

Monique Storozuk

NOMINEE FOR VICE-PRESIDENT REGION 1

Monique Storozuk, BScN, RN
ONA 46, Bargaining Unit President/Local Coordinator Sault
Area Hospital

Who am I? I, like so many, have many roles -- wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend and proud Registered Nurse. During my 32 years as a Registered Nurse, I have worked in several areas of nursing, with most of my career spent in the ICU and acute medical/cardiac telemetry unit. Critical thinking and organizational skills are necessary in these areas of nursing as you often have minutes to assess and implement actions to maintain patients' hemodynamic status. While working in these roles, I was often put in a leadership position, acting as a resource to novice staff and ensuring the flow of the unit. Recently, I have had the opportunity to work as a Case Reviewer, navigating the ALC side of nursing while seeing how our health-care system is failing at all levels -- acute, post-acute and community. Each of these skills, I believe will translate to the role of Region One Vice President.

Since 2016, I have been part of the local executive at Sault Area Hospital. Like so many, it started when I needed my union, and the Bargaining Unit President supported me and fought for my rights. I immediately felt the need to give back and decided I would be a unit representative, but my Bargaining Unit President saw something more: She needed a Grievance Chair. That year, I filed more than 300 grievances for a membership of 525. I have been a Treasurer/Secretary, Bargaining Unit President/Local Coordinator, and part of the 2023 HCNT. My goal for my Bargaining Unit was to empower my members and, for the first time in our bargaining unit history, our members came out in a blizzard to rally during the 2023 negotiations. That collective agreement was our biggest win in decades. Our private ONA46 Facebook page has a 98% engagement by our members. The executive has continued to grow, recruiting nurses of three to five years to ensure we are building and training strong leaders.

Communication, transparency and education are the pillars by which our local strives to provide to our members.

Why do I want to be Region One Vice President? I graduated in 1992 during a time when social contracts were being forced upon unions. These social contracts limited employment opportunities, enforced wage freezes and eroded the protection of rights under collective agreements for workers including nurses. The colloquial Rae Days! Today, our provincial government is working toward the same type of attack on unions, albeit much more insidious. Doug Ford used a wage freeze with Bill 124 that forced many nurses to move to higher-paying private agency jobs, causing detrimental staffing shortages in our public health-care system. These shortages caused an even wider gap in health care that was already at risk due to years of underfunding.

The province's Bill 60 has allowed private clinics to bill for OHIP-covered surgeries and procedures to "reduce wait times." This government has gone as far as allocating public health-care funds to private clinics like those in Windsor and Ottawa. This only accomplished more siphoning of staff to private clinics with the promise of a better work-life balance. Lessons learned from Alberta seem to fall on the deaf ears of Sylvia Jones and Doug Ford. Longer wait times, lower quality care and higher costs were the result of the privatization hypothesis in Alberta. Doug Ford and his administration choose to

ignore these lessons and continue the erosion of our public health care by misappropriating monies to private clinics and for-profit care nursing homes.

Bill 7 now pits nurses working as Placement Coordinators and long-term care home staff against the public by stealing their right to consent. More importantly, the bill failed to address the abysmal staffing numbers in the nursing homes -- numbers so low that the targeted care per resident of four hours per day could not be met. That target only provides six minutes of care per hour per resident. Six minutes to bathe, feed, provide meds, document care, comfort and support. But still, the Ford government funnels public earmarked dollars to the privately owned nursing homes who are hoarding the taxpayer dollars for their own greed. These funds have not gone to the wages and benefits of the staff struggling to provide those six minutes per hour of care to our historians and story tellers.

Repeatedly, Doug Ford has demonstrated he wants to break the back of public unions, but our solidarity, unity and collective action with our brothers and sisters has proven we are a formidable opponent. We won the fight against Bill 124, publicly regaling Doug Ford's ignorance of Constitutional Rights of workers. And we have succeeded in gaining improvements in wages and benefits to nursing homes contracts. Lastly, the new members who continue to join our fight by becoming part of the Ontario Nurses Association (Centertown community Health Center, Lithuanian nursing home Margaret Bahen Hospice).

Region One is unique, not only because of its size but the isolation of the North. So, what does it mean to be part of ONA and live in Region One? To me, it means we must work harder to unite our members and show our solidarity. We are stronger together when we are united in our collective actions to protect the rights of our members and public inequality and injustice. We are an essential force for social change, we are a necessity!

If I earn the position of Region One Vice President, I will work hard to ensure our members have a voice at the table. The goals of the Region will come from the reports by the Local leaders who know their members and what issues are important to them. Just like at my local level, transparency, communication and education will be the pillars upon which I base my leadership.

Monique Storozuk, BScN, RN

Monique Storozuk, BScN, RN