The Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA) is the largest nurses’ union in Canada. ONA represents more than 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, and more than 18,000 nursing students who provide care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry throughout the province.

Recognizing that nursing students are the future of our profession and our union, ONA members overwhelmingly adopted an amendment to the Constitution at our Biennial Convention in December 2008, which established a student affiliate-member classification for Ontario members of the Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA). As a result, almost all nursing students in the province are automatically affiliate-members of ONA.

Nursing students, like you, are the strong union activists and workplace representatives of tomorrow.

Working together with students to improve our shared working conditions, advocate for high-quality public health care, and advance the nursing profession continues to be a top priority for ONA.

Find out what your union has to offer and get involved!

Vicki McKenna, RN
ONA President
We also sponsor the CNSA’s annual Ontario-Quebec Regional and National Conferences, during which ONA Board members meet with your ODs and ADs, and all nursing students who attend.

We encourage you to get involved with ONA so we can work together to achieve gains that improve patient care and your experiences as a nursing student.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: THE SUPPORT OF CANADA’S LARGEST NURSES’ UNION

As an ONA student affiliate-member, you have the right to participate in the activities of your union, including meetings at the Bargaining Unit, Local, regional, and provincial levels. Between Biennial Conventions – the union’s ultimate, democratic, membership decision-making forum – ONA holds two, semi-annual Provincial Coordinators Meetings in June and November. There is also a Provincial Leadership Meeting each spring.

To get involved, introduce yourself to your Regional Vice-President (see the back page).

You can also use the Find/Contact My Bargaining Unit President tool on the ONA.org website (www.ona.org/bup) to search for a Bargaining Unit President; all you need to know to send an email to the right person is the name of an employer/workplace.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: ADVICE AND TOOLS

Providing the best possible outcomes for patients with no unnecessary exposure to risk or harm can be challenging.

ONA supports its members and student affiliate-members through teleconnect discussions about professional practice issues, Professional Practice Specialists who are available to provide advice, and the Professional Responsibility Clause – a unique feature of ONA collective agreements that gives nurses the power to ensure that patients are protected and that their standards of practice are met when employers might otherwise ignore unsafe workload and patient care environments.

Find professional practice resources, including documents from previous professional practice teleconnects and past Independent Assessment Committee reports, at www.ona.org/pp.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Valuable information about scholarships and bursaries that are available to nursing students in Ontario is available at www.ona.org/bursaries. ONA and the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) provide a limited amount of funding for nursing students who have an ONA member in their immediate family.

ONA is also part of the Registered Nurses’ Foundation of Ontario (RNFOO), a charitable organization that provides financial support for nurses and nursing students in Ontario to help them further their educational studies. See www.RNFOO.org to learn about the awards and scholarships available and how to apply.

FRONT LINES

Front Lines is the ONA members’ magazine. Published quarterly, Front Lines features stories about members and student-affiliate members, news about our profession, and information about our union that you won’t find anywhere else.

Read the latest issue of Front Lines at www.ona.org/frontlines.

SHARE YOUR STORIES

If you have a story idea, the Front Lines editor wants to know! Nursing students are regularly featured in the ONA members’ magazine, but we can only publish what we know about. So let us know if you have something that’s newsworthy. Email Front Lines editor Ruth Featherstone with news, tips and story ideas at RuthF@ona.org.

EDUCATION

ONA provides education workshops for personal and professional development.

Sign up for free sessions that will help you to:

- Gain a better understanding of your union.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Learn about nurses’ rights under ONA-negotiated collective agreements.
- Enhance your understanding of how legislation impacts nurses’ workplaces and work lives.
Advocate for high-quality patient care.

Know your professional responsibilities.

The workshop calendar is available at www.ona.org/education.

Some courses are also available online, so you can complete them at your own pace, when and where it’s convenient for you. Get started by setting up your own free ONA eLearning account today at elearning.ona.org.

**REPRESENTATION**

As members of the CNSA and affiliate-members of ONA, you have two levels of representation – both of which are based on the concept of strength in numbers.

On your campuses, you’re represented by the ODs and ADs for your CNSA Chapters. You also have a CNSA Ontario Regional Director: a nursing student who is elected each year at the CNSA’s National Conference.

In addition, you have the benefit of experienced union representatives in the ONA Board of Directors. The ONA Board includes the President, the First Vice-President, as well as five Regional Vice-Presidents, each of whom cover a specific area of the province.

On the back page, there’s a handy list of the ONA Board members’ portfolios and the nursing schools that are represented by each Regional Vice-President. Get to know your Regional Vice-President and contact them any time. They want to hear from you!

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY**

ONA’s provincial Human Rights and Equity Team includes members of five designated groups to represent the diversity in our union.

Equity Caucuses and human rights education are part of every Biennial Convention or Provincial Coordinators Meeting, which take place in the fall of each year. There is also a network of Human Rights and Equity Representatives that holds a teleconnect several times a year.

ONA welcomes student affiliate-members to participate in Pride events with us under our union’s banner. We get together each year for Pride festivities in London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and many other communities across the province.

To find out when the next teleconnect will be held for human rights and equity, professional practice or other subjects, check our online events calendar at www.ona.org/events.

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**Download the ONA App Today!**

Access breaking ONA news, events and more. Go to the Apple Store or Google Play and search for: “Ontario Nurses’ Association.”

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