The following is a summary of ONA's key activities and successes since the last “The Work of the Union” update in summer 2015.
The response to our Have a Say bargaining survey was overwhelming and the information carefully reviewed, including more than 1,400 pages of comments, to determine our members’ top bargaining priorities.

The Hospital Central Negotiating Team, elected in the summer, received orientation in the fall and commenced its first week of negotiations with the Ontario Hospital Association in November.

ONA won a landmark and far-reaching arbitration award for our members against Sault Area Hospital, the lead case for a series of grievances challenging vaccinate or mask policies at participating hospitals.

In his September 8th decision, Arbitrator Hayes said he found the policy unreasonable, noting that the requirement to vaccinate or mask was a “coercive tool” to force health care workers to receive the immunization.

Arbitrator Hayes agreed with ONA’s expert witnesses and concluded there was “scant” evidence that forcing nurses to use masks reduced the transmission of influenza to patients, adding the policy undermined the collective agreement rights of employees to choose to vaccinate or not.

A call for nominations for the Nursing Homes Central Negotiating Team was issued in the fall for the upcoming round of bargaining.

In an important decision, an arbitrator agreed with ONA that premium pay was payable when an employer made changes to the posted schedule with more than 48 hours notice.

The ONA Board of Directors will be moving forward on a number of recommendations from the Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) Reflections Report and Action Plan for the 17-day strike this past February, which included feedback from CCAC and non-CCAC leaders.

The most recent hospital contract interpretation teleconnects discussed Innovative Schedules: Issues to be Considered to Ensure Collective Agreement Rights for ONA Hospital Members and Influenza Vaccinate or Mask: After the Arbitration Success, Will Employers Implement the Award?

In yet another precedent-setting win for ONA, the Crown dropped charges laid against two ONA members regarding their footwear because there was no reasonable prospect of conviction, noting the hospital failed to provide clear direction, policies and training for employees on wearing proper footwear and other equipment.

The Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) and Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Canada have entered into a transfer agreement under the Pension Benefits Act that will allow eligible members who have been impacted by a past divestment to transfer the value of their pension benefits from the VON Canada Pension to HOOPP.

All part-time and other non-full-time health care workers are now eligible to join HOOPP, which the HOOPP Board expects to be a significant improvement for those entering the plan.

ONA continued to produce tip sheets on a variety of labour relations and other issues to assist our Local leaders and members.
Local Political Action/Member Engagement

- Twenty-three members from the Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk, who were without a contract since March 2015, held an info picket, along with members of the ONA Board of Directors, Local leaders, members, fellow unions and other supporters, outside a meeting of their Board, where the budget was on the table.

- Public health nurses and nurse practitioners from the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit leafletted their community on three different occasions this fall to bring attention to their important role and key issues as they negotiated a new collective agreement.

- ONA members continued to share their horror stories of how the Truth Hurts in their communities, which we posted on our campaign website and use to paint a clear picture to the government.

- With a federal election just around the corner, members throughout the province took the opportunity to not only show our pride as Ontario workers and unionists, but to help ensure health care was on the ballot during Labour Day activities.

- Heeding the call of ONA, Locals throughout the province became active in the federal election in their own communities, including placing ads in their local newspapers, hosting all-candidates’ meetings and hanging banners urging the public to vote for health care.

- ONA launched a Membership Secondment Program to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of the two successful candidates in grievance handling and negotiations, which we hope will encourage them to either apply for a servicing position on staff to increase our complement of RNs as Labour Relations Officers retire or another ONA leadership position.

- Members in the intensive care unit at Kingston General Hospital are participating in a study on the impact of shift work.

- ONA members honoured those impacted by violence and inadequate care in the province’s long-term care (LTC) homes and called for change at a somber ceremony at Queen’s Park, which not only coincided with International Day of Older Persons, but the 10-year anniversary of the inquest into the tragic death of two residents at the hands of another with dementia at the Casa Verde LTC home.

- At the Ontario Health Coalition’s annual Health Action Assembly and Conference in Toronto, members helped design an action plan, which is essentially a blueprint of the campaigns the OHC and its members, including ONA, will embark on in 2016.

- Our Twitter account received its 10,000th follower, which means thousands of people are kept in-the-know faster and easier about ONA news, events and important updates.

- RNs need to stand up for their patients and stand out from the crowd of health providers, which is why ONA continued to support the Wear White on Wednesdays campaign.

- The campaign has been enthusiastically embraced by individual members, units and, in some cases, facilities themselves.

- ONA makes it easy to wear white by making available ONA-branded RN apparel and many other promotional products through our eStore, available at myunionstore.com/ona.
**Member Education**

- The evaluations were positively glowing from ONA’s 2015 Leadership Conference in Grand Bend, which brought together members from three streams – Novice, Advanced and Activists – to discuss the work of our union, listen to guest speakers, participate in workshops and solidarity-building activities, and gather donations for the Huron Women’s Shelter.
- From January to October 2015, almost 6,000 members received ONA education, the majority of whom are grassroots members.
- All ONA workshops conducted up until the end of October 2015 received an impressive average satisfaction rate of 91 per cent.
- The completion rates for ONA’s eLearning program, which provides free online education, steadily increased, with almost 500 programs finished by the end of October.
- Additions to the program in 2016 include: An updated version of the Professional Responsibility Workload Reporting Process – Homes Sector; an updated version of the Professional Responsibility Workload Reporting Process – CCACs; and new programs on the Structure of ONA, Disability Income Protection Plans, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and Harassment and Bullying, including content on Disruptive Physician Behaviour.
- Video lecturettes completed between January 1 and October 28, 2015 total 706, compared to 279 for all of 2014.
- Delegates at the November Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) received education on the stigma surrounding mental health and addictions, and College of Nurses of Ontario policy.
- Planning continues for the 2016 Treasurers Conference, which will be delivered two ways: Treasurers who have come onboard since 2014 will be offered face-to-face education to support them with upgrades.

**Ontario Nurses’ Association**

**ONA Update: Winter 2016**

**Government Relations/Work with Allies**

- ONA unveiled our *Truth Hurts. Nurses Know* campaign in Kingston in late summer with a series of ads on bus exteriors, transit shelters and benches, which were extended to all corners of the province in the fall.
- The campaign demands a moratorium on disastrous cuts to RN positions throughout the province, which are causing needless suffering to patients, noting that Ontario has the second worst RN-to-population ratio in Canada.
- Immediately following the federal election, ONA officially launched the *Truth Hurts* campaign at a media conference in Queen’s Park, followed by a visit by ONA members to Question Period, where a question was asked by the NDP about nursing numbers.
- The campaign features print ads in English and French, three radio ads, a television ad, ads that play in physicians’ waiting rooms and a strong social media component, including inviting members to share campaign images on their personal accounts each Wednesday.
- A dedicated campaign website – nursesknow.ona.org – is full of resources to download, including the *Truth Hurts* posters, postcard and other helpful education material.
- More than 11,000 signatures have been collected for on our online campaign petition, which urges the government to commit to restoring hospital operating funding, create a fully-funded health human resources plan, ensure hospitals have enough resources to provide safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures, and stop plans to move such procedures into private clinics.
- ONA’s campaign banner, which runs down the side of our downtown Toronto head office, is visible for a significant distance.
- ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud and First Vice-President Vicki McKenna are re-elected in the fall televote, and vow to con-
We continue to take members’ concerns to the tables of the government and their employers.

- So too does Laurie Brown from Local 70, who is elected Region 4 Vice-President in a by-election called for the remainder of the term of office for that position.
- Working with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) on its federal election campaign, ONA distributed key information to our members while incorporating ONA priorities.
- Our goal during the federal election campaign was to promote the issues that matter to our members and our patients, including adequate funding for our health care system, a health human resources plan to hire more nurses and end RN cuts, a national prescription drug program and a safe seniors strategy.
- While cautiously optimistic about the future following the federal election, ONA will be consulting with the CFNU to determine our immediate priorities with the new government.
- We also pledge to work with Ontario’s new MPs to lobby for early implement of a new Health Accord, one of the Liberals’ election promises.
- ONA will be active in consultations with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) after it said it accepts and endorses all recommendations in the Auditor General’s Report on CCACs.
- To get the ball rolling, ONA met with Deputy Health Minister Bob Bell and other MOHLTC representatives to discuss the structure and future of CCACs and other pertinent issues.

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While at this time the government hasn’t officially endorsed the Price Report, which recommends redesigning the primary care sector based on the introduction of Patient Care Groups (PCG), it said it will involve ONA as it develops a primary care policy.

- In light of these reports, ONA reiterated that we do not support the creation of any new level of administration in the health care system, noting that some of the functions proposed to be the role of PCGs are currently fulfilled by CCACs, e.g. care connectors and care coordination.

The Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) began a series of Take Back our Hospitals rallies across the province this fall, attended by members of the ONA Board, Local leaders and members, to send an important message that cuts to local hospitals must stop.

In our submission and verbal presentation to the Ontario Changing Workplace Review of the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Standards Act, ONA recommended that the government re-instates card-based certification in all sectors, mandate benefits for employees working after age 65, give parties the right to first collective agreement arbitration, and mandate health and welfare benefit continuation during strikes.

- We will be monitoring the implementation of up to 75 new attending nurse practitioners, who are being funded in long-term care homes over three years, including 30 this past fall.
- ONA met with representatives from the MOHLTC to receive an update on hospital funding components (i.e. the Health-Based Allocation Model and Quality-Based Procedures).
- ONA supported the November Wrapped in Courage campaign of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, which raises awareness about domestic violence and violence against women and provides crucial support to shelters across the province through the purchase of purple scarves.
- The Canadian Labour Congress, provincial union leaders and ONA met in Toronto.
- ONA agreed to endorse a petition seeking support for a national housing strategy, which is being spearheaded by a former member and nurse practitioner who works with the homeless or those who are precariously housed.

To help ONA redesign our website to reflect the changing times, we asked delegates at the November PCM for ideas and encouraged our grassroots members to fill out an online survey to tell us what they like and think could be improved on www.ona.org.
Health and Safety/WSIB

ONA’s violence prevention strategy, which aims to eliminate or reduce the number of violent incidents health care professionals experience in their workplaces, gathered momentum during the fall, as more and more members shared their stories with us.

A dedicated violence prevention campaign website – www.ona.org/violence – along with a tool box full of helpful information and resources are main components of the campaign.

The campaign has one major ask of members: to report all workplace violence incidents, which is their legal duty, so that employers are aware of all workplace hazards and can act on them, and the Ministries of Labour and Health and Long-Term Care understand how serious this issue is and fund and enforce preventive items for worker protection and patient safety.

ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud was invited to sit on the executive committee of the government’s newly created leadership table on workplace violence prevention, along with the CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association and the Deputy Ministers of Health and Long-Term Care and Labour.

Haslam-Stroud said she was impressed and encouraged by the first meeting of the leadership table and is hopeful the group can come up with some solid solutions to improve workplace violence.

Thanks to the insights and information from ONA and many of our members, Global TV’s Student Affiliation

Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA) Ontario Regional Director (ORD) Kendra Davis brought greetings to our November Provincial Coordinators Meeting, stating the collaboration between ONA and the CNSA is very important to Ontario nursing students.

Davis was also featured in the November issue of Front Lines, where she thanked members for their incredible and unwavering support of nursing students and ONA for providing students with advantageous connections, resources and advocacy opportunities.

Local leaders and grassroots members connected with nursing students in their communities to show ONA’s support during National Nursing Students’ Week, November 15-21, under the theme Nursing the Mind: Care Starts with You.

First Vice-President Vicki McKenna and Region 2 Vice-President Anne Clark were the face of ONA during the CNSA’s Ontario Regional Conference in Ottawa, chatting to students about the benefits and work of our union.

ONA is urging the College of Nurses of Ontario to allow applicants additional rewrites of the controversial American National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) instead of requiring those who unsuccessfully write the exam three times to complete another approved or equivalent nursing program.

Nursing student and CNSA affiliate member Jessica Crawford successfully launched a Mental Health Awareness Week at the George Brown Waterfront campus, which will be extended to all three campuses in 2016.

Allison Harron is named the 2015 recipient of the $1,000 Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions Scholarship, to be used towards her nursing studies, and stated in her winning essay that she is “very relieved to be entering a profession with such a strong, powerful and respected union as ONA.”

The five winners of the ONA Nursing Scholarship, in the amount of $1,000 each, were also named: Dominique Swabey, Shelby Lacey, Vanessa Warren, Lisa Marie Romano and Lauren Easton.

Board members continued to participate in regular conference calls with CNSA leaders and campus delegates to learn about their issues firsthand so we can take them forward to the government and nursing stakeholders.
We solemnly marked the 10-year anniversary of the death of ONA member Lori Dupont, who was murdered while working at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor.

Local 115 Coordinator and Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH) Bargaining Unit President Faye Loverock, ONA Health and Safety Specialist Erna Bujna and TEGH co-authored an article in Healthcare Quarterly entitled, Leadership Engagement and Workplace Violence Prevention: The Collaboration Between a Large Community Hospital and its Unions, which describes how the hospital, in partnership with ONA, successfully addressed the growing threat of violence.

Our submission to the government’s roundtable on Violence Against Women indicated that nurses, predominantly women, are leading victims of workplace violence and despite the fact that health care workers are a growing proportion of the workplace, Ministry of Labour resources are disproportionately dedicated to male-dominated physician hazards and have not been amended to reflect changing workplace demographics.

ONA has endorsed a study on the impact of aerosol-producing procedures on heath care workers.

A donation of $1,000 was provided to the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health, which provided great input during the Ebola crisis in our efforts to keep our members safe.

Local 54 Coordinator and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Bargaining Unit President Danielle Latulippe-Larmand was honoured for her work to help end workplace violence during a special dinner hosted by the Workers Health & Safety Centre in Toronto, attended by many of her fellow Region 3 members.

An Institute for Work & Health study looking into whether violence legislation is making a difference in protecting workers has been endorsed by ONA.

ONA continued to seek clarity from the CNO on its requirement that nurses must declare they have practised in the last three years to be reinstated, as we are particularly concerned for nurses who have not been practising for health reasons.

Professional Practice Specialists participated in RNAO’s Best Practice Guideline revisions, such as the Revision of Collaborative Practice amongst Nursing Teams.

An ONA member will take part in the review of the RNAO’s Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) for post-partum depression, while another member will be participating in a review of the BPG for nurses with adult asthma.

During the most recent professional practice teleconnect, When in charge...what is the rest of the story?, ONA’s Professional Practice Specialists presented little-known facts about the charge role by providing an overview of the leadership standards and how it relates to the Professional Responsibility Workload Report Form.
Human Rights/Accommodation/Return to Work

Under the theme, Challenging Racism in the Workplace, the Human Rights and Equity Caucus featured guest speaker Benjamin O’Keefe, a dynamic television personality and dedicated activist whose goal is to give a voice to marginalized groups, and breakout sessions for all five equity groups and the Friends and Allies group.

At the Caucus, Benjamin Ramirez Jimenez, a member on ONA’s Human Rights and Equity Team, encouraged all delegates to challenge the stereotypes they might have grown up with and make a commitment to identify discrimination and take a stand when they witness it.

ONA successfully argued that an employer violated the Human Rights Code when it refused to let a pregnant nurse work because she could not take Tamiflu, an important decision that confirmed directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care under the Health Protection and Promotion Act that all staff must either be vaccinated or take Tamiflu during an outbreak are subject to the Code.

ONA continued our advocacy with the Ontario Human Rights Commission on its review of the College of Nurses of Ontario, as we want the barriers that prevent nurses with mental health disabilities from accessing employment removed.

In an effort to further promote equity issues, ONA’s Human Rights and Equity Team is putting an additional focus on six major days of observance – International Women’s Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, National Day of Mourning, National Aboriginal Day, Pride and Labour Day – which includes tailored information and a number of resources, such as posters, that will be easily accessible on the ONA website.

The most recent human rights and equity teleconnect provided an overview on substance abuse and accommodation in the workplace, which will assist ONA members with identifying substance abuse; determining when the threshold for “disability” is met; determining when the issue should be raised with the employer and employer obligations; ensuring a safe return to work; and understanding the member’s role in accommodation.

The Human Rights and Equity Team continued to highlight key issues in each issue of Front Lines.