



# Board Highlights

## Making Important Decisions for You!

*A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, September 13-15, 2022*

**THIS BOARD MEETING WAS THE FINAL ONE FOR REGION 3 VICE-PRESIDENT DJ SANDERSON**, who moves on to join ONA staff in the role of Executive Lead, Provincial Services, overseeing Professional Practice, Health and Safety, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Long-Term Disability and Member Education. Replacing DJ as Region 3 Vice-President is Karen McKay-Eden, who assumes her role on October 1 and attended this Board meeting as an observer. The Board wishes both DJ and Karen good luck in their new roles.

### PRIORITIES

The Board dealt with the following priorities:

- ▶ **Financial Report** – The Board approved the Financial and Variance report for the period ending June 30, 2022. This will be shared with members at the November Provincial Coordinators Meeting. The Board also approved the 2023-2025 multi-year plan, which will be discussed with Local leaders at the October Area Coordinator Conferences (ACCs). The Board also reviewed the Investment Fund performance as of June 30, 2022.
- ▶ **ONA 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration** – The Board heard a report on the work of the Celebrate 50 Team and plans moving forward. The launch date for the dedicated hub platform is October 19. ONA will be using the same Event Mobi app that has been used for other ONA events/meetings to host resources and content related to ONA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The hub will have an array of information, stories, videos, events, offers and history on it. You will be able to download it as an app or access it through an internet browser. We will also have a page dedicated to our 50<sup>th</sup> on our [ona.org](http://ona.org) website that will link to the hub.

### POLICY UPDATES

The following policies were approved by the Board:

- Policy 10.1 – *Board Committees Mandate.*
- Policy 16.27 – *ONA Commemorative Dates.*
- Policy 23.1 – *Invoked Administration.*
- Policy 26.17 – *Funding for Local Coordinator and Local Treasurer High-Speed Internet.*

These updated policies will be sent to leaders and can be reviewed through Access ONA.

### BOARD MOTIONS

- ▶ The Board approved a motion recognizing Emancipation Day on August 1 as one of ONA's commemorative dates.
- ▶ The Board approved a motion to make a donation in the amount of \$100,000 for 2023 to the Ontario Health Coalition. This represents an additional \$50,000 to our usual annual donation of \$50,000 and will be funded from the existing budget line for donations in 2023.

### MEMBER TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The Board approved the following:

- Professional Practice Independent Assessment Committee infographic.
- Workload Report Form for the Homes and Community Care Support Services sector.
- Joint Health and Safety Committee Representative Tracking Tools.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

## REGIONAL REPORTS

- ▶ **Region 1:** There is a continued high use of agency nurses in most Bargaining Units, resulting in member frustration over lack of recruitment and a retention strategy. Continued COVID-19 outbreaks are causing increased workloads. Although vacations were granted, many units were left short-handed during the summer. Although there haven't been emergency room closures, many employers are issuing public statements regarding high wait times and lack of staff.
- ▶ **Region 2:** Staffing was extremely short over the summer. Many management teams did not address the nursing and health-care worker shortfall in early planning and many units either closed or decreased services. Patients and staff were put at risk, due to poor management decisions. To entice workers to accept work, many employers offered overtime and up to two times the regular hourly rate. There have been incidents of extreme violence over the last month, with one member severely choked. ONA had to push for a safety plan for the member.
- ▶ **Region 3:** Vacancy and agency issues are being reported across the region in hospital and long-term care sectors, with bonus money being offered to agency nurses for accepting critical care shifts. Employers are offering premium rates for call-ins primarily in critical care and emergency departments (EDs). Skill mix remains an issue at many hospitals with RPNs being introduced into critical care and PSWs as "helping hands." Succession planning in one Local is well underway.
- ▶ **Region 4:** Critical staffing shortages are prevalent. There are many examples of closures throughout the region. One hospital closed its ED on several occasions. Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) has introduced operating room assistants (ORAs) into OR care teams. ONA's member mobilizer has worked with our members at all sites on a letter to the Chief Nursing Executive and nursing executives outlining their concerns. In August, a letter was delivered to the hospital's Board of Directors and a meeting was scheduled with the Chief Executive Officer. ORAs are also in place at Niagara Health and mobilizing has begun. Agency use has increased exponentially in this region. Members and leaders have expressed concern about the fragmented patient care. ONA's Professional Practice Team has been heavily engaged

throughout the region to assist with the introduction of RPNs into ICUs and the use of unregulated care providers in many clinical areas, including ORs and ICUs (ORAs and clinical externs). Due to staffing shortages, HHS and other employers are implementing Team Nursing models of care. As a result, grievances are being filed.

- ▶ **Region 5:** There are a high number of vacancies (in almost all sectors) with retention and recruitment initiatives proving futile. ED closures and/or reduction of services has worsened due to staffing shortages (Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, South Bruce Grey Health Centre and Grey Bruce Health Services). We are seeing increased usage of agency nurses in non-traditional rural hospital settings and long-term care. Larger hospitals appear to be considering the introduction of agency nurses to address staffing deficiencies. Burnout and absenteeism are increasing among Bargaining Unit leaders and members. The Huron Perth Bargaining Unit, through an incredible letter-signing campaign, met with their CEO to raise the concerns about a moratorium policy for casuals. The hospital has offered to increase casual postings in many departments throughout their sites; regrettably, that commitment has not been extended to the EDs. The resolve of this group is very inspiring – more to come!

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

- ▶ **Communications:** ONA's fall advertising campaign, *Nurses Fighting for Change* has begun. We had print ads in three consecutive weekend issues of the *Toronto Star* and are continuing our arrangement with *Hospital News* for an inside-cover ad monthly. We continue to call out the Ontario government for failing to address the crisis in health care. Every sector is losing skilled nurses and health-care workers, and that is bad for our patients, residents and clients. For information on our campaign and to view our ads, go to the newly refreshed campaign website, [Nurses Fighting for Change](#). You can also *Share Your Story*. As part of our provincial campaign, we are asking members to share their stories of how the staffing crisis is impacting their work, their wellbeing, and the quality of care they are able to provide. These stories will be used anonymously in future campaign messaging to help tell Ontarians the truth about what's happening on the front lines of our health care. Everyone is encouraged to [Share Your Story](#).

- ▶ **Government Relations:** ONA's legal team presented our arguments regarding why Bill 124 was unconstitutional at the Charter Challenge hearing, September 13-14. Our arguments were based on two grounds: 1. Bill 124 interferes with our members' rights to freely collectively bargain; and 2. Bill 124 is discriminatory as it disproportionately impacts female-dominated professions. A summary of our testimony has been posted on our website at [Bill 124 update](#). ONA President/Interim Chief Executive Officer Cathryn Hoy had a disappointing first meeting with Health Minister Sylvia Jones on September 15. On the key issue of repealing Bill 124, the Health Minister said she was unable to discuss it because it is in the courts. She listened to the solutions we offered to address the nursing crisis, such as bringing back retired nurses for mentoring and phasing out agency nursing, but did not make any commitments. The Health Minister said her goal is expanding capacity across all partners whether for-profit or not. ONA believes the solution is to put more funding into the public system.
- ▶ **Local Political Action:** ONA took a leading role as one of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) union affiliates organizing action timed for the opening of the Legislature on August 8 at Queen's Park. The *Listen up! This is the Ontario We Need* theme was to remind Premier Doug Ford what his government's priorities should be to make Ontario affordable for the working class. We need a government that will address the cost-of-living crisis, with rising housing, transportation and food costs. Twenty ONA members participated in the action. ONA reiterated our call to repeal Bill 124 and keep health care public. Shelly Ormsby, ONA Local 51 Site Rep at Lakeridge Health Bowmanville, was ONA's spokesperson at the rally. She talked about how Bill 124 makes it difficult for nurses and health-care professionals to make ends meet as wages do not keep up with the cost of living. Ormsby was quoted by NDP MPP Jennifer French in question period on August 10, who said: "Shelly, an ICU nurse who works at Bowmanville, stood on the lawn of Queen's Park and bravely told us what it was like to watch fellow co-workers make the difficult decision to leave the bedside in a health-care system where nurses cannot take it any longer. Bill 124 has unfairly suppressed wages, and exhausted nurses feel devalued, underappreciated and disrespected – and this after two years of

COVID. We need the Bowmanville ICU to reopen. How will this Premier ensure nurses can stay and ICUs can stay open?"

- ▶ **Student Liaison:** ONA supported the Toronto Metropolitan University and McMaster Nursing Students' Association orientations by providing ONA-branded sticky notes to help students study, a gift card valued at \$300 to raffle off to a first-year student, and 700 ONA nursing student brochures to include in orientation kits. This year, many in-person orientations are returning for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. These materials will help new nursing students learn more about ONA. The Communications and Government Relations Team (CGRT) developed shareables for student leaders to use on social media.
- ▶ **Professional Practice:** The Professional Practice Team continues its momentum in supporting members to raise their professional responsibility and workload issues and push for file resolution and implementation of settlements. Working alongside Local leadership and front-line members, the team continues to achieve success in settlements and is moving files to an Independent Assessment Committee where a settlement is not achievable.
- ▶ **Human Rights and Equity:** The Human Rights and Equity Team led ONA's contingent at the 2022 Pride Parade in Toronto on June 26. It was an awesome event! The crowd was very welcoming when they saw our float and members; the cheers and applause were almost overwhelming. It was wonderful to have all Board members join us this year. We have some great ideas for next year! We continue to collaborate with CGRT, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Working Group to ensure we are proactively and appropriately representing our marginalized and historically marginalized members as we recognize commemorative dates throughout the year. The team is now focussed on preparing for the Human Rights and Equity Caucus on October 31. Our theme is: *Truth and Reconciliation – History, Healing and Hope*. This will be a very full day for the team and participants. The agenda is jam-packed with guest speakers, education on Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous ceremonies. We will be adding something different to this year's agenda in that we will have a movie screening for our participants. Layla Staats-Black

will be joining us to show her documentary *Blood and Water: A Reclamation Story*.

- ▶ **Local Finance:** Planning for our Treasurers Workshop October ACCs/New Executive Partnership Workshop 2022 is underway. We sent out a survey in June to Treasurers requesting their educational needs. This information was compiled and divided by region to customize the education by regional needs. We have another meeting booked at the end of August to walk through the day and finalize the plenary. This same group will meet in the coming weeks to review the New Executive Partnership Workshop.
- ▶ **Health and Safety:** The Board approved the Tip Sheet, *Health Risks Associated with Working Rotating and/or Night Shifts*. This resource is designed to alert ONA members to the hazards of rotating shifts/straight nights, as well as identify what ONA believes to be the role of the employer and government to mitigate these risks. ONA members need to understand the risks associated with working rotating and/or night shifts so they can make informed choices about their work. Direction was sent to leaders in June regarding the revocation of all COVID-19 directives, including Directive 5, by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The memo includes directions to leaders, some of which include: ensuring the mandatory masking requirements for health-care workers, patients, caregivers, visitors and other members of the public are maintained; maintaining at minimum the mandating of a fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirator (or equivalent or greater protection), eye protection, gown and gloves when providing direct

care or interacting with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19; ensuring direct access to N95 respirators for our members whose Point-of-Care Risk Assessment determine one is needed; and conducting ongoing risk assessments for the threat of infectious disease.

- ▶ **Member Education:** Education workshops continue to be delivered using Zoom as the primary method. As we move into the fall, we will be delivering some of our workshops that are more hands on and require in-person delivery. These are primarily the Executive Skills 1 and 2 series. In addition, Rock your Role will be offered in person in the Toronto office in October, November and December. If there are five or fewer participants, this workshop will revert to digital delivery. Members can continue to request in-person workshops. There were 60 workshops delivered between May 1 and July 31, 2022 in our digital space. The eLearning platform has been updated and is now accessible to both members and staff. We have seen a notable increase in the percentage of members utilizing Access ONA to register for workshops versus using the online registration form. Working with the Applications and Development Team, we will continue to transition our members over to Access ONA when registering for workshops. The registration page will indicate that ONA will be removing the online registration option by the end of September 2022. This will be followed by a number of email blasts to our members informing them that they will need to register for workshops via Access ONA as the online registration form will no longer be available.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held November 29 to December 1, 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); Karen McKay-Eden, Region 3 (#7710); 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.