



Board Highlights

Making Important Decisions for You!

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, March 21-23, 2023

THIS WAS THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ONA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2023. The meeting was chaired by interim Provincial President Bernie Robinson. ONA's newly elected President, Erin Ariss, will chair the next Board meeting in June.

The Board discussed the following items:

- ▶ That as a member organization of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), ONA will put forward a resolution for the creation of a Dues Structure Committee to review and provide recommendations regarding affiliate members' dues to CFNU. The resolution will be put forward by ONA at the CFNU Convention in June 2023.
- ▶ The Board of Directors also agreed to continue ONA's full endorsement, participation and affiliation with the CFNU.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- ▶ ONA is now entering its third phase of the strategic plan. This phase will develop interim measurement and reporting systems for the Multi-Year Action Plan and Accountability Framework, our two key deliverables from Phase II. This work will enhance ONA's ability to assess whether our work is achieving our goals, and will streamline our work within and among teams in the organization as we focus on common goals. The outcome of ONA's Branding Project, another key initiative, will be an important vehicle to communicate ONA's identity and core business – including our Mission, Vision and Values – to our staff, members, external stakeholders and the public. Under the Professional Practice Initiative, a key project – Members Supported – is also underway.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ▶ **Quality Committee**
As part of ONA's Strategic Plan, the committee is looking at the issue of communication with ONA members and has discussed developing a survey on our communication effectiveness.

▶ Risk Management and Finance

ONA's Health and Safety Precaution Statement was updated to reflect current precautions for COVID. A safety protocol and tip sheet will be circulated to leaders for use at in-person events. Prompted by a severe weather alert and power failure at the 2022 Leadership Camp, it was also determined that an emergency response plan for events is required.

▶ Governance and Nominations

As 2023 is a Biennial Convention year, this committee will be prioritizing a review of ONA's Constitution and suggesting revisions as appropriate.

▶ Political Action

This committee was launched in January 2023. The committee's mandate is to identify province-wide issues and assist members in developing and implementing political action plans to address these issues. The focus will be on high membership participation and building strong Bargaining Unit structures for advocacy on issues that matter to ONA members.

▶ Constitutional Amendments

The Board reviewed the work done to date on constitutional amendments by the Governance and Nominations Committee. The goal is to have the amendments finalized for presentation at the June Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the March 21-23 Board of Directors meeting will be available at www.ona.org once approved.

POLICY UPDATES

The following policy amendments were approved by the Board:

- Policy 14.2 – Signing of Collective Agreements
- Policy 16.16 – Membership Discipline
- Policy 16.26 – Support for Members Running for Political Office
- Policy 26.16 – Security Fund – Establishment and Use of Monies
- Anti-Racism Advisory Team Mandate
- Standing Board Committees Mandates
- Nursing Week Advisory Team Mandate

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

DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

The following was approved by the Board:

- \$7,500 at the Advocate Sponsor level for a Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) event on May 30, 2023.
- Purchase of 1,000 OFL International Women's Day pins at \$3.25 per pin for a total of \$3,250.
- \$1,750 Gold Sponsor level for the Registered Nurses' Foundation of Ontario (RNFOO) Annual Gala on May 3, 2023.

REGIONAL REPORTS

► Region 1:

- Notable increase in violence, including family and visitors.
- Agency nurse use has increased and so has resentment/anger from our members over various issues, such as pay, scheduling and preferential treatment of agency nurses. Some agency RPNs are being compensated and earning more than the RNs in long-term care (LTC) homes.
- Some Bargaining Units report discontinuation of vaccination mandate policies and that their employers are not requiring vaccinations for new hires or are bringing back members who were placed on leave.
- The new Bargaining Unit President at St. Joseph's Elliot Lake has increased member engagement as well as Bargaining Unit reps. They are very politically active in engaging labour councils and other unions.

► Region 2:

- Staffing shortages are significant and there are pending layoffs at one employer, where ONA's Professional Practice Team is preparing for an

Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) in both Emergency and Med/Surg departments.

- A notable number of issues remain in dispute at another hospital, where there are significant RN shortages and issues due to heavy workloads. This employer appears to have abandoned following the collective agreement.
- Staffing shortages are occurring and agency nurses are being used at another employer, who is using multiple strategies to actively recruit.
- Insufficient baseline staffing is resulting in denied vacation, chronically working short and increased workload issues. Professional Responsibility Workload Report Forms (PRWRFs) are being submitted.
- Vacation denials have continued at one organization as well as failure to notify members of such denials.
- Signing bonuses are being paid for full-time and part-time staff at one employer, who has implemented temporary enhancement pay without ONA agreement of terms and continues to amend and adjust enhancements in an arbitrary manner.

► Region 3:

- High rates of agency usage and vacancies in the hospital sector, especially in specialty areas.
- Retention of staff a key issue. Employers are offering recruitment bonuses but staff are not staying because of high workloads and unsafe skill mix.
- All Locals report issues with the return-to-work process and the culture of pushing nurses with identified mental issues back to work with disregard for physicians' recommendations.
- Grievances filed regarding reduction of nursing hours with notice at a VON branch. There is a net loss of 24 RNs since 2018. The employer claims that they are actively posting however they are unable to demonstrate that there were 24 postings at the December grievance meeting. This will be referred to arbitration.
- Workload issues are related to staffing at one facility. Agency usage and a parallel workforce are of concern. The employer has considered on-call commitment from the agency.

► Region 4:

- Right-to-Strike sectors, including home and community care support services (HCCSS), public health units and home care, are conducting strike mandate votes and members are willing to strike on principle alone in many cases. The Region of Waterloo Public Health avoided strike action and successfully ratified an agreement achieved after two days of conciliation.

- LTC is overrun with agency nursing and membership counts are down in most Bargaining Units.
- Employers are becoming increasingly adversarial, and in more than one case our Bargaining Unit Presidents and Bargaining Unit Reps are being targeted by the employer.
- Leaders report a significant increase in cyber bullying and member-to-member harassment. Leaders are looking for strategies to address this behaviour as this is impacting their ability to lead. Some will not be seeking re-election this year as a result. Succession planning is being undertaken and the education budget has been increased to prepare for new Bargaining Unit representation.
- Locals have embraced political action with nine local pickets on Feb. 23, and hundreds of members attending the March 2 rally. Many members have asked what ONA's next action will be as they are very eager to participate.

► Region 5:

- Closures and reduced weekend hours are occurring.
- Occupancy rates remain high, but the severity of illness has decreased.
- Staffing deficiencies continue across also sectors.
- Increased member engagement on provincial political initiatives.
- RN staffing challenges and above ad-hoc Agency use continues. One Emergency Department remains closed evenings and weekends.
- Some units are without any RN coverage. The surge unit is mandated by government and is staffed with agency nurses.
- An employer continues to have difficulty recruiting staff or finding coverage for sick calls due to staffing shortages.
- Members are hesitant to complete PRWRFs. The Bargaining Unit President is looking to schedule education.
- There are 27 multi-unit/multi-site positions at one employer, who is looking to reduce these to seven positions.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

► Communications

- **ONA Branding:** Research and consultation work continues with our partner, STIFF, on this project and is moving along respecting the project timeline, approved at the April 2022 Board meeting. STIFF presented to members at the Area Coordinators Conferences held (ACCs) in February. The research

phase continues with data review from the strategic plan, and interviews with selected individuals from all stakeholder groups. A presentation to Local Coordinators is planned for the June Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM).

- **Nursing Week:** We are busy preparing for Nursing Week, the first since 2020 in which we can safely promote in-person as well as virtual events. Our theme this year is: *Lasting Impact, Forging Our Future*. Once again, we will be providing a gift to members as well as a letter from the Board in our Spring *Front Lines* mailing. We are pleased once again to offer a digital order form for ONA leaders to request posters in two sizes. Note that all members will receive a letter-sized poster with their Spring 2023 *Front Lines* mailing. Leaders who wish to book ONA Board members to attend or speak at their Nursing Week event, may do so using our Guest Request Form at [Guest Request Form](#). The deadline for guest requests is April 24, 2023. This practice was suspended in 2020-21 due to COVID. All Nursing Week materials (posters and shareables) plus other information are available on our Nursing Week page at [Nursing Week 2023](#).
- **Media:** ONA had two main stories that dominated media coverage during this reporting period: our victory in our *Charter* challenge of Bill 124, followed closely by the Ford government's decision to appeal the ruling; and the start of bargaining for hospital-sector members and escalating actions across Ontario by front-line members. Media coverage of the all-out pickets organized by ONA Locals saturated the media and reached a huge proportion of Ontario's population, furthering the level of awareness of Ontarians of the support nurses have as they seek to provide better care through better staffing and better wages. Media coverage of the rallies alone garnered coverage from a total of 41 media outlets, including 19 newspapers, 7 radio stations, 13 TV stations and two digital media outlets. We will be providing an update in the next Board report on the huge media coverage that came out of our March 2 protest at the Sheraton Hotel and march to Queen's Park. The Ford government's announcements regarding privatization of parts of the health-care system has also bumped up media coverage of ONA. To prepare for and maximize coverage, ONA has provided media training to Bargaining Unit Presidents and Local Coordinators, including consistent key messages, to enable ONA

members/leaders raise awareness and support of hospital-sector members' pursuit of a respectful contract. In addition, media training was provided to ONA's Board of Directors in early January. We continue to provide an ONA podcast on our website at [ONA Podcast](#).

- **Social Media:** Our media release post about Bill 124 being declared unconstitutional netted us our highest number of engagements in all platforms, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Other content that challenged Doug Ford performed well on Facebook, including our social shareable of the Compass 360 "Seriously?" newspaper ad, and our "Ford's Failing Health Care Plan" news conference with the major health care unions also ranking in our top 10 posts for this period.

► **Government Relations/Member Mobilizing/Campaigns**

- **Mobilizing our Members:** ONA has been a hotbed of activity for the last few months as we set in motion an incredibly compressed set of escalating actions in support of our Hospital Central Bargaining Team, representing 60,000 hospital sector RNs and health-care professionals. Since the beginning of 2023 we held a series of meetings with leaders and activists who joined our Hospital Contract Action Team (HCAT) to engage their workplaces and communities in collective actions to support bargaining. In early February, we held a Sticker Up day promoting our message in workplaces across Ontario. On Feb. 23, we held a series of pickets across the province, which turned out ONA members by the hundreds in freezing temperatures with the same message – calling for better staffing, better wages and better care. Nurses and health-care professionals organized pickets in front of hospitals and Conservative MPPs' offices. On March 2, we held a massive picket in front of the Sheraton Hotel and marched to Queen's Park from there. Our members have been loud and clear that they are fed up with unsafe staffing, wage suppression and heavy workloads that are responsible for our members' increasing inability to provide the best patient care possible. We had incredible help from the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), Justice for Workers and other unions, including teachers, for our efforts. HCAT will be planning other actions to continue the pressure. An action is planned for the PLM on April 4 as well as a community action on April 23.

- **Local Political Action/Community Labour Solidarity:**

The Campaigns Officer has been working closely with a Government Relations Specialist on the Communications and Government Relations Team (CGRT) to reach out to labour unions and community groups to familiarize them with the hospital bargaining campaign, communicate the collective actions ONA members are mobilizing around, and to build union and community solidarity. We are calling, emailing and meeting these allies over zoom or in person. They have also been conducting training for HCAT leaders who want more support in doing outreach to labour and community allies, in addition to the training provided during the ONA province-wide HCAT meeting. This has been incredibly successful with the strong showing of support by the OFL and other community groups at our events. Of note in the community outreach efforts is the deep commitment to solidarity with nurses and health-care workers shown by Justice for Workers from the Workers Action Centre. Members in the group and their allies have been [posting around Greater Toronto](#), mobilizing the public around what is happening to nurses and health-care workers in Ontario, and moving people to take action by posting solidarity selfies, "painting the province pink" through postering, and asking them to show up to the February 23 pickets and March 2 shutdown protest. It is important that we continue to build relationships with groups like Justice for Workers, and to bring nurses and health-care professionals to the forefront of these struggles by encouraging them to take part in community action. As well as all of the above activity, ONA's Member Mobilizers have been working with specific Bargaining Units to plan campaigns around professional practice issues.

► **Labour Relations**

- ONA's central hospital bargaining has moved on to Arbitration in early May before Arbitrator Kaplan. Orientation was held for our Victorian Order of Nurses Bargaining Units and negotiations commence at the end of March. All local issue agreements have been reached for participating nursing homes. The Stout award for the Bill 124 reopener for participating not-for-profit nursing homes was released which covered the term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

► **Professional Practice**

- The Professional Practice Initiative has started in Region 1. This supports our Strategic Plan initiative

to enhance labour relations services (Action 6). A plan is in place to transfer professional practice files from the Region 1 Servicing Team to the Professional Practice Team for North Bay Regional Health Centre, Health Sciences North (RN) in Sudbury and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre from Region 1 Servicing Team to Professional Practice.

► **Student Liaison**

- **ONA Presentation to the Care Centre for Internationally-Educated Nurses (IENs):** On October 27, Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington presented to IENs at the Care Centre for IENs. During this presentation, he spoke about what a union is, ONA's structure, roles and responsibilities that leaders and members can take on, what a collective agreement is and how members can be part of the union leadership team. He also highlighted current issues in government, including fast-tracking licenses for IENs and ONA's advocacy around mentorship opportunities like the Late Career Initiative to support IEN retention.
- **Supporting Nursing Student Association Publications:** In January and February, ONA supported Sault College and Ottawa University nursing student handbooks for the 2023-2024 academic year. Nursing students at both institutions will receive a handbook advertising what it means to be an ONA member. Since many of these students will become ONA members, the goal is to share ways they can get involved in their union and the services to which they have access.

► **Dues and Membership**

- As of February 15, we have a November dues-paying count of 68,573. The team has been hard at work reducing the previously reported 10-week backlog in dues, to approximately three weeks. This was also accomplished by the resumption of overtime. Capacity issues remain a challenge with the ongoing volume of membership updates and additional event and initiative support. Access ONA (leader/member portal) is a very valuable application that promotes the collection of membership updates, making our membership communication networks stronger. However, it has resulted in an ongoing new stream of work for the team to support. In January, we received over 1,000 portal updates versus the 2022 monthly average of 600. It is also noted that there were volume increases from the previous month in all membership update processes (email and phone intake as well as Membership Application forms).

► **Human Rights and Equity**

- Another hugely successful Caucus was held in November 2022, which included reintroduction of Equity Group breakout sessions, newly identified as "Communities of Support," with people brought together by commonalities and similar goals to offer support in a culturally safe environment. Over 235 members attended the Caucus. We continue to collaborate with CGRT, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and the Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team to ensure we are proactively and appropriately representing our marginalized and historically marginalized members as we recognize commemorative dates throughout the year. We are hoping to increase our profile on social media to reach more of our members. Planning for events in 2023 is underway.
- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group (ARAO WG):** The Board approved a revised mandate for the Anti-Racism Advisory Team and also approved community and group engagement guidelines for use at ONA meetings. These will be discussed at the ACCs in May. The ARAO WG meets weekly to continue working on the implementation of the ARAO Action Plan. The ARAO WG now has four coordinators and one human rights specialist. Led by the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group sub-committee, which consists of WG members, a representative from the member Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team, a rep from the member Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team and a staff member, is close to the selection of a Reconciliation Consultant to assist with the work needed under Priority 1 of the Action Plan: Reconciliation. The WG hopes to have a consultant chosen and on board by April 2023. The WG worked closely with CGRT, the member HRE Team, and member ARA Team in preparation for Black History, Black Futures Month. During this time, CGRT promoted the weekly themes (Black Art, Black History, Black Health), the commissioned artwork by Alexis Eke and links to the Black History, Black Futures Month webpage. This webpage houses resources that support the above themes, as well as links to various events around the province. The WG continues to work closely with CGRT in the development of a poster and shareables for various commemorative dates. The WG will be in discussion with the Member Mobilizers and Campaign Officer in late March to explore engagement strategies with various community

groups. The member ARA Team continues to advise on ARAO matters that impact membership. ARA Team members will co-lead various Communities of Support for our members. March will include Communities of Support for Black members, Indigenous members and Allies. The Board approved the hiring of consultant Tomee Sojourner-Campbell to complete ONA's ARAO Action Plan implementation priorities.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ▶ ONA's Health and Safety Team is monitoring employers' responses to a McMaster University study that suggests N95 respirators are not superior to surgical masks when working in an environment with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The study is being used to downgrade respiratory protection to surgical masks. A memo went out to leaders to support regions where employers are downgrading PPE requirements and relying on the McMaster study. ONA shared our position with the OFL, which is working on a response to the removal of the provincial mask mandate, following the revocation of Directive 5 in June 2022. Several health-care employers began downgrading respiratory protection in the workplace in the fall of 2022. The CFNU's Outlook on Nursing study, completed before the pandemic, is being redone to measure the impact the epidemic had on the nursing workforce. New questions for the study will focus on the unique issues nurses are experiencing as result of COVID.

MEMBER EDUCATION

- ▶ The Board of Directors has agreed to fully fund two days for the Treasurers Workshop, October 11-12, 2023, to a maximum of 22.5 hours per Local Treasurer (location to be determined). The Membership Education 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 in a digital format as the primary method, while Leaders can request to have in-person delivery of workshops listed in the Education Calendar.

LABOUR AFFILIATES – OFL

- ▶ The OFL and affiliates have been quite busy in the fight against Bill 124. Numerous labour actions have been undertaken across the province and continues

to impact the work of the OFL. In early 2023, the OFL launched its newest campaign, "**Enough is Enough.**" The campaign focuses on four main points:

- The global cost of living.
- The privatization agenda.
- Corporate interests over peoples well being.
- Organizing workers and winning.

The campaign will follow a roadmap leading up to a province-wide action on June 3, 2023. For more information see materials at [OFL Enough is Enough campaign](#).

OFL/CFNU/CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (CLC)

- ▶ On Feb. 21, a Zoom meeting occurred with Bernadette (Bernie) Robinson, Interim ONA President/Region 2 Vice-President; Angela Preocanin, First Vice-President; Andrea Kay, Chief Executive Officer; DJ Sanderson, Senior Executive Professional Services; Patty Coates, OFL President; and Rob Halpin, OFL Executive Director, to discuss concerns with the CLC. The discussion focused primarily on the CFNU welcoming the British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU) to rejoin the national federation. There is a concern about potential sanctions levied against the BCNU by the CLC and the impact that would have on the relationship between the OFL and ONA. The parties agreed to meet again when more information is available.
- ▶ The CFNU's Outlook on Nursing study, completed before the pandemic, is being redone to measure the impact the epidemic had on the nursing workforce. New questions for the study will focus on the unique issues nurses are experiencing as result of COVID.

EXCITING EVENTS AHEAD FOR ONA MEMBERS!

▶ ONA 50th Celebration

The HUB continues to be updated on the 19th of each month with letters of acknowledgement, articles, and event dates. The Ontario Hockey League/ONA game nights have been held in nine locations across the province with success and engagement with the community. In several instances, ONA provided unsold tickets to students from nursing programs within the community, which were much appreciated. London and Barrie sold out of available tickets and London oversold twice with 176 tickets sold! Spring and summer events are currently being designed with input from the member committee. Celebrate 50 merchandise is available in the ONA Boutique for member purchase and will be showcased at upcoming events moving forward. The Working Group team members are

Jennifer Paul (Region 1), Sue Croxford (Region 2), Karen Muller (Region 3), Ann Scott (Region 4) and Emily Webb (Region 5). Board members supporting the working group are Erin Ariss (Region 4) and Alan Warrington (Region 5). The Celebrate 50 working group will continue to meet and inform recommendations for regional page features and interviews and ONA Boutique items.

► **New Executive Partnership – Dec. 6-8, 2022**

Treasurers and Local Coordinators attended this session held at the ONA office in Toronto and received a day of specific training on their roles and how they work together. Each group then had more specific training related solely to their position. Feedback on the session content will inform the next iteration of this training for 2023. This session included the New Executive Partnership Workshops for Local Coordinators and Treasurers (Dec. 6), New Treasurers (Dec 7-8) and New Local Coordinators (Dec. 7-8).

► **Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) – April 4-5, 2023**

A robust topic list of general interest sessions (four with hybrid component) and eight core competency sessions (in-person delivery only) are planned. The plenary session will include segments on Constitutional Amendments and Anti Racism and Anti Oppression.

► **Health & Safety Caucus – May 2023**

Planning, design and development is underway for the health & safety caucus held in May across the province. Venues have been secured for each event. The title of the caucus is: Preventing and Responding to Psychological Injuries in the Workplace. Dates for the

caucus are as follows:

- May 3 – Region 1 (virtual)
- May 16 – Region 2 (Perth)
- May 17 – Region 4 (Burlington)
- May 18 – Region 3 (Toronto)
- May 23 – Region 5 (Stratford)

► **CFNU Convention, ONA Caucus and Participation – June 6-9, 2023**

About 200 ONA delegates have registered and will be attending the CFNU Convention at the Delta Charlottetown. A Caucus meeting room has been secured through CFNU for the ONA Caucus to occur the morning of June, 7, 2023. We are working with our premium partner to develop an apparel item that will showcase ONA celebrating 50 years.

► **June Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) at Delta Thunder Bay – June 20-22, 2023**

Registration went live for the June PCM during the week of March 1, 2023. The planning process for the June PCM has begun.

► **Premiums and ONA Boutique**

ONA premiums continue to be managed for both inhouse premiums and for the ONA Boutique. Minimum quantities of items are purchased for the ONA boutique so that items are sold and new items are continually brought into the mix. The ONA Boutique will be a participating vendor at the PLM, providing access to regular ONA branded merchandise as well as Celebrate 50 merchandise. ONA has a rebate agreement with the vendor partner that gives us back five per cent on total sales each quarter.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held June 13-15, 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.