



April 26, 2018

Ann Hoggarth, MPP, Chair  
Eric Rennie, Clerk  
The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs  
Room 1405, Whitney Block  
Queen's Park,  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Dear MPP Hoggarth and Mr. Rennie,

**Re: Submission on Bill 31, Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures), 2018**

The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) is the union representing 65,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as 16,000 nursing student affiliates, providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry.

ONA welcomes the opportunity to provide the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs with our recommendations on Bill 31, Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures) 2018.

**1. Bill 31 – Schedule 31 – Inclusion of Nurses in PTSD Presumption**

ONA applauds the government for including all direct care nurses in the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) presumption. It is important that nurses were included because of the risks they face in healthcare workplaces.

Because it took some time to move to this recognition, ONA is asking the Standing committee to reconsider a retroactive component for when the coverage should have started that is consistent with the original start date for the legislation that covered other first responders. The first responders included in the original legislation were covered as of 24 months before the legislation came into force on April 6, 2016. It seems fair that nurses, considered to be first responders, especially as specifically named in the First Responders Day Act, should be treated no differently than others.

In addition, ONA is hearing directly from many other healthcare professionals ONA represents, that they too face the same workplace triggers and risks as do nurses. We ask the Standing Committee to commit to an amendment on a broader inclusion of healthcare professionals to also be covered in the PTSD presumption.

Finally, ONA is of the view that healthcare employers, as were the employers of the original first responders covered, should also be directed to prepare PTSD prevention plans as the Minister directed the original employers of first responders to provide to the Minister no later than one year from the date of the posting of the Minister's notice in the Ontario Gazette as of April 14, 2016. This should be replicated for the healthcare employers of direct care nurses.

## **2. Bill 31 – Schedule 12 – Inclusion of Canadian Blood Services (CBS) Under the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act (HLDA)**

The government has moved forward with the designation of Canadian Blood Services under the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act without full consultation with ONA in advance of this legislative initiative.

While ONA is not in opposition to the nurses we represent at CBS being covered under HLDA, had ONA been consulted, we would have told the government that the timing of the inclusion of CBS in HLDA interrupts ONA's efforts to work towards coordinated provincial bargaining with CBS. As the Standing Committee may know, the interest arbitration process is designed to replicate what would have been achieved through collective bargaining had bargaining proceeded to a settlement between the parties. Because the government has moved on this before consulting with ONA, we believe that replication of our bargaining is being interrupted.

As a result, ONA is asking the Standing Committee to amend Schedule 12 so that it would come into force at a later date, specifically one year later. This would assist us in completing our current bargaining efforts. In addition, it does not impact on other bargaining agents as their bargaining has been completed.

In summary, ONA is asking the Standing Committee to put forward amendments that would include the original retroactive date for the new inclusion of direct care nurses, the inclusion of healthcare professionals in the PTSD presumption, and directing healthcare employers prepare and submit PTSD prevention plans for direct care nurses.

Finally, ONA is asking that coverage of Canadian Blood Services under HLDA be delayed for one year.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

### **ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION**



Vicki McKenna, RN  
President

vm/lw

- C. ONA Board of Directors  
Lawrence Walter, Government Relations Officer