID-19, and our advocacy continues throughout the pandemic.

MAY 2020: An arbitration decision provides clear direction on PPE and infection control practices in LTC.

FALL 2020: ONA presents recommendations to the LTC COVID-19 Commission, based largely on member stories.



How You Can Celebrate 50!

ONA's 50th anniversary wouldn't be complete without those who have made us so special: our members! And so, we want you to get involved, just as you have since our inception. Here are some ways you can help us Celebrate 50:

- ▶ Check out an array of anniversary material on our website at ona.org/celebrate50.
- ▶ Sign up for our Celebrate 50 hub at <https://eventmobi.com/celebrate50>.
- ▶ Once you have access, read about our impressive past, learn about our regional changemakers, watch inspirational videos from key players, view letters of congratulations, and so much more. And come back often as more content is added every month.
- ▶ Pick up a special 50th anniversary item, carefully chosen by members just like you, at the ONA Boutique on the hub and our website.
- ▶ Look out for special events in your area and attend if you can.
- ▶ Interested in sharing a particular story about ONA over the years or what our union turning 50 means to you? Let us know on the "Our Story" section of the hub.
- ▶ Have any photos from our past or other paraphernalia we could put on our hub or display at our Biennial Convention (we'll take good care of it)? Drop us a line on the hub.

"I'm hoping to reach out to members at the grassroots level, get together and have some fun," said Celebrate 50 Team member Emily Webb. "Our 50th is all about that camaraderie and solidarity."

ONA launched an initiative to further champion HRE causes and highlight major observances, including Black History/Black Futures Month and Pride.

Along the way, our membership has grown by leaps and bounds, from 26,000 in 1978, to 37,000 in 1983, to

54,000 in 1991, to the 68,000 we have today, while our 14 regions have been streamlined to five. In 1985, a *Financial Post* survey of Canada's 30 largest unions revealed that ONA was the fastest growing one in the country, with a growth of nearly 29 per cent between



Throughout our history, members have always put safety first.

1981 and 1984. And that membership is increasingly more politically active and involved in our union.

In 1992, we amended our Constitution to allow allied health personnel – now called health-care professionals – to join ONA nurses and be organized and included in our Bargaining Units. In 2008, we welcomed nursing students into the fold by establishing an affiliate membership classification for Ontario members of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association.

"I remember being a new grad in the emergency department in my

OCTOBER 2020: ONA works with Ontario's health-care unions to negotiate important revisions to Directive #5, re: fit-tested N95 respirators.

APRIL 2021: The LTC COVID-19 Commission releases its final report, filled with anonymous quotes from members, along with 85 recommendations, many of which mirror ours.

NOVEMBER 2021: ONA's five-year Strategic Plan is officially unveiled to guide our union forward.

AUGUST 2022: ONA releases a four-year Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan.

OCTOBER 2022: ONA officially kicks off our year-long countdown to our 50th.

FEBRUARY 2021: ONA joins the growing call for paid sick leave for all workers.

MARCH 2021: After 15 years, ONA is elated when the Ontario Court of Appeal rules that a 2016 Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal decision opposing pay equity maintenance for women working in participating nursing homes is unreasonable.

JUNE 2022: ONA wins a precedent-setting case that finds if a member opposes their employer's mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for a "sincere and legitimate" creed-based reason, they may be entitled to an exemption.

SEPTEMBER 2022: Our Bill 124 Charter challenge goes before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

NOVEMBER 2022: ONA is elated when Bill 124 is struck down by the courts.

JANUARY 2023:
Happy 50th anniversary year, ONA!



At ONA, everyone has a voice.



hospital and not knowing my rights, where to go for help or what to do,” said Ariss. “ONA certainly showed me the way, led me to where I am now, and has helped so many others.”

A lot of credit also goes to our dedicated staff, which has grown along with our membership. We currently have more than 310 staff on almost 30 teams to meet your ever-increasing needs. Working out of our Toronto provincial office and the 10 regional offices we established over the years in all corners of the province, including our most recent addition in Port Hope just this past November, they bring core services to members right where you live and work.

“When you look at our early days, it’s hard to believe where we’ve come from, and people sometimes take for granted what we have today without appreciating the struggles,” noted Warrington. “After five decades, we are still a powerful union and continue to grow. It’s important moving forward that ONA is there to ensure that nurses and health-care professionals have a voice with their employer and the government and to educate the public.”

Where We’re Going

Because the reality is we really can’t celebrate our past without looking towards our future.

« **ONA was created to make things better for nurses and health-care professionals – and we have, but we’re not all the way there yet. We need to celebrate our milestones and then move forward to the next stage.** »

– Celebrate 50 Team member Sue Croxford, RN

In fact, ensuring that our union is sustainable for the next generation of nurses and health-care professionals and beyond and that members continue to receive the best possible services is at the very heart of ONA’s five-year Strategic Plan, approved by Local leaders in 2021.

The plan, which took into consideration input from more than 3,000 members and staff, is divided into 22 actions that fall under six broad priorities: *Members Informed, Members Supported, Stronger Bargaining Units, Telling Ontarians the Truth, Everyone Included* and *Our Work, For You*. ONA staff is currently bringing the plan to life based on priorities identified by the Board and reporting on our progress every step of the way. We encourage you to read more at ona.org/stratplan.

Also guiding our union forward is our 2022-2026 Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Action Plan (ARAO), a direct call to action from members, leaders and staff with

lived experiences of intersectional forms of racism. Integrating an ARAO approach into ONA’s work, which focuses on the different ways people from Black, Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized groups experience racism, will help us review our organizational structures, policies, procedures, practices and actions, and develop remedies and preventative measures. You’ll find that plan at ona.org/arao.

“These living, breathing documents, which we are able to refine where needed, are instrumental in launching the ONA of the next 50 years because, unfortunately, our issues are not simply going to go away,” concluded Robinson. “So, while our struggle for fairness and equitable treatment for nurses and health-care professionals continues as we mark this incredible milestone, so too does our commitment to keep our union united and strong. That will take all of us working together, just as we have done throughout our history.”

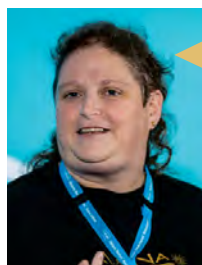
Meet Your Celebrate 50 Team!

If you attend an event in honour of this special occasion, read an uplifting story about a past or present member or even just like our dazzling 50th anniversary logo, you can thank our Celebrate 50 Team! Here, in their own words, these dedicated members, along with the two Board members who sit on the team – the team is also supported by staff – explain what ONA hitting the Big 5-0 means to them.



Jennifer Paul, RN, Region 1

I'm very excited to be involved on this team, celebrating how far members have come over the past 50 years. ONA has fought for equal pay and standard working conditions since its birth in 1973, and in our 50th year, we continue to fight. We are a strong, united voice.



Sue Croxford, RN, Region 2

ONA turning 50 is a big deal. When I was a young nurse, I got involved in a situation where I needed ONA's help, and I hadn't yet found my voice. I liked the thought of ONA standing up and standing out, and fighting for what's right for members who can't and for all Ontarians.



Karen Muller, RN, Region 3

Thirty-six years ago, I walked into the hospital as a new nurse with one goal in mind. That goal is the same today as it was then: to provide the best possible physical and mental care to every one of my patients. Through the years this goal has been challenged by government, employers and policy; yet for 50 years ONA has advocated for its membership and our shared pursuit of providing exceptional care to our patients.



Ann Scott, RN, Region 4

ONA means stability to me. They support members with Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims, grievances and at arbitrations, etc. They are out there advocating and liaising with the government. They are just a phone call away if a member needs advice or legal support.



Emily Webb, RN, Region 5

ONA has meant a lot to me. Being a Bargaining Unit President has led me down a path of meeting so many wonderful leaders, and ONA has given me the support I need to do my job the best I can and build relationships with my peers. It's been a wonderful experience being a part of ONA.



**Erin Ariss, RN
Region 4 Vice-President**

As a former Bargaining Unit leader, ONA was there for my team, for me personally and for my members. The difference ONA has made is remarkable. We have safer workplaces, more manageable workloads, we value equity and diversity, and we build strong leaders and Bargaining Units.



**Alan Warrington, RN
Region 5 Vice-President**

ONA's anniversary makes me appreciate the struggles our front-line members have had over the past five decades and the improvements we have made. Whether it be in health and safety or labour relations and their rights, these challenges and successes are echoed throughout our 50 years.



Learn more about these team members on our Celebrate 50 platform hub at <https://eventmobi.com/celebrate50>.



CEO Andrea Kay, RN

ONA President Resigns, Kay Named CEO

After years of dedicated service, Cathryn Hoy, RN, has resigned as ONA President for personal reasons.

Hoy, who was elected President in November 2021, was an ONA Board member for six years, also serving as Region 2 Vice-President and First Vice-President. Before that, she was Local 99 Coordinator and Bargaining Unit President at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) for six years, served as Chair of ONA's Hospital Central Negotiating Team for two rounds, negotiated grievance settlements at KHSC for nine years, and sat through four rounds of Local negotiations. She has also been a member of several Local and provincial committees.

The rest of the ONA Board of Directors thanks Hoy for her work on behalf of members, noting she has been a tireless champion throughout the pandemic and the ongoing health care crisis.

A provincial by-election to replace Hoy will be held early 2023 (see sidebar), and the Board has appointed Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson, RN, as Interim President to ensure a smooth transition.

Long-time front-line ONA member, Local leader and member of staff Andrea Kay, RN, has also been named Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Kay was appointed to the position of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) by the Board last February on an interim basis to allow her to grow and transition into the CEO role.

As CEO, Kay will oversee staff and day-to-day operations, including the initial roll-out of nine actions in

ONA's five-year Strategic Plan regarded as the most urgent by the Board and prioritized in years one and two.

"It's a huge honour to help lead our amazing union and staff as we continue to improve how we serve our members and nursing student affiliates," she said.

Kay has a rich history with ONA, serving as Bargaining Unit President and Local 105 Coordinator prior to joining staff in October 2012 as a Labour Relations Officer. For the past several years, she has held various leadership and management positions, including Manager II-Team Lead, Professional Practice; Region 2 Labour Relations Manager; Senior Executive, Labour Relations; and CAO.

"The Board of Directors is confident in Andrea's leadership with her member-driven mindset and methodical and steady-hand approach to lead ONA operations and staff as the permanent CEO," Robinson said. "She has undertaken significant education on her own over the years to help prepare for her increasing responsibilities at ONA. We congratulate Andrea on her appointment."

By-election Called for ONA President

The call for nominations for ONA President was issued on January 4, with a deadline to return completed forms by 4 p.m. on February 1. Information on the candidates will be posted on our website. Online voting (web and phone-based) will commence around the third week of February and will conclude at 4 p.m. on March 29.



See ona.org/president.

ONA in the News

From **September 1 to November 30**, ONA was cited at least* **166** times in the media, with the main topic being labour strife and ONA support for CUPE education workers in their battle for a new collective agreement (see page 6), the nursing shortage (see page 30) and ONA's successful legal battle to have Bill 124 declared unconstitutional (see page 10).



Interim ONA President Bernie Robinson joins her fellow union presidents on November 30, speaking at a media conference on the Bill 124 court decision.

91 newspapers | **17** radio stations | **38** television stations | **20** online news sources

In addition, **four** opinion editorials and **one** letter to the editor submitted by ONA were published.

**Some stories picked up on the newswire appeared in multiple news outlets and are not all counted here.*

November PCM Focuses on Wellness

With surveys showing that nurses and health-care professionals are under stress like never before and Mental Health Awareness Week a recent event, our November Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM), held both virtually and in-person in downtown Toronto, focused heavily on members taking care of themselves.

“During this meeting, we have heard about the insurmountable challenges our members have been facing in health care,” Interim ONA President Bernie Robinson told the delegates, referencing the exhausting COVID-19 pandemic, regressive government legislation such as wage-suppressing Bill 124, and the devastating nursing shortage. “The stress and burnout have taken a serious toll on our mental and emotional health.”

That is something keynote speaker Clara Hughes, a six-time Olympian at both the summer and winter games, knows a great deal about. Passionately relaying her own personal struggles with mental health in her quest for success, she noted that “we are living in a time when everyone is carrying some form of trauma, but we’re not given the space and support to even begin to understand how to deal with it, reconcile with it and rightfully gain the resilience to move into our place of community, work, family and, most importantly, our place of self.”

“Hold space for yourself and realize your own story: what it has been, what it is and how you are going to continue to write it in your future because you are taking care of everyone around you,” she urged. “Please don’t forget about yourself.”

Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington, who holds the portfolio of occupational health and safety, added that ONA will continue to raise awareness and educate our members,



ONA First Vice-President
Angela Preocanin, RN



Storycoaching Inc. founder
Carol Sachowski



Olympian and mental health
champion Clara Hughes

staff and colleagues about the importance of mental health.

“We are constantly urging the government, employers, unions and associations to come together to improve supports to address mental health,” he said, sharing his personal experience with post-traumatic stress disorder in the wake of the pandemic. “This includes increasing the level of mental health supports for nurses and health-care workers; improving access to mental health training and coping strategies; and implementing evidence-based return-to-work programs for workers. If you are struggling with mental illness, anxiety or burnout, please reach out for help. Free, confidential virtual support is available 24/7 through Wellness Together Canada (wellnesstogether.ca).”

Following the PCM, which also provided updates on key ONA service areas such as professional practice, litigation, bargaining



and operations, Storycoaching Inc. founder Carol Sachowski, who works with professionals on creating deep and lasting change for themselves, provided delegates at the half-day education session with tools to help improve self and wellbeing.

“I hear a lot from my clients that if I only had more time, I could focus on myself,” she said before launching into an interactive discussion on triggers, values, emotional intelligence and emotional agility. “But it’s time for some tough love around taking care of yourself.”



Read full PCM Highlights at ona.org/highlights.

ONA Instrumental During Pandemic, Nursing Scholarship Winners Say



Read the full essays at
ona.org/students.

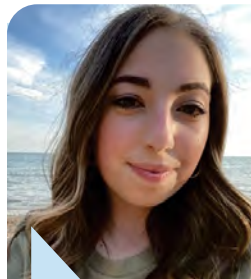
In our final installment, *Front Lines* is featuring the names and pictures of the recipients of the 2021 ONA Nursing Student Scholarship, along with snippets from their winning essays on “The Importance of the Ontario Nurses’ Association for Nurses.”



SARAH JULIANNA TRUDEL:
Daughter of Barbara Ann Trudel
from Local 92, Lakeview Manor
Nursing Home

During the pandemic, health professionals and especially nurses have endured a lot: working overtime in

conditions where PPE may have been lacking or unavailable, experiencing burnout and having to adjust to working in unfamiliar circumstances. ONA was instrumental in protecting both front-line workers and patients. ONA also advocated for nursing students when they were forced to stop their clinical placements and resort to completing their course work online.



ORLY KURTACH: Daughter of
Miriam Kurtach from Local 16,
Central Home and Community
Care Support Services

Not only will ONA have a great impact on my career as a future nurse, but the union is also already

affecting me today as a student. The association works with nursing students to improve clinical placements, advocate for high-quality public health care, and focus on the major issues new nurses face. Through the uncertain times brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA has been working to ensure nursing students have safe access to in-person clinicals and gain an authentic nursing experience.



ALYSSA BOSSIO:
Daughter of Karen Bossio from
Local 73, Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences Centre

Throughout my mom’s nursing career, she has been grateful for ONA as they have been an advocate for her and her

colleagues. The importance of ONA has manifested. I have never felt so sure about a career after witnessing all the precautions and steps ONA has taken with COVID-19. Thanks to ONA, I am able to start my nursing career feeling confident that I will be part of a safe environment where I have a voice.



ROSE SELATORAY: Daughter
of Vimala Selatoray from Local
43, William Osler Health System

ONA holds significant importance for nurses, as it advocates for improved working conditions, rights, benefits, wages and safety. Its Human Rights

and Equity Team recognizes and supports members who experience discrimination and marginalization in their workplace. They develop resources such as FAQs and bulletins, provide workshops on bullying, workplace violence and prevention, and promote events that underscore and promote equity issues.



Nice to Meet You!

ONA was a big hit, as nurse practitioners (NPs) flocked to our table during the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario's 2022 Annual Conference in Toronto this past September. NPs chatted to staff about the benefits of ONA membership and how we advocate for them, filled out a ballot for a chance to win a fabulous pair of earbuds, and picked up an array of ONA goodies and material, including lanyards, wallets, a recent issue of *Front Lines* and our newly revised NP brochure. “NPs are a very important component of ONA membership and our health-care system,” said First Vice-President Angela Preocanin. “ONA continues to educate policymakers on NPs’ high level of skills to ensure they are able to practice to their full potential to improve access to health care. We advocate for fair and equitable wages, benefits and pensions and improved working conditions for our NPs – and all members.”



MEGAN SALTER: Daughter of Amy Salter from Local 70, Hamilton Health Sciences

ONA is important for nurses as it acts as their advocate in areas such as working conditions to ensure that nurses' only focus is the quality of health care they provide. For example, ONA is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. ONA advocates for nurses' safety by raising awareness of the lack of PPE available. ONA works to protect the well-being of nurses by ensuring that they are safe at work.



VICTORIA GRICE: Daughter of Kim O'Grady from Local 99, Kingston Health Sciences Centre

My mom has been a nurse for 33 years working primarily in psychiatry and mental health. She values ONA as a unique union serving a consistent presence. ONA has always offered transparent communication with an abundance of energy and engagement to inform members and work towards resolutions, common goals and negotiations to serve the best interest of nurses.

SOS! ONA, Fellow Unions Demand Urgent Action on Health-Care System

ONA has joined our fellow provincial health-care unions in issuing an SOS to the Ford government about our crashing health-care system.

At a media conference at Queen's Park on November 24, ONA First Vice-President Angela Preocanin and leaders from the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions-CUPE, SEIU Healthcare, OPSEU and Unifor warned that after years of neglect, underfunding and failure to improve staffing levels, the health system is buckling under the weight of severe staff shortages, overcrowding, lack of surge capacity, the spread of COVID-19, and an early surge in the flu and other respiratory illnesses.

With staff turnover currently running at almost 15 per cent and Ontario hospitals needing to hire 47,000 staff just to deal with the turnover and needs of an aging and growing population, health care has been destabilized under Premier Doug Ford's watch, said the unions, which unsuccessfully



Flanked by their members, leaders from five Ontario health-care unions, including ONA First Vice-President Angela Preocanin (third from left), warned at a media conference on November 24 that Premier Ford is "pushing the public health-care system to collapse," and using the crisis to drive his costly privatization agenda.

requested an urgent meeting with Premier Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones in October.

Five from Five

The five health-care unions are urging the Ford government to adopt our five solutions to stabilize Ontario's failing health-care system:

1. Respect workers by scrapping Bill 124.
2. Boost front-line staffing.
3. Relieve administrative pressure by hiring hospital support staff.
4. Invest in people, not profits by restricting the use of private health-care staffing agencies.
5. Keep out privatization.

Pointing to the recent Fall Economic Statement (see page 11), which saw no new funding for health care, the leaders noted that Ontario currently has a \$2 billion dollar budget surplus, plus billions more in unspent contingency funds and additional revenues. Bringing Ontario from dead last in hospital staffing to the Canadian average would cost \$2 billion.

"People must demand government fund the care they need and deserve," Preocanin told the media conference. "We are asking the government to work with us on solutions now."

Dead Last: Latest Nursing Numbers Paint Grim Picture for Ontario

The Canadian Institute for Health Information has released its latest RN numbers, and the news continues to be particularly bad for our province.

The statistics show that Ontario has fallen further behind the national average than ever before, with just 668 RNs per 100,000 people. Meanwhile, the average number of RNs in the rest of the country has increased by 2.68 per cent, resulting in a Canadian average of 830.5 RNs per 100,000 people.

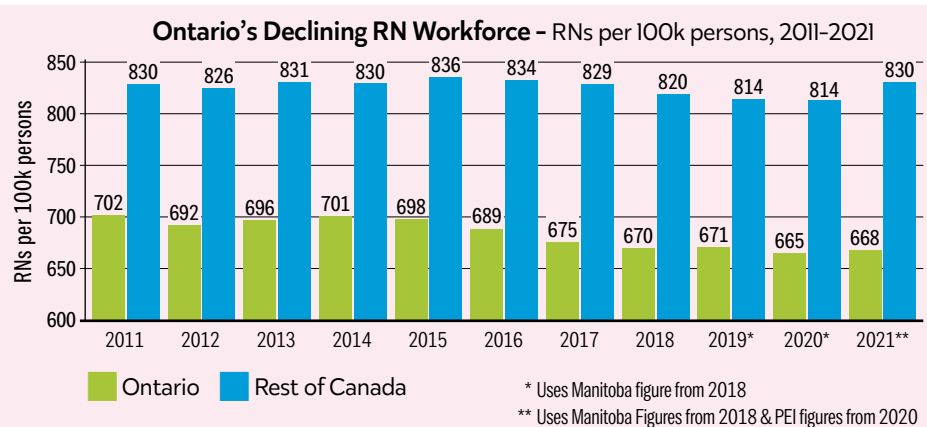
That means Ontario would need to hire 24,000 RNs immediately just to catch up the national average, although ONA believes the real number is much higher. That's up from 22,000 last year and just under 17,000 a decade ago. It's also important to note that the national average is still far fewer nurses than what the country needs, making the

situation all the worse.

"These numbers show that we are continuing to head in the wrong direction in this province," said Interim ONA President Bernie Robinson. "Sadly, that does not come as a shock to me. Instead of addressing nursing retention and recruitment, the Ford government

is all but ensuring nurses walk out the door in droves. They are burnt out from crushing workloads and fed up with the disrespect shown to them with regressive legislation like Bill 124."

ONA called on Ontarians to contact their MPPs and demand this desperate situation finally be turned around.



CFNU, CNA Disappointed by Lack of Movement at Health Ministers' Meeting

The Canadian Federation of Nurses' Union (CFNU) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) are disheartened that no progress or collaboration was achieved at the recent health ministers' meeting in Vancouver.

During a CFNU/CNA joint policy briefing for the federal, provincial and territorial health ministers, co-hosted by British Columbia Health Minister Adrian Dix, leaders from provincial nursing unions, including ONA First Vice-President Angela Preocanin and CEO Andrea Kay, provided evidence-based concrete solutions to improve patient care, better support burnt out and severely stressed nurses, and end the dire staffing shortages plaguing health-care systems across the country.

At the heart of the plan are investments in retaining, returning and recruiting nurses, backed by firm timelines and with real accountability. While we were hoping to see action by the conclusion of the meeting on November 8, no promises were made.

"Every day, in every corner of this country, patient care is in jeopardy," said CFNU President Linda Silas. "Nurses are running ragged as they constantly work understaffed and

CFNU President
Linda Silas, RN



overstretched. It's no wonder so many nurses are looking for the exit door. Retaining nurses must be every government's top priority if we are going to bring our health-care systems back from the brink. Nurses need better support and safer workplaces, so patients can get the quality care they deserve."

CNA President Sylvain Brousseau added that governments must collaborate with nurses and health-care advocates to effectively address the staffing crisis, noting that "with a multi-faceted strategy to improve working conditions and retain nurses, we can put our public health-care system back on track."

CFNU and CNA are requesting a meeting with Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson, Chair of the Council of the Federation, which represents Canada's premiers, to discuss the critical measures needed to support nurses and Canada's health system, stating political differences must be put aside to prioritize patient and worker needs.



Employer Cannot Stand in Shoes of CNO, Successful Case Finds

ONA has won a significant case for a member whose employer refused to return her to work after a medical leave. The arbitrator found that the employer had discriminated against her and ordered lost wages as well as damages.

The Case

The member worked in the emergency department (ED) at Health Sciences North (HSN) in Sudbury. She was on a medical leave for four years, and after a successful recovery, requested to return to work. During her leave, she had practised nursing in a volunteer capacity and had kept up her licence with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).

However, instead of returning her to work, HSN took it upon themselves to doubt the validity of her nursing licence. In their view, she could not be off for four years and still renew her licence unless she lied to the CNO about her practice. The hospital suspended the return-to-work process and filed a complaint to the CNO.

HSN kept the member off work for nearly two years while they waited for the CNO to respond. When that response came, the CNO confirmed the member's licence was valid. Even then, HSN did not return her to work. At that point, their rationale was that they did not feel a nurse who had been off on a medical leave for post-traumatic stress disorder could handle the work in the psychiatric ED.

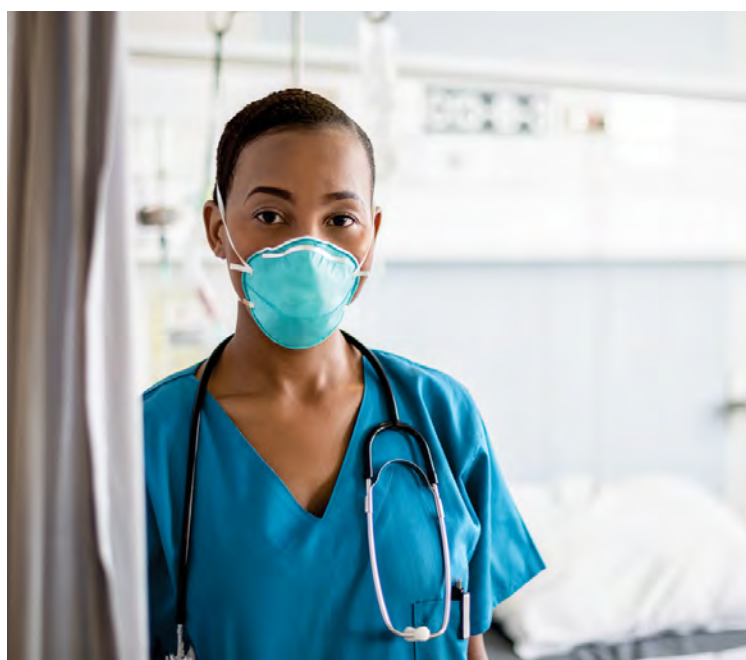
The Decision

Arbitrator Colin Johnston found that this rationale amounted to discrimination based on perceived disability. He ordered HSN to immediately reinstate the member to her position. The parties are currently discussing the financial remedy, which will include lost wages and damages.

Arbitrator Johnston also found that an employer cannot stand in the shoes of the CNO. He wrote: "it is not for the hospital to second guess the grievor's credentials when the licensing body has taken no steps to limit them. It cannot assume that there is a cloud over her licensing status when the CNO has made no such pronouncement."

« It is not for the hospital to second guess the grievor's credentials when the licensing body has taken no steps to limit them. »»

– Arbitrator Colin Johnston



ONA Membership Card Now Electronic

ONA has discontinued the production of plastic membership cards as we transition to electronic-only versions.

The change, the result of amendments in ONA Policy 16.5, took effect this past December. Bona fide members can view your digital card through the ONA App (download through Google Play or the Apple Store). You can also download/print your card image and/or produce a copy of the welcome letter that includes your ONA ID through Access ONA at ona.org/access.

Newly signed members who provide a valid personal email will receive this welcome letter email in the week following the processing of their application form.

Leadership Labour School Both Informative and Fun, Members Say

It doesn't get better than this!

Every single response to the question on our evaluation form asking if participants would recommend ONA's recent Leadership Labour School to others was a resounding *yes*, with almost all saying they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with all components.

The week-long event, held in Grand Bend this past September, provided 95 Bargaining Unit executive members and staff Labour Relations Officers with education on labour relations foundations. The aim was to build their knowledge in core competency areas falling under two broad categories: collective bargaining and workplace problems, including the grievance/arbitration process.

"The Labour School was held in partnership with Queen's University, and participants were able to gain a three-credit training program certificate," noted Membership Experience/Events Team Manager Lynda Hoff. "Our Education Officers were also invaluable. It was a wonderful week, even if the weather didn't always cooperate!"

Following a one-day full plenary session, participants were divided into two groups, led by mediators and conflict resolutions professionals Anne Grant, a former nurse, and Heather Swartz, who both specialize in the assessment and restoration of poisoned work environments. Participants were able to put what they learned into practice through a series of small group exercises that encouraged idea-sharing, including simulations in areas such as



« *This was probably the most informative education I have ever attended through ONA. Great work!* »

— Leadership Labour School participant

negotiations, where both parties at the table were role-played.

"The learning environment was very engaging and entertaining and kept us very involved in discussions," noted one participant. "The instructors were very friendly and helpful. The events planned after classes were so much fun and it was great to network with other nurses from other areas of Ontario, share stories and have good laughs! It was very well organized."

Those after-hours team-building activities included ONA's version of the Amazing Race – always popular – early morning yoga and evening campfire stories, songs and s'mores (when it wasn't raining, that is).

If the evaluations are anything to go by, the week was a roaring success, with comments such as, "the skills

and information provided will assist me not only with union-related work, but also will be valuable in my career and everyday interactions;" "I will be participating in negotiations this year and this was a great learning experience for me;" and "the program also allowed me to self-reflect on previous interactions, learning what I could try potentially differently."

And perhaps one participant summed it up best.

"I'm having a hard time thinking of any constructive criticisms because I really enjoyed the learning and role playing – everything was really interesting to me. Meeting so many new and like-minded people, making new friends, networking with other Locals, it was an amazing opportunity. I called it a *work-cation*, and I would definitely apply again!"



Chronique de la président par intérim, AIIO/
Vice-présidente de la région 2
BERNIE ROBINSON, RN



SUITE DE LA PAGE 4

à la libre négociation collective, qui est enchâssé dans la *Charte des droits et libertés*. Le premier ministre Ford n'a peut-être pas écouté, mais la cour l'a certainement fait et a invalidé ce projet de loi irrespectueux.

Bien qu'il s'agisse d'un obstacle à surmonter (pour l'instant, le gouvernement a annoncé qu'il interjettera appel), malheureusement, il y en a d'autres. Parce que le gouvernement Ford est encore au pouvoir et que ses politiques et ses lois régressives contre les travailleurs, le projet de loi 124 n'est certainement pas le seul, font certainement fuir beaucoup d'entre vous. En fait, les derniers chiffres de l'Institut canadien d'information sur la santé montrent que le ratio d'IA par habitant n'a jamais été plus faible, ce qui donne à l'Ontario l'honneur discutable d'avoir le pire ratio de toutes les provinces du pays (voir page 30). Pourtant, le ministre de la Santé nie qu'il y a une pénurie de personnel.

Après presque trois ans, la virulente pandémie de COVID-19 se poursuit également, laissant dans son sillage des infirmières et infirmiers et des professionnels de la santé débordés, épuisés, exténués et souvent brisés. De plus, la violence en milieu de travail demeure une réalité pour bon nombre d'entre vous.

Je ne veux pas vous donner l'impression que tout est sombre. C'est loin d'être le cas. Notre victoire contre le projet de loi 124 nous l'a clairement démontré. Le fait est que l'AIIO est de votre côté, et cela veut vraiment dire quelque chose. Nous défendons vos intérêts à chaque occasion, et nous avons des raisons d'espérer des jours meilleurs.

Nous continuons de soulever vos questions auprès du gouvernement et d'exiger d'être entendus. Nous faisons des progrès impressionnants auprès de vos employeurs en ce qui a trait à vos graves problèmes de charge de travail grâce à notre processus unique de règlement des plaintes de responsabilité professionnelle. Nous avons uni nos forces avec celles de nos collègues du syndicat comme jamais auparavant pour atteindre des objectifs communs – et il y a là un pouvoir énorme. Nous déploierons tous les moyens possibles pour faire en sorte que notre prochaine ronde de négociations centrales dans les secteurs des hôpitaux et des infirmiers et infirmières de l'Ordre de Victoria aboutisse à des contrats qui respectent la valeur indéniable que vous apportez à notre système de santé (voir page 13).

À l'interne, nous travaillons tout aussi fort pour nous assurer que les services que nous vous offrons demeurent les meilleurs aujourd'hui et à l'avenir, guidés par notre solide Plan stratégique. De plus, nous déployons des mesures dans le cadre de notre Plan quadriennal de lutte contre le racisme et l'oppression que nous pouvons prendre, individuellement et collectivement, pour apporter les changements qui s'imposent.

Autre chose à ne pas manquer en 2023 : le 50^e anniversaire de l'AIIO. C'est quelque chose que nous devons célébrer! Alors, lisez l'article de couverture et rendez-vous sur notre site Web et sur notre page spéciale du 50^e anniversaire pour jeter un coup d'œil aux nombreux documents sur notre passé, notre avenir et tout ce qui se trouve entre les deux! Vous verrez également comment vous pouvez vous impliquer dans cette occasion capitale.

Au cours de l'année, je sais que nous continuerons de relever nos défis avec détermination, grâce et solidarité, comme nous l'avons fait tout au long de nos cinq décennies d'existence.



Suivez Bernie : twitter.com/BernieReg2VPONA.



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



SUITE DE LA PAGE 5

public que nous avons besoin qu'elle et le premier ministre Ford nous écoutent parce que nous avons les solutions (voir page 29).

Nous avons demandé aux membres d'appuyer les travailleurs de l'éducation du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique (SCFP) lorsque le gouvernement Ford a adopté la disposition de dérogation et, par le projet de loi 28, a forcé ces derniers à retourner au travail avant même d'accepter leur dernière offre insultante, contournant complètement le processus de négociation collective (voir page 6). Votre présence aux rassemblements du SCFP dans toute la province a été impressionnante, et je sais que cela a stimulé leur moral!

Pourquoi cette action collective est-elle importante? Parce que lorsque plusieurs syndicats et nos centaines de milliers de membres unissent leurs forces, nos voix combinées sont beaucoup plus difficiles à ignorer. Sans cette solidarité, le projet de loi 124 n'aurait pas été jugé inconstitutionnel, et le gouvernement Ford n'aurait jamais abrogé le projet de loi 28 et ne serait jamais retourné à la table de négociation. La lutte du SCFP pour une rémunération équitable et des niveaux de dotation appropriés n'était pas unique aux travailleurs de l'éducation. C'est littéralement le combat de tous les travailleurs de la province.

Toutefois, ce n'est pas important seulement pour ces travailleurs. C'est important pour tous les Ontariens. Le projet de loi 124 a fait fuir les infirmières et infirmiers et les professionnels de la santé à un rythme alarmant, alors qui s'occupera d'eux? Nos enfants ont besoin de travailleurs de l'éducation dans leurs écoles pour s'épanouir. Si la privatisation s'implante dans notre système, nous craignons qu'elle ne s'arrête pas, ce qui signifie que l'accès aux soins reposera largement sur la capacité de payer. Donc, nous menons ce combat pour chaque personne dans la province.

Je tiens à vous rappeler que nous ne sommes pas les seuls, dans les bureaux de l'AIIO, qui doivent faire preuve de solidarité. Il faut vraiment que ce soit chacun de vous. C'est ce qui fait pencher la balance et qui provoque des changements positifs. Je vous encourage donc fortement à vous joindre au mouvement. Vous pouvez participer à un rassemblement local, porter un macaron, mettre une pancarte sur votre pelouse, parler à votre famille et à vos amis de la façon dont ils sont touchés par ces enjeux, ou écrire au rédacteur en chef de votre journal local pour informer le grand public. Chaque geste compte!

Nous ne devons pas oublier que le SCFP et tous nos collègues syndiqués ont manifesté à nos côtés lorsque nous en avons le plus besoin et qu'ils le feront sans doute de nouveau sans hésiter si le besoin se fait sentir. Après tout, c'était le SCFP aujourd'hui, mais ce pourrait être nous demain.



Suivez Angela : twitter.com/4angiepreocanin.



Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2021

Balance Sheet

	2021	2020
Assets		
Current		
Cash and short-term investments (at market value)	\$ 23,084,227	\$ 15,949,289
Dues and other receivables	8,355,593	9,694,253
Prepays	2,203,508	2,081,879
	<u>33,643,328</u>	<u>27,725,421</u>
Capital assets (at net book value)	7,478,106	8,492,870
Marketable investments (at market value)	42,089,896	38,998,674
Investment in ONA Liability Insurance Ltd. (equity method)	21,059,057	23,212,830
	<u>\$ 104,270,387</u>	<u>\$ 98,429,795</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 10,922,399	\$ 11,743,991
Current portion of capital lease obligations	380,286	353,913
	<u>11,302,685</u>	<u>12,097,904</u>
Capital lease obligations	190,647	529,174
Employee future benefits	28,400,100	28,723,900
	<u>39,893,432</u>	<u>41,350,978</u>
Net Assets		
Invested in capital assets	6,907,176	7,609,785
Invested in ONA Liability Insurance Ltd.	21,059,057	23,212,830
Internally restricted	32,185,616	31,641,188
Unrestricted	4,225,106	(5,384,986)
	<u>64,376,955</u>	<u>57,078,817</u>
	<u>\$ 104,270,387</u>	<u>\$ 98,429,795</u>

The above information is a condensed version of the Association's audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2020 and December 31, 2021. The complete financial statements, including the Auditor's Report and accompanying notes, are available at the Association's office.



Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2021

Statement of Operations

	2021	2020
Revenue		
Membership dues	\$ 73,200,410	\$ 69,376,463
Investment income	3,663,939	2,436,143
Other	827,942	904,983
	77,692,291	72,717,589
Expense		
Governance/External vision	3,454,105	2,654,429
Membership services	3,469,660	1,311,371
Service teams	29,404,353	27,379,249
Support teams	18,917,880	18,105,601
Fixed costs	10,351,642	9,261,597
Program costs (Security/LEAP/Critical Illness/LTD/Supplementary)	4,385,025	3,501,089
	69,982,665	62,213,336
Excess of revenue over expenses before undernoted items	7,709,626	10,504,253
Amortization	(1,607,468)	(1,729,780)
Realized gain on sale of investment portfolio	-	2,472,840
Unrealized loss on investments	(483,447)	(2,275,611)
Share of net income (loss) of ONA Liability Insurance Ltd.	(652,973)	1,304,314
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 4,965,738	\$ 10,276,016

The above information is a condensed version of the Association's audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2020 and December 31, 2021. The complete financial statements, including the Auditor's Report and accompanying notes, are available at the Association's office.

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Download Our Annual Report!

You can find these condensed financial statements and read so much more about ONA's recent work in our October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 Annual Report, available in both English and French, on our website at ona.org/ar.



KNOW AN INSPIRING NURSE?

Nominate them for the Nursing Now Ontario Awards!



ONA, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) are excited to hold the Nursing Now Ontario Awards to recognize and celebrate nurses for their contributions to nursing practice and the health and well-being of Ontarians. Despite extremely challenging environments, nurses continue to go above and beyond.

Awards will be issued to one nurse in each category:

- ▶ Registered Nurse
- ▶ Registered Practical Nurse
- ▶ Nurse Practitioner

The awards are open to all nurses who practise in any health setting across the province.

Awards will be presented during Nursing Week, May 8-14, 2023.

For more information about the awards, criteria and nomination forms, visit:

ona.org/nnoa

Deadline for Entries: February 17, 2023