

WE ARE 68,000+ MEMBERS STRONG AND WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Dear Members,

As Ontario's nurses and health-care professionals, you are a vital part of a province-wide chorus speaking up in advance of the provincial election to ensure the health and well-being of Ontarians is the priority for the next provincial government.

It has been four long years since Premier Doug Ford and a majority government of Progressive Conservative (PC) MPPs were elected to Queen's Park. Our next provincial election is scheduled for Thursday, June 2, where we will elect a new government.

Before we vote, we must reflect and ask ourselves some important questions:

- How has the Ford government managed the province over the past four years?
- What initiatives did this government put in place that positively or negatively affect us and our communities?
- How has provincial legislation – such as Bills 124, 175 and 195 – impacted me, my family and my workplace?

When I reflect on these questions, I come back to some central issues:

- The Ford government has failed Ontarians in many concrete ways.
- He has failed in his health-care restructuring plan, which is still ongoing, aims to privatize parts of our health-care system and has created a continuous environment of chaos.
- He has failed to take any meaningful steps to shore up staffing and respect for nurses and health-care professionals, and Ontarians are facing the disastrous consequences.
- Finally, he has absolutely failed to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving catastrophic results from the humanitarian crisis in long-term care, failing to protect workers with 10 paid sick days and deepening the inequalities facing Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.

Over two years into the pandemic, things are much worse in Ontario than they have been since it began.

We have lost hundreds, if not thousands, of nurses and health-care professionals because of

Premier Ford's Bills 124, 175 and 195 – regressive legislation that suppresses wages of female-dominated professionals, ushers in further health-care privatization and disregards our hard-fought workplace rights. ONA implored Premier Ford to immediately repeal Bill 124, to demonstrate a glimmer of respect to nurses, who have worked so very tirelessly these past two years and beyond. He refused.

At the outset of the pandemic, the Ford government should have listened to and consulted with ONA and other stakeholders who were on the ground. We could have provided sound and meaningful solutions to greatly curb COVID-19 and its disastrous results. As President of your union – representing more than 68,000 nurses and health-care professionals as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates – it is imperative that ONA has a working relationship with the provincial government.

The provincial election will set the stage for Ontario for the next four years. Through our own individual lenses, each of us must carefully consider who can best govern the province and make decisions that will positively impact our families, our communities, our health-care system, our patients, and ourselves.

Within this special election insert, we lay out some of the overarching issues that impact us on an individual level, within our communities and provincially. Although it provides just a brief overview, more information can be found on our website at www.ona.org/vote.

ONA's passionate Nurses Vote Provincial Election Team, made up of nurses and health-care professionals from across the province, will be reaching out to members to talk about this election, what is at stake, and how vital it is for everyone to vote. The team is dedicated to sharing information with you to help you make an informed decision come election day.

I am hopeful that, together, we will elect a new provincial government that will listen to us, consult with us and respect us.

In solidarity,

Cathryn Hoy, RN
Provincial President

TOP FIVE ISSUES

ON JUNE 2, WE MUST ELECT A GOVERNMENT THAT RESPECTS NURSES AND HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS.

For too long our voices have been ignored, and now our health-care system is in dire straits because nurses and health-care workers are burnt out and beyond our breaking point.

The provincial election is our opportunity to make it clear that nurses and health-care professionals vote!

In the last provincial election, **14 ridings across Ontario were decided by fewer than 1,000 votes. The balance of power at Queen's Park was decided by 16,265 votes.** ONA has more than 68,000 members and 18,000 nursing student affiliates across the province.

We have the power to elect a government that will respect and listen to nurses and health-care professionals!

Here are five key issues to consider before you vote.

1) RESPECT

Repeal Bill 124

Bill 124 was passed by the Ford Conservatives in 2019. This wage-suppression law has negatively impacted registered nurses, nurse practitioners, registered practical nurses, and health-care professionals. It limits wage increases to a maximum of one per cent a year for three years, including wages and benefits. It applies even in the middle of a global pandemic as we are being asked to work longer hours, in unsafe conditions, with fewer supports.

ONA has worked tirelessly to call for the repeal of Bill 124, and for nurses and health-care professionals to see their salaries increase to reflect their value. ONA members have shared just how insulting this bill is, and how important it is for it to be repealed. And yet, the Ford Conservatives have refused.

We deserve equity, fairness and respect.
On June 2, vote for a government that will respect nurses and repeal Bill 124.

2) STAFFING

End the Nursing Crisis

The fact is Ontario has the worst RN-to-population ratio in Canada — it has been this way for years. More than 22,000 nursing positions need to be filled just to catch up to the national average. That burden is being passed on to us as front-line nurses. We're being asked to do more and more for less and less. The burn out is causing more nurses to leave the profession entirely.

It didn't have to be like this. Nurses and health-care professionals have been sounding the alarm for decades.

We urgently need a fully funded retention and recruitment strategy to train more new nurses and keep experienced nurses working in health care. That means better wages, fair hours, more full-time positions, access to mental health supports, protection from workplace violence, and investing in the proper supports for mentoring and training new nurses.

On June 2, vote for a government that won't ignore the health human resources crisis any longer.

3) SAFE AT WORK

The Right to Provide Care in a Safe Environment

We deserve safe workplaces where we can provide the care our patients, residents and clients need.

For decades, governments have been trying to cut health-care costs by changing how we provide care for patients. "Skill mix" and "team nursing" are presented as magical solutions that will improve patient care and cut costs. We know better.

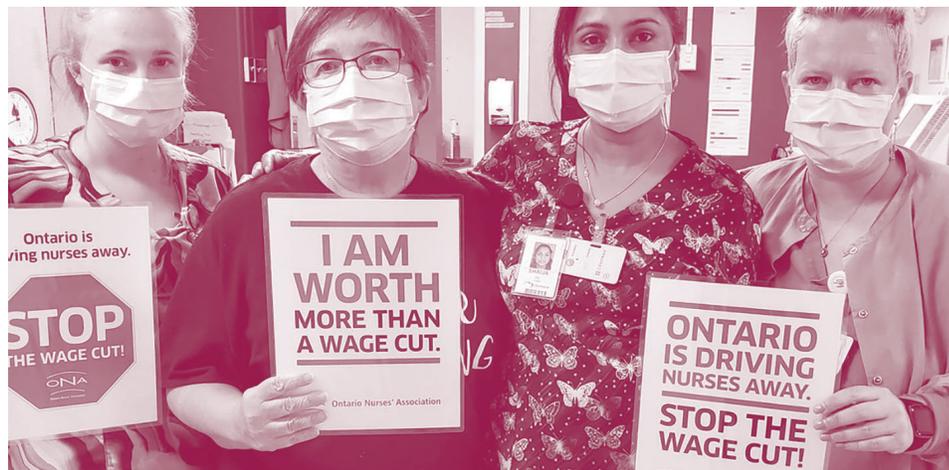
In long-term care, increased acuity means that residents have complex care needs. We need funding for more positions for RNs to provide the appropriate care for residents.

These models of care have been proven to be detrimental to safe patient care, impact continuity of care, and put even more strain on nurses. It is unacceptable to try to save money by cutting RNs from the care settings where we are needed most.

Nurses and health-care professionals deserve to be safe at work. We need a government that will listen to nurses and take action to address workplace violence.

On June 2, vote for a government that will invest in safe, properly resourced workplaces for nurses and health-care professionals.

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4) FAIRNESS

Social Determinants of Health

As front-line health-care workers, we know that there is so much more to keeping people healthy and well than acute medical care.

At ONA, we support applying a “social determinants of health” lens to health-care policy. This means looking at how race, ability, income, housing, and other social determinants of health intersect and place Black, Indigenous and racialized communities at greater risk.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve seen the disproportionate way communities with higher percentages of Black, Indigenous and racialized people have been impacted. Migrant workers have experienced trauma and death through this pandemic because of unsafe living conditions and lack of permanent resident status.

For Indigenous communities, particularly in the north, jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments result in failure to improve infrastructure and impact access to everything from education to housing and clean water, which factor into the social determinants of health. We know that experiences of racism and discrimination negatively impact people’s mental, emotional and physical health. In fact, the Toronto Board of Health has recognized that anti-Black racism is a public health crisis.

Access to affordable housing and good food are critical supports that keep people healthy. The Ford Conservatives have cut funding for new affordable housing and for income supports like the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works

and the Basic Income Pilot. The Ford Conservatives spent months refusing to sign the \$10-a-day child care deal with the federal government.

Much of the work of Ontario’s Public Health Units tackles some of the social determinants of health. And yet, the Ford Conservatives made massive cuts to public health in 2019. These cuts still have not been fully reversed, despite the ongoing global public health emergency of COVID-19.

Together, these choices mean people across Ontario are struggling to meet their basic needs, and their health is suffering.

On June 2, vote for a government that will invest in improving the social determinants of health along with our health-care system itself.

5) STOP PRIVATIZATION

Keep Health Care Public

Canadians are proud of our public health-care system. We see it as part of our national identity. But for decades, our government has underfunded public health care and allowed privatization to seep in.

As nurses and health-care professionals, we know that when private corporations are involved in health care, their goal is to extract profit, not provide care. Wages are kept down and benefits are slashed. Funding for public health care is funneled to corporate profits.

We need a government that is committed to ending privatization and keeping health care public. We’ve already heard that the Ford Conservatives plan

to dramatically expand private hospitals to offer ambulatory surgeries. This would undermine patient care, exacerbate the staffing crisis in public hospitals, and allow private companies to siphon funding out of our public health-care system. We cannot allow this to happen.

As we’ve seen throughout the crisis in long-term care, private care settings fail the people relying on them for care. We need a government that will not issue licenses to for-profit homes and phase out for-profit long-term care entirely. Instead, the Ford Conservatives are awarding 30-year licenses paid for by Ontarians to for-profit homes, including to some of the worst offenders during the pandemic. They are also restructuring the last remaining public elements of home and community care, leaving the door wide open to privatized care coordination.

We need a government that believes in public health care and will invest the dollars needed to expand the public system, not undermine and destroy it.

On June 2, vote for a government that is committed to keeping health care public.

Enough is Enough

It’s time to elect a government that we can trust will keep its promises to nurses, health-care professionals, and every person who relies on our public health-care system.

We need you to vote on June 2. Visit www.ona.org/vote to find out where and how you vote, and make your plan to vote. Together, we can make a difference.



CHECKLIST FOR ELECTION ACTION!

THIS ELECTION, ONTARIO'S NURSES AND HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS ARE STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC HEALTH CARE!

Here are some of the things that you can do to help make a positive change on June 2.

□ Get ready.

Visit www.elections.on.ca to confirm or update your information, find out your polling stations, and more.

□ Vote!

The earlier the better. Vote in an advance poll so you can help out on election day.

□ Get plugged in.

Follow the news and www.ona.org/vote to learn about the issues, the choices and much more.

□ Spread the word.

Tell three people why you plan to vote and what's at stake for our health care.

Volunteer with your ONA Local Election Committee.

Reach out to your Local and help organize events to drive the vote and spread the word about our five key issues:

- **Keep health care public.** Our government has underfunded public health care and allowed privatization to seep in to our hospital, long-term care, home and community care sectors and beyond.
- **Repeal Bill 124.** This wage-suppression legislation has negatively impacted the retention of nurses and health-care professionals.
- **End the Nursing Crisis.** Ontario has the worst RN-to-population ratio in Canada. More than 22,000 nursing positions need to be filled just to catch up to the national average.
- **Improve working conditions.** We deserve safe workplaces where we can provide the care our patients, residents and clients need.
- **Ensure fairness.** Government policies must address how race, ability, income, housing, and other social determinants intersect and impact health outcomes, particularly for Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.

Ask a question. Raise an issue you care about at an all-candidates' forum or debate.

Use social media. Share @ontarionurses messages on Facebook and Twitter and @ontario.nurses on Instagram. #NursesVote #HealthProfessionalsVote



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