

## The Importance of the Ontario Nurses' Association for Nurses

When I asked my mother, the nurse I aspire to resemble, what the ONA meant to her, she responded by saying that “they will ensure my daughter has a great and meaningful career ahead of her”. I had never truly grasped the true meaning of a union until I delved deeper into what the Ontario Nurses' Association stands for. They believe in fighting for the occupational safety and economic welfare of health professionals and providing a safe space for a diverse set of nurses to communicate effectively and openly in order to promote the highest standard of patient care.

While contemplating the importance of the ONA, I wondered where we would be without such an organization. Fearing the termination of your position as a nurse for speaking your mind, working for low wages in unfavourable working conditions, being mistreated by employers and undervalued for work that helps to save lives. Without the ONA, it is likely that nurses would not be treated as integral members of the health care system who provide patients with the utmost respect and care.

When I think about the history of nurses, I am in awe of pioneers such as Jean Lowery and Anne Gribben who risked their careers and reputations to challenge the views and treatment of nurses and demand justice. They defied social norms and refused to stop until they received the treatment they rightfully deserved. It is this caring and strong attitude that I see in my mother and one day hope to embody in my own practice, which is why I will be joining the ONA alongside the other 65,000 healthcare professionals. It makes me feel confident knowing that I will be safe, heard and appreciated in my future career, thanks to the Ontario Nurses' Association.

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