



Ontario Nurses' Association

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To: Bargaining Unit Presidents, Hospital Sector

From: Rachel Muir, RN, Chair, Hospital Central Negotiating Team

Date: May 13, 2023

Re: **Hospital Central Negotiating Team (HCNT) Update**

C: Board of Directors, Local Coordinators, HCNT, Staff

ONA and the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) concluded their interest arbitration hearing before Arbitrator William Kaplan and nominees Philip Abbink (ONA) and Brett Christen (OHA) on May 2, 2023.

Without a doubt, it was made clear to the Board of Arbitration that better wages, better staffing and better care were our members' top priorities in this round of bargaining.

ONA presented an overwhelming amount of "demonstrated need" for substantial wage increases that prioritized the need to retain experienced nurses, as well as to recruit new nurses in hospitals. We highlighted the devastating impact of years of below cost-of-living wage increases to nurses and to quality patient care. The Board heard from ONA and the bargaining team that nurses are leaving hospitals in droves due to non-competitive wages, increased workload, and frustration with the disrespect they have received from this government.

ONA also went forward to arbitration seeking premiums and benefit improvements. ONA's compensation proposals focused on the negative impact of gender inequality on ONA members.

We proposed to ensure nurse practitioners (NPs) have approximately 80 per cent of their time dedicated to clinical activities and approximately 20 per cent to non-clinical care responsibilities, including professional development (e.g., research, education, leadership, policy and procedure development, education material development, and administrative duties), access to university provided stipends for student supervision, recognition of prior RN experience and a single provincial wage grid.

The OHA continues to seek contract changes that would provide hospitals with flexibility to move RNs as they deem fit, through reassignment and elimination of some of the protections and options that the current seniority provisions provide to our members. The OHA further proposed contract changes that would minimize the retirement packages to those senior members where there are layoffs.

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The hospitals also want the opportunity to eliminate more full-time positions, all the while creating more part-time jobs. These proposals all focus on balancing their budgets versus delivering safe, quality patient care.

After two days of arbitration (May 2 and 3), we now await the Arbitration Board's decision. We expect to receive the final and binding award from the Board in approximately 30 days. We are hoping for a favourable result, but there are no guarantees.

In the interim, we will be planning our Hospital Sector meeting to be held via Zoom after the award is released.

If you have any questions for the HCNT, please contact ONA President Erin Ariss at erina@ona.org, who will see that any questions are brought to my attention.