The following is a summary of ONA’s key activities and successes since the last “The Work of the Union” update in fall 2016.
Bargaining/Labour Relations

- ONA members in the nursing homes sector overwhelmingly ratified a settlement reached during mediation with the employers, representing 179 provincial nursing homes.
- The agreement, which affects 3,000 members, runs from July 1, 2016 until June 30, 2019, and provides a 1.4 per cent increase across the board for all classifications effective July 1, 2016 and July 1, 2017, and 2 per cent starting July 1, 2018.
- The agreement also strengthens the violence prevention language, provides double-time pay for all additional hours worked on paid holidays, leave to be a temporary compliance inspector, a lieu time off work option for working overtime, and gives the employers none of the concessions they were seeking.
- As the collective agreements for our 10 community care access centres (CCACs) expired on March 31, 2016, notice to bargain has been served and we are preparing for negotiations, starting with the South West and North East groups.
- Just six months after ONA won certification rights, Bayshore Home Health Care in the districts of Sault Ste. Marie, Elliott Lake, Blind River, Desbarats, Echo Bay, Garden River, Iron Bridge and Thessalon ratified a first collective agreement that contains wage, benefit and job security improvements over the 18-month term.
- That is just one example of ONA’s concerted efforts to negotiate and finalize first collective agreements as quickly as possible, which has been particularly successful in the community.
- ONA continued to meet with the Ontario Hospital Association on our proposed gender-neutral evaluations system, which will be used to evaluate all ONA job classes as well as potential male comparators, with the aim of finalizing the groupings over the next few months.
- We have also met with the participating nursing homes to negotiate a new gender-neutral comparison system and evaluate the RN job class and other positions.
- As Bill 41, Patients First Act, which will transfer CCACs into Local Health Integration Networks, could have a significant impact on our application before the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal for our members in this sector, we are reviewing the impact of this change and how to proceed.

Member Education

- ONA workshops continued to be popular, with a total of 338 delivered from January 1 to September 30, 2016 and 3,063 members in attendance.
- All ONA workshops delivered in this time period received an impressive average satisfaction rate of almost 88 per cent.
- Several workshops are in development for 2017, including New Bargaining Unit President Grievance Chair Checklist, Making it Count at Return to Work and Accommodation Meetings, and Making it Count at Investigations and Disciplinary Meetings.
- ELearning, which provides free online education to ONA members, continued to be a favourable option, with 350 program completions from January to September 30, 2016.
- A review of the eLearning video library occurred to ensure relevance of content, and in 2017 a number of them will be updated.
- Several new programs are also being developed for inclusion in the eLearning platform in 2017, including ONA Structure/Bargaining Unit Structure, Disability Income Protection Plan, WSIB, and Harassment, Mobbing and Bullying.
- One is already underway, as ONA is currently developing an outline for a program using the eLearning platform to support Treasurers with their financial work.

- ONA’s Membership Education and Events (MEE) Team reviewed our education planning process and consulted with Local leaders, the Board of Directors and senior managers to create a progressive, reflective and fiscally responsive curriculum delivery vehicle, known as the responsive education model (REM).
- Rolled out to ONA leadership at the fall Area Coordinators Conferences to very positive reviews, REM engages member in larger numbers, creates excitement for specific topics, provides curriculum to build strong skill sets, and is flexible to meet the changing environment.
- The 75 participants in ONA’s recent Leadership Conference in the novice, advanced and activist streams came away more
ONA also continued to review pay equity plans for public health across the province to determine compliance.

The most recent hospital contract interpretation teleconnect provided information on bedside reporting.

As the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) is restructuring and appearing in court to solidify the terms and conditions of its bankruptcy protection (which does not apply to VON Ontario), ONA, as a creditor, is reviewing all of the court’s orders.

ONA donated $5,000 to the 5,000 members working at hospitals in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area, who were forced to go on strike by the tactics of Allina Health, which would only discuss the termination of nurses’ health insurance plans and not nurses’ proposals to address workplace safety concerns and staffing improvements since bargaining began.

In a letter to the editor of the Globe and Mail, ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud refuted several claims in the story, The Employee Argument against Defined-Benefit Pension Plans, noting that such plans have longer investment horizons, are better positioned to deal with downturns, and produce significantly more income than defined contribution plans.

Informing Bargaining Unit leaders about the outcome of hospital bargaining and its impact on bargaining for nursing homes and homes for the aged was the focus of the most recent long-term care teleconnect.

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

Online visits to our website and Facebook and Twitter pages remained strong and steady in the last few months of 2016, with the top issues viewed being news about RN cuts in workplaces, bargaining updates, and our Nurses Know campaign.

ONA’s Facebook followers jumped by almost 3,000 in the past few months to approximately 18,000.

engaged in our union than ever after hearing from several guest speakers, learning about the structure and stellar services of our union, and participating in group and charity work, campaign workshops, storytelling exercises and solidarity building activities.

Based on feedback from ONA members and staff, we relaunched our fresh new website, which houses more information and resources, to rave reviews at the Biennial Convention.

The education session at the Biennial Convention took members back to the future to learn about the victories, setbacks and pivotal challenges that have helped shaped ONA into the proud and vibrant union we are today.
ONA launched the next phase of our very successful, The Truth Hurts. Nurses Know campaign, which brings attention to the continuing slashing of RN positions in Ontario.

The campaign featured powerful television and radio ads, eye-catching print and transit shelter ads, our petition for better care, and a strong social media presence.

ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Bill 41, the Patients First Act, which would expand the role of Ontario’s Local Health Integration Networks to include home and community care, saying it ignores all evidence raised about the duplication and inadequate home care service provision while underestimating that the growing demand for home care services requires significant upgrades to resources and capacity.

ONA has high hopes that the tide is changing with the government’s fall announcement that it is lifting its conditions of “net zero” as a bargaining restriction for Ontario public-sector contracts.

As a member of the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), ONA encouraged our members to help enact its 2017 action plan, aimed at maintaining our public health-care system through three key campaigns: hospital cuts and the restructuring and privatization of hospital services; the non-profit reform of home care; and improvements to levels of care, staffing standards and access to care in long-term care homes.

Region 2 Vice-President-elect Cathryn Hoy made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs highlighting our concerns that amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, buried in omnibus budget legislation, will weaken measures meant to protect health-care workers from violence.

ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud penned a letter to the editor of the Regina Leader Post in response to a column calling for more private health care in Canada, saying it’s time to stop promoting a larger role for privatization and for our federal leaders to enforce the Canada Health Act.

ONA welcomed the announcement from Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Eric Hoskins at our Biennial Convention that amendments to Ontario’s Nurse Graduate Guarantee Program will provide new nurses with 12 months to apply for a placement and for every new nurse funded through the program, employers will receive eight weeks of funding to support existing front-line nurses and their professional development.

Safe patient care can only come with a full complement of professional nursing staff in our hospitals, Region 3 Vice-President Andy Summers told the gathering at an OHC Day of Action at Queen’s Park, which called for an end to the dismantling of hospital clinic services and mega mergers.

Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) President Chris Buckley thanked ONA members for their “compassion, experience and tireless efforts” during remarks at the Biennial Convention, adding that the OFL is making positive changes in bringing the federation forward.

As the federal, provincial and territorial health ministers converged in Toronto, ONA joined with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) in reiterating calls for a renewed Health and Social Accord with stable funding; coordinated health human resources planning; a pharmacare plan; strategy for healthy
aging; improved access to home and community care and mental health; and improved Indigenous care.

The CFNU also participated in a Day of Action on Parliament Hill, demanding universal access to education, education justice and public education for the public good.

A $20,000 sustaining donation will be provided annually from ONA to the Ontario Centre for Policy Alternatives, which delivers original, peer-reviewed non-partisan research.

During a brief presentation at our Biennial Convention, OHC Provincial Director Natalie Mehra thanked ONA members for our support over the years, noting it has moved her personally, and that we should be proud of the many successes we have had at saving hospital emergency departments, services, units and beds.

As part of a contingent of Canadian union leaders, retiring Region 2 Vice-President Anne Clark travelled to Swaziland and South Africa to see just how much of a difference ONA’s charity of choice, the Stephen Lewis Foundation, is making to the places hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

ONA continued to vigorously pursue an amendment to have front-line RNs included in Bill 163 (post-traumatic stress disorder coverage for first responders), including sending a letter to the Premier, engaging in discussions with the Labour Minister, providing an expert opinion from a renowned forensic psychiatrist who is surprised nurses aren’t covered, and producing a lobby kit for our Locals.

Region 1 Vice-President Pam Mancuso joined with other labour leaders at the Canadian Labour Congress’ Rise Up! Human Rights Conference to participate in a number of workshops aimed at engaging workers to build a strong movement based on equity and inclusion.

An additional $5,000 sustaining donation will be given by ONA to the Canadian Health Coalition for a total of $10,000 annually.
ONA’s violence prevention strategy, which aims to eliminate or reduce the number of violent incidents health-care professionals experience in their workplaces, continued to gather momentum over 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 so 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.

The government’s Executive Team, made up of the Deputy Ministers of Labour and Health, the CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association and ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, is overseeing the Violence Leadership Table and the groups working on violence initiatives for nurses in hospitals, including documenting and reporting violent incidents and how to collect evidence to help us ensure safer workplaces.

The team’s deadline for finalization is approaching; they will then look at a rollout for all health-care workers in hospitals followed by homes and communities.

ONA solemnly acknowledged the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, which marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l’École Polytechnique de Montréal.

Local 115 Coordinator and past Bargaining Unit President of Toronto East General Hospital Faye Loverock received a Workers Health and Safety Centre award for recognition of her outstanding services and dedication towards improving the work environment of her members and, in so doing, all Ontario workers.

Thanks to the hard work of ONA’s WSIB Team, a part-time 30-year veteran RN, who suffered a severe low back injury in spring 2004 when she was pulled off balance by a patient she was assisting toileting, has been granted Loss of Earnings (LOE) benefits for as long as she continues to be impaired by the injury to the age of 65, after the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal reimbursed her for years of LOE benefits.

ONA is supporting several research studies: the impact of organizational supports on the health outcomes of workers exposed to violence in long-term care and home-care organizations; the outcomes of nurses and user interface interactions in acute-care settings; the workplace psychosocial hazards impacting our members and other first responders and any impact of those hazards on their mental health; occupational stress injuries, workplace stress and violence experienced by nurses; safe quality improvements in health care; and the workplace factors contributing to post-traumatic stress disorder among mental health-care providers.

Region 2 Vice-President-elect Cathryn Hoy has been named ONA’s representative on the development of the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario’s new Best Practice Guidelines for Safe Injection Services.

ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud wrote to the Canadian Medical Association Journal in response to its paper on the effectiveness of N95 respirators versus surgical masks in protecting health-care workers from acute respiratory infection, noting that with proper training, reinforcement, staffing and other support, N95s have a proven track record.

With the help of its steering committee and working groups, which included ONA members and specialists, the Public Services Health and Safety Association is developing five tools to help employers develop similar products in their workplaces or improve their measures and procedures: organizational risk assessment; individual client risk assessment; flagging; security; and a personal safety response system.

ONA is so respected in the world of occupational health and safety that President Linda Haslam-Stroud and CEO/CAO Marie Kelly were invited to present at the Fifth International Conference on Violence in the Health Sector, the largest of its kind in the world, on our strategies to better engage people on the ground level in health and safety responses.

Haslam-Stroud also co-presented with representatives from Michael Garron Hospital and the Public Services Health and Safety Association on a Collaborative Approach to Preventing Workplace Violence in Canadian Healthcare Facilities, while Kelly moderated two other sessions.

An ONA member received entitlement to a knee replacement surgery she was originally denied and all benefits flowing from it, after ONA appealed a WSIB decision.
Changes to the WSIB Team’s work processes in 2014 continued to result in improvements in the team’s performance, with the majority of files having been merit reviewed within 60 days of receipt, and an increase in submissions.

Over the past two years, members seeking the assistance of ONA have been awarded more than $76,927.56 in Non-Economic Loss awards and $727,888.95 Loss of Earning benefits, totalling more than $804,000!

The most recent health and safety teleconnect focused on the new harassment amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and violence aggression and responsive behaviour tools, and how they can be used by ONA health and safety leaders and Joint Health and Safety Committees.

To show our unwavering support for our 16,000 nursing student affiliate members, ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna attended the Ontario-Quebec Regional Conference of the Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA) under the theme, Building the Future: Inspiring the Next Generation of Nurses, addressing delegates from the podium and liaising with them at breaks.

ONA hosted the executive meeting of associate delegates of the CNSA, who represent Ontario chapters of the organization, with Haslam-Stroud and McKenna attending a segment of the meeting and chatting with the group about key student issues during breaks.

Ontario Regional Director of the CNSA Grant MacNeil thanked delegates at our Biennial Convention for advocating for students and “inspiring us to be leaders.”

ONA named the 10 recipients of our 2016 Nursing Student Scholarship, intended to assist students in accredited nursing programs, who are immediate family members of ONA members, cover the expense of their education: Joel Bogacki, Matthew Lozano, Rachel McConnell, Ashley Miron, Rachael Oliver, Simona Rekem, Jordan Shantz, Madison Turner, Ryan Wilpstra and Nick Zanet.

Alyssa Lepine was chosen by ONA as the Ontario recipient of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions Scholarship.

ONA distributed promotional material to student affiliate members during their orientation events at six post-secondary institutions.

Local 97 Coordinator Elizabeth Romano and Secretary Eleanor Adarna attended York University’s Keele Campus orientation to put a face to ONA and answer students’ questions about our services.

Under the theme, Diversity in Nursing – Sharing Similarities, Celebrating Differences, ONA student affiliate members showcased their contributions to practice settings and accomplishments throughout their program of study during National Nursing Students’ Week from November 14-21, and Indigenous Nursing Students’ Day on November 14.

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.
Local Political Action/Member Engagement

- ONA members had their say in the fall elections for the positions of Regional Vice-Presidents on the ONA Board of Directors, and as a result, the 2017 Board has been decided: President Linda Haslam-Stroud, First Vice-President Vicki McKenna, Region 1 Vice-President Pam Mancuso, Region 2 Vice-President Cathryn Hoy, Region 3 Vice-President Andy Summers, Region 4 Vice-President Laurie Brown and Region 5 Vice-President Karen Bertrand.

- At the Biennial Convention, all members were invited to "get loud," the theme of the week-long event, about an end to RN cuts, violence in the workplace, appropriate workloads, and staffing to ensure we are providing safe, high-quality patient care and working in safe and healthy environments.

- Delegates were also given the opportunity to write what they are getting loud about this convention and beyond on a white board in the foyer, and responses included violence, job security, member engagement and supporting students.

- During the convention, Local Coordinators voted in favour of an amendment to establish a common term for the ONA Board of Directors — currently, Regional Vice-Presidents are voted in one year, the President and First Vice-President in another — so they will be together for a two-year period, which would enable them to implement the Board’s strategic plan without the possibility of turnover and preparing for elections every year.

- As elections under this new format will take place next fall, a resolution passed that a Biennial Convention will be held in November 2017 and in every odd numbered year thereafter to coincide with the election of the new Board of Directors.

- Local Coordinators also voted that Provincial Coordinators Meetings (PCM) will continue to be held two times a year (in June and November, except in a Biennial year when the November PCM would be a Biennial), but a joint sector meeting will replace the March PCM to share information, dialogue on provincial issues and engage more Bargaining Unit Presidents in our work.

- Region 2 Vice-President Anne Clark bid a fond farewell to members, expressing gratitude for their support, at the Biennial Convention, her last provincial meeting before she retires from the Board.

- While ONA launched the next phase of our Nurses Know campaign provincially, it is largely rolling out at the Local level, engaging the public, media and key decision-makers in communities across Ontario.

- As part of that, members embraced the Nurses Know letter-writing campaign to MPPs, highlighting our demands for more nurses and a moratorium on cuts to nursing positions.

- When delegates asked some tough questions of Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Eric Hoskins at the Biennial Convention regarding violence in the workplace and ongoing RN job cuts, he responded that his government is listening, will continue working with ONA to stabilize the RN workforce, and is waiting on the report from the Violence Leadership Table.

- Members from Thunder Bay laid wreaths on behalf of all ONA members at the city's Waverly Park during a solemn Remembrance Day ceremony.

- Local leaders took up the cause after ONA sent a Lobby Kit on Nurses and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to each one, asking for help lobbying written support from their local MPP to include nurses in the PTSD legislation.

- ONA members staged an information picket outside the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and circulated a petition demanding an immediate end to violence following yet another incident at the facility involving a member who was attacked by a patient and suffered critical injuries.

- Political action continued in London from Local 100, including local TV ads and a town hall meeting, to inform the public about what is really happening to health care at London Health Sciences Centre, as the facility has cut 250,000 RN hours, or 140 positions, over the last four years.

- A team will be brought together to continue conversations on protecting our members’ work, including language in the hospital contract, workload issues, lobbying strategies and tools needed to help our Bargaining Units.

- Local 4 set up a booth at the Keady Market in Tara to hand out flyers about...
the Nurses Know campaign to market shoppers and talk to them about nursing needs and changes in RN staffing, which is occurring locally and throughout the province.

- By purchasing raffle tickets for a selection of prizes donated by Locals at the Biennial Convention, ONA members raised more than $7,000 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

- Members from the North Bay Community Care Access Centre showed solidarity by joining the picket line at St. Joseph’s Motherhouse in North Bay, where 44 employees are striking over key issues of wages and contract language regarding internal hiring.

- ONA members throughout the province joined the call for safer workplaces, stronger public pensions and better jobs for all during Labour Day events.

- Local 237 Coordinator Mandeep Sangha, who always participates in local events with her family, said Labour Day is “very important to keep the labour movement in our communities, create and keep public sector jobs for our children, and fight together for a better future,” adding that “when we join with our fellow unions, we are not alone in our struggles.”

- Local 73 placed an ad in its local Women magazine to promote the role of RNs and tie into our provincial Nurses Know campaign, the latest in the Local’s long-list of community advertisements.

- One of the community projects delegates engaged in during our June Provincial Coordinators Meeting in Sault Ste. Marie – planting vegetables and perennial gardens at the Algoma Residential Community Hospice (ARCH) – won the Mayor’s Award for City Beautification, and ARCH’s manager of volunteer and support services sent appreciation for all our “kindness and generosity.”

- Members supported the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses’ Wrapped in Courage campaign, which aims for women’s shelters across the province to engage their communities to become more aware of the issues of women abuse by wearing purple scarves, the symbol of courage, and connecting with local shelters.

- Our second Membership Secondment Program got underway this fall, with four candidates working out of ONA’s regional offices for three months to become more confident and successful in handling grievances and negotiations before heading back to their Bargaining Units for phase 2.

- ONA members continued to stand up for their patients and stand out from the crowd of health providers by embracing the Wear White on Wednesdays campaign, including during the Wednesday of the Biennial Convention.
ONA continued to make gains for our members in addressing their workload and professional practice concerns and has been able to reach settlements prior to having to advance to an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC).

A settlement was reached with the College of Nurses of Ontario, which is an important step forward for nurses in recovery from addictions and mental health issues, as they will no longer be labelled “incapacitated” on the CNO’s Find a Nurse website; information on the website will provide less information about practice restrictions and no further reference will be posted once they are lifted; and references to incapacity, past findings and practice restrictions will be removed from the website for nurses found incapacitated under the old regime.

Now that Bill C-14 (Medical Assistance in Dying – MAID) has passed, ONA continues to assess its impact on our members by reviewing the legislation with our legal team and working with the Canadian Nurses Association to develop a national nursing framework to assist and support our members.

We maintain that our employers and the CNO have a key role to play in supporting, educating and informing our members of their responsibilities regarding MAID.

National Occupational Therapy Month in October gave ONA the opportunity to recognize the work these health professionals do to help Canadians overcome physical, mental and cognitive barriers so they can participate fully in the activities important to them.

ONA reached a significant workload settlement with Kingston General Hospital that results in substantial improvements on the pediatric unit, including an increase in RN staffing by 11.25 hours a day from Monday to Friday; the permanent closure of the nine overflow beds on the unit; and the reduction of the four-bed pediatric critical care unit (PCCU) to two beds and staffing on a one-to-one nurse to patient ratio until the second phase of construction of the new PCCU beds is complete.

ONA acknowledged very special weeks for the allied members we proudly represent: National Respiratory Therapist Week from October 23-29 under the theme Respiratory Therapists: Our Profession...Our Passion, and Medical Radiation Technologists Week from November 6-12, observed to laud the contributions of these highly skilled professionals.

ONA reached an agreement through the mediation process regarding concerns of RNs in the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (Stratford site), with the employer committing to a six-month trial that would increase staffing in the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) by one RN, which would ensure the RN admitting a patient would be the same one recovering and discharging that patient, an agreement to discuss the implementation of a full-time/part-time staffing ratio of 70/30, and education and ongoing in-services relevant to the operating room, endoscopy, day surgery and PACU.

Nurse practitioner and ONA member Lisa Ladouceur and staff tended a booth at the Nurse Practitioner (NP) Association of Ontario’s Annual Conference to hand out ONA promotional items and pertinent information, including a highlights document of the recent hospital arbitration award, which establishes a new minimum start rate for NPs as the first step towards standardizing rates for this important nursing classification.

Following an escalation of workload issues at Northumberland Hills Hospital’s emergency department (ED) relating to staffing and security during the night shift and on weekends, ONA met with the employer, which agreed to an increase of RN staffing by one RN for 12 hours on the night shift, seven days a week, the adjustment of nurse practitioner hours to align with peak volume times, and that the ED manager and charge nurse will assess daily the need to up-staff based on volumes, acuity and complexity.

During Nurse Practitioner (NP) Week, from November 13-19, ONA increased
Organizing Successes

We held a successful certification vote during this time period: The Village in Hanover, part of Revera Long-Term Care Inc., and seven new RN members joined ONA.

As the outstanding scope issues have been resolved and a certificate issued by the Ontario Labour Relations Board for Providence Care in Kingston, we officially welcomed 133 new RN members and retained 84 members following a Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act vote in April.

The Retention and Recruitment Team fielded calls from RNs and allied health professionals seeking the benefits that ONA membership offers, and additional campaigns are underway.

We also continued to monitor the transfer of health services across the province and are filing PSLRTA applications when necessary to protect our work.
In an effort to further promote equity issues, ONA’s Human Rights and Equity Team continued to put 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 are easily accessible on the ONA website.

Thanks to the involvement of ONA, a member who was absent from work after suffering a heart attack and was unable to return after being diagnosed with major depression, won a long-term disability appeal after the insurer ended benefits, alleging she was physically able to work at a sedentary level and identified occupations they believed she could perform.

After months of planning, ONA’s annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus kicked off the Biennial Convention week under the theme, Mental Health—Stop the Stigma.

ONA member Brigitte Goar, who has represented the Aboriginal equity group on the Human Rights and Equity Team for the past two years, told the Caucus that experience has made her more vocal and better able to stand up against inequity.

ONA moved away from our tradition of having breakout sessions for our five equity groups and the Friends and Allies group at our Caucus to provide all delegates with information on delivering culturally competent care.

Caucus keynote speaker, renowned journalist Valerie Pringle, whose daughter Catherine has been very vocal about her struggles with anxiety and depression, said more needs to be done to remove the stigma of mental health because “there can be no health care without mental health care.”

A special section on our new website for return to work (RTW) issues has been set up, containing useful material and resources on accommodation and RTW, with more content in development.

After a member, who was injured when she hit her head and subsequently diagnosed with major depression and illness anxiety disorder, was denied her application for long-term disability benefits, ONA appealed, resulting in a retroactive payment of approximately $78,000.

ONA’s Return to Work Network focused its recent work on creating resource materials to assist leaders and servicing Labour Relations Officers with managing an effective RTW process for our members.

The most recent human rights and equity teleconnect provided a step-by-step guide to accommodation, focusing on the interplay of seniority and accommodations.

The Human Rights and Equity Team highlighted key issues in each issue of Front Lines and the Human Rights and Equity Bulletin.