

ONA WINS



SUMMARY OF ANOTHER SUCCESS AS YOUR UNION STRIVES TO IMPROVE YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS

Settlement Results in Significant Staffing Improvements at St. Catharines ED

ONA has reached a professional responsibility complaint (PRC) settlement for our members at the emergency department (ED) of the St. Catharines site of the Niagara Health System, which will see significant staffing improvements.

Practice and workload concerns escalated as soon as the new St. Catharines hospital site opened in April 2013. Previously, there were two separate hospital sites in the city, one housing the main ED and the other a large urgent care unit. These were combined into one geographically challenging single location at the new hospital site.

The major issues raised by RNs on workload forms included inadequate RN staffing levels to respond to increased patient volumes, activity and acuity; an improper triage process resulting in up to several hours wait for the actual triage nursing assessment; and inability to properly care for patients undergoing resuscitation or for patients being transferred out.

While an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) had been convened for this unit, with hearing dates set for November 2014, we were able to reach a Minutes of Settlement (MOS) with the employer this past October, avoiding the IAC process entirely.

Of particular significance to ONA in the MOS is the replacement of 22.5 RPN hours in the ED with 22.5 RN hours, and clarification that the remaining 11.25 hours of RPN care be limited to the least acute patients presenting to the ED. The new staffing model will also provide additional RN resources, which can be utilized across the entire ED.

In terms of the triage process, base staffing will be consistently maintained with teams of RNs and registration clerks, allowing patients to be registered in the triage area and then sent to the appropriate zone in a timelier manner.

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