



# PCM Highlights

JUNE 20 AND 21, 2023 | HELD IN REGION 1, GETTING IT DONE! BEAUTIFUL THUNDER BAY

## Solidarity! Actions! Members overwhelmingly support mobilizing movements

**AMID THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE, CHEERS AND BANGING ON THE tables,** ONA President Erin Ariss stepped onto the stage at the Provincial Coordinators Meeting and declared to more than 160 ONA members: “Now is the time to act boldly, together!”

On the shores of Lake Superior in Thunder Bay, in a room filled with nurses and health-care professionals familiar with burnout and challenging working conditions, Erin spoke about how ONA and its members have grown and increased their resolve over the last several months.

“Our union turns 50 this year and has fought tooth and nail with the Ford government; we have won some historic challenges, including pay equity and Bill 124. But our union, including many of us in this room, was a bit tired. A bit shell-shocked with never-ending, regressive employer demands and bad government decisions, not to mention the many ways in which the pandemic took away our breath,” she said.

“But the rumours of the decline of ONA are false. ONA still has that spark, is feisty and demands the best for our front-line members. I have seen, over these past few months, that ONA has experienced an awakening of sorts. Because the truth is: ONA is us. And we are fighting back like never before.”

**ONA members must be ready for provincial election in 2026**

After a rousing standing ovation, Erin continued to emphasize that when we raise our voices and work together in solidarity, we move our issues forward. She noted that in June of 2026, Ontario will be heading into a provincial election.



**“Our union is not a transaction – it is a movement.”**  
 — Erin Ariss, Provincial President

“We must tell our communities about the connections to the Ford government and how it has been responsible for eroding patient care. We must begin to plant the seeds about how devastating this government’s decisions have been.”

**Actions, upcoming**

There are many opportunities for members to become involved and fight back on the issues that [cont. on next page](#)

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affect us all. For the first time, ONA has joined forces with our labour partners – OPSEU-SEFPO, CUPE/OCHU, SEIU Healthcare and Unifor – to sound the alarm on Ford’s privatization scheme. Across the province, five work locations were chosen for actions because of the crossover of all five unions in most of the facilities. “This is a first for ONA, working with our labour partners in facilities and fighting the issues together. And this will not be our last,” notes Erin. “This campaign will continue to build strong local structures to escalate actions over the summer and

into the fall and we will continue to protect public health care with our allies and community.”

Erin emphasized that ONA members must come together to help make change to improve working conditions, which will benefit patient care. “I am ready to lead you and guide you and protect you. The ONA Board is here to support you. Now, I want you to make some loud noise right now! Who is with me?!” An inspiring standing ovation of members, staff and guests rose up, marking a clear, defining moment of unity.

# Professional practice wins, mobilizing victories and more!

**IN HER REPORT, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT** Angela Preocanin highlighted some great wins in professional practice and local political action.

## College of Nurses news

Last month, the College of Nurses proposed to retire the Professional Standards, Ethics and Decisions About Procedures and Authority practice standards. Angela notes that, “Shockingly and very disappointingly, these proposals passed and will be effective July 1, 2023. ONA was blindsided by this swift approval at council, and we were taken aback by the immediate effective date.”

The College is also retiring the RN and RPN Practice Guidelines, the Client, the Nurse, and the Environment as well as Authorizing Mechanisms practice guideline as of July 1. The updated Code of Conduct came into effect on Monday June 5, which is the overarching document to guide nursing practice.

“ONA’s Professional Practice specialists team are discussing these changes and developing strategies to address the gaps this will create for our members,” Angela says. “These are very significant changes which will have impacts on ONA education, professional practice and even aspects of labour relations. We will keep you informed on the latest developments and advise on next steps.”

## Political action galore

Hundreds of ONA members across the province are initiating actions in their workplaces to improve their working

conditions and enhance patient care. “We are so proud of everyone who has taken action – large or small – to help push the issues forward. Every little bit helps,” says Angela. Workplaces include Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, Mount Sinai Hospital, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, The Ottawa Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences Centre, and so many more.



## Since January, our Professional Practice Specialists have achieved settlements resulting in:

- An increase of 20,440 registered nurse hours annually.
- An increase of 2,920 hours of registered respiratory therapist support annually.
- An increase of 7,300 hours of non-registered staff annually.
- And our specialists continue to receive improvements to orientation, education, charge nurse supports, as well as policies including zero tolerance for violence.

# Regional Vice-President Portfolio Reports Highlights

**The following reports are portfolio snapshots that highlight a fraction of the work that is happening. Please visit ONA's website for additional information and details.**

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

**Dawn Armstrong**  
**Region 1 Vice-President**

"Our provincial Human Rights and Equity Team has started discussions regarding our Human Rights and Equity Caucus. Last year's Caucus involved reintroducing the Equity Group breakout sessions or Communities of Support. We will continue the Communities for this year's Caucus and will draft conversation starters for each room. In the interim, we are partnering with the Anti-Racism Advisory Team to create virtual spaces where members of the communities can come together and share thoughts, experiences and stories. The Board approved the Caucus theme of Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion, and Creating Equitable Communities. Our diversity. Our members. Our stories. The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group has chosen a reconciliation consultant who will be onboard by the fall. Two members submitted a proposal for ONA's participation in the Toronto Caribbean Carnival



and it was approved by the Board. This is a first for ONA, participating in the Toronto Caribbean Carnival Grand Parade. We are close to finalizing member education: *Beyond Good Intentions: Understanding Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression*, which will be available on the e-Learning platform this summer."

## MEMBER EDUCATION

**Bernie Robinson**  
**Region 2 Vice-President**

"Our Membership Education Team continues to provide our members with a variety of workshops to enhance their skill set and support the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Education is offered digitally and in-person as well as through our eLearning platform. More than 135 workshops have been offered between January and April 2023, with 39 in-person and 98 digitally. About 650 members and local executives have attended workshops during this time period. On May 18, a motion was passed by the Board to improve members' education experiences. The Board direction is that Member Education Team Labour Relations Officers will develop a virtual calendar that is relevant and based on the needs of the members. ONA is in the early stages of planning for a one-time, April 2024 Leadership Summit. This is based on feedback we received from our advanced Local



leaders. The summit aligns with ONA's strategic plan and discussions are underway with Queen's University to consider three proposed sessions: Emotional Intelligence, Strategic Grievance Handling and Labour Arbitration Skills. Details to follow.

# Regional Vice-President Portfolio Reports Highlights

## LABOUR RELATIONS

**Karen McKay-Eden**  
**Region 3 Vice-President**

"An ONA member went on pregnancy leave twice; in 2014 and in 2016. The member noticed that the SUB top-up amounts were different between the two leaves, despite her working a comparable number of hours. ONA identified that the employer had been making many errors when calculating SUB top-up amounts. Both sides agreed that ONA members were underpaid due to this employer's calculation errors. The employer and union agreed that 58 members were owed a total of \$380,384.29. I'd like to highlight one wage grid placement issue that was resolved thanks to ONA's work with many teams across our union. An ONA member worked in a hospital in Korea from 2006-2014 for about 16,000 hours. She emigrated to Canada in 2017 and retrained in Ontario based on the direction from the College of Nurses. Her employer would only place her on wage grid step 2. ONA filed a grievance



and we went to mediation and she was able to be placed on the wage grid step 8. With an influx of IENs in our workplaces, we will likely see an increase of these types of grievances coming our way. We will be sure to continue to fight for their rights."

## LOCAL FINANCE

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

Eleven Locals are supplementally funded and the budgets have been approved. Because of the increase in travel expenses with the Provincial Leadership Meeting, this PCM and Biennial come November, the second-half supplementary fund requests are expected to exceed last year's. ONA has started planning the plenary and learning points for our two-day Treasurers Workshop. This fully funded workshop will take place in October. Agency nursing is pretty much depleting hospital budgets. Many Locals are receiving large payments from hospital-sector employers for agency overuse. Our Finance and Accounting Team has worked with Locals to tailor the process to fit Locals' needs. The existing template will be revisited in the fall with tweaks to the new Local budget template. We are seeing that call



volumes have continued to increase since our last report in November. Many novice treasurers are receiving much-needed assistance from ONA staff to get up to speed on the ins and outs of budget and finance work.

# Regional Vice-President Portfolio Reports Highlights

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Alan Warrington**  
Region 5 Vice-President

“One core pillar of ONA’s work is to prevent worker injuries and illnesses. They can take on many physical forms and can impact our mental health. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board data show the total number of mental stress claims increased by 176 per cent from 2017 to 2022. It is with the mental health focus that our spring health and safety caucuses addressed psychological safety through identification, prevention and supporting members when injuries occur. More than 650 members participated. Kensington Village Nursing Home is where ONA member Brian Beattie worked and succumbed to COVID-19. The Ministry of Labour laid three charges against Kensington. Ministry inspectors made more than 10 visits to the home between May and June 2020 and issued orders. Kensington pleaded guilty to the first charge of not providing notice under the Act. The Ministry dropped the other two charges. This is a



complete travesty of how the Act should be enforced. Workplaces and employers must be held responsible and be charged and prosecuted under the full scope of the Act. At ONA, we will continue to monitor this, to see whether this turns out to be a concerning trend.”

## CEO Report

**CEO ANDREA KAY PROVIDED SEVERAL KEY UPDATES** in ONA operations and staff. “ONA would not be where it is today without our staff. Every ONA staff person has clearly demonstrated their dedication to you, and they work hard to ensure you have access to services when you need them. There is so much specialized work that goes on behind the scenes that is undertaken by our committed staff. ONA’s collective staff strength is our determination to ensure that you have ONA’s unwavering support. As a team, ONA leaders, the Board, staff and management will never give up until this government’s policies are defeated and our members are valued and treated fairly. Your drive is phenomenal and your commitment to fulfilling your obligations is beyond question. We are all ready for the future and I am looking forward to what’s next.”



# Members' stories front and centre

*Five members spoke about how they took actions in their workplaces to raise awareness and effect changes.*



**Local 97's Ingrid Garrick** – along with her Local Coordinator Liz Romano – organized balloting on hospital privatization for the Ontario Health Coalition Citizen Referendum. Ingrid spoke with hundreds of members about the devastating effect privatization has on patient care. The result? More than 400,000 people voted across Ontario and the result is 98 per cent oppose privatization. Way to go, Ingrid!



**Local 134 Coordinator Char Lameront**, along with Bargaining Unit President Carey Finn, organized a fight-back campaign to oppose the layoffs of 13 nurses at Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Using many digital tools as well as a postcard campaign that targeted her local MPP, Char and her team continue to talk to their communities and gather support for their campaign.



**Local 81 Coordinator Rachel Muir** spoke about her members' successful initiative to prevent Operating Room Assistants from working in the hospitals' ORs. Thanks to the collective hard work and strength of the front-line members, the employer did not implement this plan. This is a huge win for these members. Congratulations!



**Local 15 Coordinator Muriel Vandepol** was part of a team who, along with the Labour Relations Officer and Region 4 manager, collectively pushed back to reach a new collective agreement. Muriel spoke passionately about the support she and her members received to get a respectful deal for members. Way to go, Muriel!



**Sue Sommerdyk and her Local 8** members produced a series of videos to raise awareness of workplace conditions that impact nurses. Sue spoke about the many issues that were featured in the videos and highlighted that the videos garnered not only awareness, but also won several national and international awards.

**Hey, hey, ho, ho! Privatization has got to go!** ONA members took to the streets in Thunder Bay, chanting and leafletting to shout it out: Privatization has no place in health care! Members are calling on the Ford government to drop their dangerous privatization scheme and invest in better public health care for all.



# Happy Snaps



## Celebrate 50 events highlights

ONNA continues its year-long 50th anniversary celebrations and there are so many more. ONNA has so many events planned in the coming months including a Black and Gold Gala to be held at the Sheraton on Wednesday, November 8. Visit ONNA's Celebrate 50 Hub for more details at <https://eventmobi.com/celebrate50/>

## EFFECTIVE JULY 1, THE BOARD PORTFOLIOS ARE CHANGING, AS FOLLOWS:

- ▶ Education – Dawn Armstrong
- ▶ Health and Safety – Grace Pierias (pictured, new Region 4 VP-elect)
- ▶ Human Rights and Equity – Karen McKay-Eden
- ▶ Labour Relations – Alan Warrington
- ▶ Local Finance – Bernie Robinson



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