



# Board Highlights

## Making Important Decisions for You!

*A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, June 8-10, 2022*

**WITH THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION BEHIND US AND THE RETURN OF DOUG FORD FOR A SECOND TERM** as Premier, the ONA Board of Directors discussed strategies to work with the government to achieve our goals. Foremost among our concerns is the direct impact of Ford policies on the worsening nursing shortage, namely Bill 124, and creeping privatization in our health-care system. We will continue to fight to have Bill 124 repealed and to support our members as we move through these challenging times.

### PRIORITIES

The Board dealt with the following priorities:

- ▶ **Strategic Plan** – The Board heard presentations from staff leads on multi-year action plans to move the Strategic Plan forward. A presentation on the Accountability Framework was provided by members of the Quality of Service to Members Committee and accepted by the Board. Both presentations will be made to leaders at the June Provincial Coordinators Meeting.
- ▶ **Financial Report** – ONA's new Chief Financial Officer Nina Sinopoli presented the Financial and Variance report for the period ending March 31, 2022, which the Board approved. The Board also received a review of the Investment Fund Manager performance as of March 31, 2022.

### BOARD COMMITTEES

Reports were provided updates on the ongoing work of ONA's Quality of Service to Members Committee, Enterprise Risk Committee and the Governance and Nominations Committee. A new Board committee, the Provincial Action Committee, is currently in development.

**Governance and Nominations Committee:** The Board approved changes to the Local and Bargaining Unit Election Policy as recommended by this committee.

**Political Action Committee:** This new committee is currently under development. The Board had

extended the deadline for Expression of Interest (EOI) submissions to June 17 and the committee will be determined from those EOIs received. This committee is being developed in response to our members' increasing political organizing and mobilizing efforts. The committee will identify province-wide trends on workplace or political issues and recommend and implement short- and long-term province-wide political action plans.

Learn more at [www.ona.org/eoi-political-action/](http://www.ona.org/eoi-political-action/).

### POLICY UPDATES

The following policies, mandates and tip sheet were approved by the Board:

- Policy #16.5 New Members
- Policy #23.4 Board Oversight
- ONA Group/Central Negotiating Teams Election Policy
- Accommodation/Return to Work Service Delivery Accountabilities
- Hospital Central Negotiating Team Mandate
- VON Central Negotiating Team Mandate
- Pay Equity Tip Sheet

These will be sent to leaders and posted on our website.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the June Board of Directors meeting will be available at [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org) once approved at the September Board meeting.

## DONATION

The Board approved a donation of \$1,000 to the Haven Toronto Food Program.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

- ▶ **Region 1:** Staffing shortages resulting in workload issues continue to be the prominent trend. The lack of RNs, RPNs and PSWs have led employers to increase their reliance on agency nurses and other agency personnel. Agency use is transcending beyond long-term care and is now prevalent in every sector, further exacerbating the nursing shortage. Health Sciences North has introduced a nursing model change, resulting in a reduction of RN hours due to a loss of approximately 30 full-time RNs leaving the unit. Education in professional responsibility workload reporting forms (PRWRFs) is being planned to assist members.
- ▶ **Region 2:** Front-line staffing shortages are being felt in all sectors in the region with both long-term care and hospitals being hit the hardest. These staffing shortages have resulted in an increase in premium pay, overtime, discipline, re-assignment/layoff, Bargaining Unit work and scheduling grievances being filed. Employers have been hiring more foreign-trained nurses and are failing to recognize their previous experience, which is being challenged via the grievance process. Unregulated Operating Room Assistants (ORAs) are being hired to deal with surgery volumes, which are increasing despite staffing shortages.
- ▶ **Region 3:** Many workplaces are now focused on the fallout of the pandemic, including managing increased staffing shortages and undoing staff reassignments and redeployments previously permissible under Bill 195. Severe staffing shortages are leading to increased agency usage across all sectors. Many nurses are leaving their current employer to take agency work. These nurses often end up working back at their previous employer as agency staff for higher wages. This new trend is compounding the staffing and agency issues, particularly in the hospital sector. Incentives being offered by employers are not provided to all staff, creating inequities. Staffing shortages and COVID fallout have also resulted in employers expanding other classifications into areas of work that are traditionally and properly the work

of the RN. The same is true for other professional classifications in ONA.

- ▶ **Region 4:** Meetings have been held to discuss Hamilton Health Sciences utilization of ORAs to replace RNs and RPNs in the scrub nurse role in three Operating Rooms. ONA's member mobilizer is working with the Bargaining Unit to campaign to stop this practice, asking co-workers to sign a letter to the Chief Nursing Executive. Niagara Health is implementing a similar program. St. Joseph's Hamilton, Niagara Health System and Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Health Unit are enforcing their vaccinate or terminate policies. A high volume of grievances are being filed throughout Region 4, with Local 70 filing more than 130 since January. Professional practice issues abound across all sectors. Leaders report a significant increase in the number of PRWRFs being completed by members.
- ▶ **Region 5:** This region continues to see a high number of vacancies in almost all sectors, with retention and recruitment initiatives proving unsuccessful. In addition, absences due to COVID-19 and stressful work environments remain commonplace. Ninety per cent of members from Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance Emergency Department have signed a letter requesting to meet with their CEO to discuss the harm to the department and community of a policy to no longer hire casuals. Professional practice specialists are being utilized throughout the region in all sectors to assist Bargaining Units with workload and other issues. Understaffing is causing hardship to members. On a high note, provincial election secondees made thousands of calls in the pre-election period to members in this region.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

- ▶ **Communications:** ONA's spring province-wide multi-media advertising campaign, **Nurses Fighting for Change**, launched on April 11. The campaign, which kicked off with television and social media ads, called out the Ford government for failing to address the crisis in health care, including a worsening nursing shortage, and urged Ontarians to vote for public health care on election day. Nursing Week 2022, May 9-15, was our third since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and while for the past two years we encouraged our members to hold virtual events,

this year represented a hybrid of virtual and in-person activities. The theme this year was ***Dedicated to Care. Fighting for Change. / Les soins sont notre mission. Le changement est notre combat.*** While generally a time of celebration, this year we sent out a stronger message of support and unity as we honour our nurses who continue to fight on the front lines. Once again, our public service announcements (PSAs) were aired on radio stations across Ontario at no cost, for a total of 2,191 spots. The PSAs talked about how nurses are committed to fighting for change — better working conditions, safe staffing and the fairness nurses deserve from employers and government — to provide better care for all Ontarians.

- ▶ **Government Relations:** ONA's provincial election campaign saw 18 members from all regions seconded to engage members on the importance of voting in the Ontario election on June 2. They coordinated phone banks and other political action events in their regions, receiving a week-long training session from ONA staff in April. With so much at stake, ONA went all out to prepare for this election, providing Local and Bargaining Unit Leaders, and our front-line members, with all the resources and information they needed to make an informed decision on election day. Although Doug Ford was re-elected, we will continue to pressure his government on all issues that impact our members and to work to repeal Bill 124, the unfair wage-suppression legislation, to end the nursing shortage and rebuild our public health-care system.

- ▶ **Local Political Action:** On May 1, 2022, ONA mobilized as part of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) province-wide day of action. May 1, or May Day, is the traditional workers' holiday, a day on which working people celebrate the gains they have won over the years and commit to fighting for a better future for everyone. This day of action marked one month before the provincial election and was an opportunity for nurses, health-care professionals, unions and workers from across the labour movement, social movements, and our communities, to raise awareness of the issues we've been fighting for these last four years. Thousands of workers and their supporters participated in more than 15 rallies held across Ontario to make sure candidates in every community heard the issues that matter to working people. Marches and rallies were held in Toronto,

Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Peterborough.

- ▶ **Student Liaison:** On March 7, the provincial government announced another new stand-alone four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, this time at Sault College. The first cohort of nursing students in the new program will start in September 2022. Sault College is also launching a new RPN to BScN bridging program, set to start in January 2023. On March 16, Region 3 Vice-President DJ Sanderson presented to over 70 students at Cestar College about the benefits of ONA membership. He fielded questions of the challenges many internationally educated nurses face when trying to secure their license to practice in Ontario. Many struggle with long processing times, lack of mentorship and access to jobs, and unfair regulations.
- ▶ **Professional Practice:** Working alongside Local and Bargaining Unit leaders and front-line members, the Professional Practice Team is continuing to achieve successes when raising professional responsibility and workload concerns. Since January 2022, 10 professional practice files have been settled, marking significant gains for our members. Achievements include:
  - An increase of 70,887 ONA member hours annually.
  - An increase of 20,462 hours annually for other registered staff and an increase of 13,128 hours annually for non-registered staff.
  - Many equipment improvements, including but not limited to, vital sign machines, stethoscopes, thermometers and oxygen monitors.
  - Educational needs assessments added on an annual basis.
  - Health and safety improvements.
- ▶ **Labour Relations:** The All-Sector Strategic Bargaining Project Team (ASSBPT) continues to review and update staff policies and work processes. ASSBPT will now be reviewing policies and direction on a continuous two-year cycle. Position statements, Guides and Tip sheets, and resources relevant to our leaders and members, continue to be reviewed, revised and newly created as needed. A new Have Your Say questionnaire is being developed to determine member priorities for upcoming negotiations in various sectors.

- ▶ **Human Rights and Equity:** The Board approved plans for the Human Rights and Equity Caucus in November, which will focus on Indigenous issues. The Board supported a recommendation from the Human Rights and Equity Team as follows: "Although the team recognizes Florence Nightingale's contributions to nursing, her mistakes cannot be ignored, therefore, as an organization we will no longer use her as a reference when highlighting or advancing the profile of the nursing profession. This includes but is not limited to Nursing Week, International Nurses' Day or any other celebration around nursing. All opportunities will be availed to shine a light on other nurses whose contributions to the nursing profession were significant." Work on ONA's four-year Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Action Plan (ARAO) continues to focus on priority areas. The Board received an Action Plan from the ARAO Working Group. Stay tuned for more information.
- ▶ **Local Finance:** An initial meeting with ONA Chief Financial Officer Nina Sinopoli took place and another meeting will be held this summer to determine where the education focus should be for the Treasurers Day at the October Area Coordinator Conferences. The New Executive Partnership Workshop is scheduled to take place in December.
- ▶ **Health and Safety:** ONA was angered to learn that all but two of the latest round of workplace violence charges against Southlake Regional Health Centre were withdrawn by the Crown with no explanation in March. Charges that were brought

against Southlake and CEO Arden Krystal personally resulted from three separate incidents of workplace violence that happened in October and December of 2020. That included an incident involving a nurse and ONA member, who was injured while caring for a patient with a known history of violent behaviours. One charge regarding the lack of reliable personal workplace violence alarms for staff members was allowed to proceed. Workplace violence continues to be rampant in health care. Nurses and health-care workers continue to regularly experience physical, verbal and sexual violence, which takes a punishing toll on their mental and physical well-being.

- ▶ **Member Education:** The Member Education (ME) Team has moved forward with implementing education digitally. Our offerings have been reviewed and augmented based on Local priority, member need and strategic requirement. Where special circumstances arise with workshop requests for in-person delivery, requests are reviewed, considerations given and approval provided to proceed in person.
- ▶ **Member Engagement and Events:** The Board heard a presentation from the Celebrate 50 Working Group on ONA's 50-year celebration. The front-line members on the Working Group are:
  - Region 1, Jennifer Paul
  - Region 2, Sue Croxford
  - Region 3, Cara Silva
  - Region 4, Ann Scott
  - Region 5, Emily Webb

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held September 13, 14 and 15, 2022.

If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact ONA President Cathryn Hoy, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin or your regional Vice-President (contact information below). Current and past Board meeting highlights are available on our website [here](#).

**Board members for 2022:** Cathryn Hoy, President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison (#7755); Angela Preocanin, First Vice-President, Political Action/Professional Issues (#7707); Dawn Armstrong, Region 1, Human Rights and Equity (#7706); Bernadette Robinson, Region 2, Education (#7756); DJ Sanderson, Region 3, Labour Relations (#7704); Erin Ariss, Region 4, Local Finance (#7709); Alan Warrington, Region 5, Occupational Health and Safety (#7708). **To contact a Board member during regular business hours,** call (416) 964-8833 (Toronto) or toll-free 1-800-387-5580, hit "0" and ask the receptionist to put you through to the appropriate voicemail box (in brackets). **To leave a message for a Board member after hours,** call (416) 964-8833 (Toronto) or toll-free 1-800-387-5580 (if using the toll-free number, hit "0" immediately after dialing the number to be connected to the Toronto office), then dial her or his voicemail box. The Board also has an intake box for emergencies, monitored twice daily. To reach it, call the above numbers and dial voicemail box #7775.