



# Board Highlights

## Making Important Decisions for You!

*A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, November 29 to December 1, 2022*

**THIS WAS THE FINAL BOARD MEETING IN 2022**, and also the first Board meeting chaired by interim Provincial President Bernie Robinson. It was also the first official Board meeting for new Region 3 Vice-President Karen McKay-Eden, and for the new permanent Chief Executive Officer Andrea Kay, who serves as secretary to the Board. The Board wishes all members and staff a safe and joyous holiday season.

The Board discussed the following items:

- ▶ The Superior Court of Ontario's Nov. 29 ruling that Bill 124 is unconstitutional and next steps. The Ontario government has said it will appeal the decision and is seeking a stay. Since the decision of the Court means that Bill 124 has no effect, we will be going back to the table to renegotiate issues related to total compensation that were constrained by the legislation, such as the one-per-cent wage cap.
- ▶ The Board supported contributing \$14,380 for polling and message development regarding the Five Health-Care Union Campaign on staffing and privatization. ONA has partnered with four other health-care unions, representing 295,000 Ontario workers, to pressure the Ford government stabilize our failing health-care system. ONA, the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU-CUPE), Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU/SEFPO), SEIU Healthcare and Unifor want Ontario to adopt such solutions as an aggressive staff retention strategy.
- ▶ The Board held a debrief of the November Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) and Human Rights and Equity Caucus, as well as the Leadership Summit. PCM highlights are posted on our website at [here](#). A discussion was held about plans for the upcoming Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) April 4-5, 2023. The Board reviewed and outlined Constitutional Amendments education planned for the PLM.
- ▶ The Board received an annual presentation from Johnson Insurance and approved a motion to implement a 24-month cool-off period for the member Dental Plan benefit in order to reduce the ONA Benefit Program premium increase from eight per cent to four

per cent. This means members enrolled in the plan must stay in the plan for 24 months.

### POLICY UPDATES

The Board approved the following policy amendments:

- Policy 26.23 – Funding for new Bargaining Unit President education.
- Policy 18.6 – The provincial election policy has been updated to reflect recommendations from the provincial Election Team as supported by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

These updated policies can be reviewed through Access ONA.

### DONATIONS

The following donations were approved by the Board:

- \$5,000 to Operation Christmas Cheer.
- \$10,000 to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.
- Continued support for ONA's yearly sustaining contribution of \$22,000 to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Ontario.
- ONA continues its sponsorship of the Ontario Legislative Internship Program in 2022/23 in the amount of \$2,500.

### REGIONAL REPORTS

- ▶ **Region 1:** Staffing issues continue to be a major concern. Nurse practitioners (NPs) have been introduced into small rural emergency rooms (ERs) to

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the November 29-December 1 Board of Directors meeting will be available at [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org) once approved.

address physician and nursing shortages and increased patient volumes. Bargaining Unit Presidents will ensure NPs are recognized as part of the Bargaining Unit. Letters of Understanding for a double-time incentive have been negotiated with some employers to address staffing shortages. Employers have also implemented other incentives, including recruitment bonuses, housing and licensing fees. There is increased apathy in filling out workload reporting forms. Some members believe emailing their managers will cover them. There is an increase in hospitals being penalized for agency use. Members are reporting "Agency fatigue," due to constant orientation of Agency staff, and employers changing schedules to accommodate agency staff at the expense of membership. Retention issues persist. There is an increase in accommodation requests due to stress, anxiety and mental health issues.

- ▶ **Region 2:** Staffing shortages continue to be a problem, with such actions as denial of vacation requests and staff being mandated to work double shifts at some employers. ONA's Professional Practice specialists are supporting members with workload concerns at some facilities. Grievances have been filed for workload, job posting issues, improper reassignments and union hours being filled by non-union staff (managers). Members continue to resign leaving some employers short-staffed. New members are hired, which creates workload issues for senior members who are required to mentor them. One hospital has increased Agency usage significantly due to its RN shortages. Health and safety concerns persist at one employer related to workplace threats from visitors. Grievances are being filed over workplace violence issues.
- ▶ **Region 3:** High rates of vacancies are occurring in specialty areas such as ICU/ED and OBS. Recruitment and retention of staff are issues and our region is reporting unprecedented use of Agency staff, especially in the hospital sector in ICU. Four hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area are implementing an ICU float pool. Each facility will hire five RNs with the intention to float to whichever hospital has greatest need. This is being closely monitored. One hospital has commenced with a second round of layoffs and initiating the hiring of personal support workers. Another will reopen a closed unit with or without the staff to make the beds operational. Bed mapping and bed movement is being instituted at a hospital and we are monitoring for potential layoffs. Discipline for some Bargaining Unit Presidents is occurring.

- ▶ **Region 4:** Critical staffing shortages are not improving across the region and are extending into all sectors. As a result, Agency usage has increased exponentially in all sectors, including in long-term care and Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS). Agency nurses are being used instead of paying our members premiums. Emergency Departments (EDs) are experiencing significant volumes that exceed their normal levels. EDs are not able to admit patients to inpatient beds creating a lack of space in the EDs for emergency patients. As such, patients are being placed in hallways, around nursing stations and in EMS garages. Pediatric Units are over capacity and critically understaffed. Pediatric patients are being transferred from regional pediatric centres to children's hospitals hours away. Operating Room Assistants have been implemented at Hamilton Health Sciences and Niagara Health Systems. Members at both Locals are mobilizing for patient safety and a significant political action campaign is underway, which includes petition signing, meeting with CEOs/CNEs and rallies. Local Leaders are voicing concerns about overwork, burnout and conflict. Professional Practice concerns are increasing with respect to internationally-educated nurses and unregulated care providers.
- ▶ **Region 5:** Staffing shortages and high volume of grievances are occurring across the region. There has been an introduction and escalation of other workers performing Bargaining Unit work as well as the increased use of Agency staff throughout the region. Many sectors report severe staffing shortages and dreadfully high occupancy rate in pediatric units. Some employers are issuing two times payments for overtime to cope with staffing shortages. Continued increased incidents of violence and workplace injuries due to understaffing. Professional Practice Specialists are involved throughout the region at all stages of the professional responsibility process. The issues being addressed include insufficient staffing, equipment shortages and skill-mix changes, etc. Some Bargaining Units are reporting improper layoffs. Hundreds of our members from the Windsor area are leaving for Agency and positions in the United States.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

- ▶ **Communications:** ONA's ad targeting Premier Doug Ford, "Struck Down," appeared in the Saturday *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* on Dec. 10. A final ad urging the Ontario government not to appeal the court's

decision on Bill 124 was published in the Saturday Star on Dec. 17. We also ran a final week of social media ads from Dec. 10-16. See our full suite of ads at [nursesfightingforchange.ca](https://nursesfightingforchange.ca).

We continue to call out the Ontario government for failing to address the crisis in health care.

Members can share their stories of how the staffing crisis is impacting their work, their well-being and the quality of care they are able to provide. Everyone is encouraged to [Share Your Story](#).

- ▶ **Government Relations:** ONA continues to work with four other major health-care unions in Ontario to pressure the Ontario government to address our collapsing health-care system.

ONA held two successful town halls on Dec. 12, responding to the many questions our members have concerning the landmark Ontario Superior Court decision that struck down Bill 124 as a violation of public-sector workers' constitutional rights. Unfortunately, the Ontario government says it intends to appeal the ruling. We will update you as this process unfolds. A survey during the town halls indicated 87 per cent of members are willing to take political action. The Dec. 12 town hall recorded sessions can be found here:

- [ona.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-12-12-bill-124-town-hall-530pm.mp3](https://ona.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-12-12-bill-124-town-hall-530pm.mp3).
- [ona.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-12-12-bill-124-town-hall-730pm.mp3](https://ona.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-12-12-bill-124-town-hall-730pm.mp3).

For more information on our Bill 124 actions, see our dedicated webpage [here](#).

- ▶ **Local Political Action: Rally to Save Operating Room RNs at HHS** – ONA members and leaders rallied alongside patients, community members and labour leaders in Hamilton, in a call for Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) to increase staffing to begin clearing up surgical backlogs. HHS plans to cut nurses from their role in operating rooms and replace them with unregulated health-care workers. Petitions to stop this unsafe model of care have been read in the legislature and videos of the reading were posted on ONA's social media sites.
- ▶ **Student Liaison:** On Nov. 28, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin and Parisa Jamali, the Ontario Regional Representative for the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA), met with Dr. Karima Velji, Ontario's Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice, to discuss initiatives to better support nursing students.

ONA will continue to advocate for paid clinical placements, additional financial support and more RN seats at Ontario colleges and universities.

- ▶ **Professional Practice:** An Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) panel of nursing experts made 64 recommendations to improve patient care in the Mental Health and Addiction Care Program (MHAP) at Kingston General Hospital. Recommendations covered the following areas:
  - Human Resource Planning and RN staffing levels.
  - Education, Training and Professional Development.
  - Violence Risk, Patient Acuity and Complexity.
  - Morale and a Toxic Work Environment.
  - Leadership and Communication.
 ONA will continue to push for changes, including a resolution to inadequate staffing resources and ineffective retention and recruitment strategies. The IAC report is posted on our professional practice webpage at [IAC Reports](#). Click [here](#) for our media release.
- ▶ **Human Rights and Equity: Share your experiences with our ARAO team** – Earlier this year, ONA launched a four-year action plan that will help guide our union in addressing the ongoing racism and oppression that exists for so many of our members and staff, and within our communities. To explore how the action plan can best support you, the Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Working Group would like to know what issues you can identify in your Bargaining Unit or Local that relate to anti-racism and anti-oppression. Visit [ona.org/arao/leader-feedback/](https://ona.org/arao/leader-feedback/) and share your experiences.
- ▶ **Local Finance:** The 2023 Budget Template was released and is in a consolidated Supplementary Funded Locals/ Non-Supplementary Funded Locals format. The template underwent extensive testing and ONA will update the template as needed. The Treasurers Workshop was held in October at the Area Coordinator Conferences (ACCs). The day consisted of Governance and Administrative training. A sample policy for Locals to use in their Local Finance Policies was provided to the Treasurers. Treasurers were reminded to contact hospital sector Bargaining Unit Presidents to inquire if the Bargaining Unit is entitled to any Agency usage penalties.
- ▶ **Occupational Health and Safety:** ONA is moving forward with an *Occupational Health and Safety Act* appeal regarding the Southlake Regional Health Centre's Mental Health and Wellness Area. This appeal arises from a violent incident on Jan. 17, 2019, in which two workers suffered critical injuries from a Form 1

patient. An ONA member suffered two skull fractures and a security guard's orbital bone was fractured.

At Halton Health, ONA's OHSA appeal was stayed pending the outcome of a criminal trial. The appeal concerned a physician who was criminally convicted for assaulting a hospital employee. The employer failed to provide notice to the workplace parties, did not investigate appropriately and failed to warn workers about the risk of violence by the perpetrator. With procedural issues resolved, the appeal is progressing, and hearings were held Aug. 30 and Sept. 1 to determine the scope of issues to be considered.

There have been multiple fires in the Intensive Care Units at London Health Sciences Centre linked to Baxter IV pumps over the past year and investigations failed to determine a cause. A Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development electrical engineer has provided recommendations to prevent fires in the ICU.

- ▶ **Member Education:** The Membership Education (ME) Team supports the organizational strategic goals and objectives by providing members with education workshop sessions that enhance member skill sets, delivering ONA education in digital format, in person and through our eLearning platform. Education workshops continue to be delivered using ZOOM as the primary method. Rock your Role (RYR) was offered in person in Toronto in October and December of this year. Members can continue to request in-person workshops. There were 35 workshops delivered between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30 in our digital space.

## EVENT PLANNING

- ▶ The PLM will be held April 4-5, 2023. A robust topic list of general interest sessions and core competency sessions for both Novice and Advanced participants has been approved and is now in development with subject matter experts. Planning work and curriculum development continues on the Sector session and Regional session segments. A needs assessment survey has been sent to the Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents to inform the session development. The plenary session will include segments on the accountabilities framework and Anti Racism and Anti Oppression.
- ▶ **ONA Celebrate 50:** The HUB soft launched on Oct. 19, 2022 and will continue to be populated with new activities and material uploaded on the 19<sup>th</sup> of every month from Oct. 2022 through Dec. 2023. The HUB platform is the centre for all Celebrate 50 information. At the November PCM, working group team members Sue Croxford (Region 2) and Ann Scott (Region 4) presented what members can expect to see on the HUB and in celebration events throughout 2023. The first of the Celebrate 50 merchandise available in the ONA Boutique was offered at the PCM and new items will be available on the ONA Boutique site and at major events moving forward. The Celebrate 50 working group continues to meet and make recommendations for regional page features and interviews, as well as ONA Boutique items.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held March 21-23, 2023.

If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact Interim ONA Provincial President/Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson, 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:** Bernadette Robinson, Interim Provincial 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, 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.