

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

ONA Making Important Decisions for You!

ONA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, DECEMBER 12, 13 AND 14, 2023

THIS REPORT FROM THE FINAL BOARD MEETING OF 2023 concludes an incredibly busy year for ONA. We celebrated our 50th anniversary and made some important decisions for our union to take forward in 2024 and beyond. The Board extends its best wishes to all our front-line leaders, members and staff for a safe, happy holiday season. See you in 2024!

BIENNIAL CONVENTION

The Board reviewed the Biennial Convention action plan for follow-up. All proposed Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions were supported by the Convention voting delegates. As a result of the amendments, there are a number of policies that will be updated in 2024 by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

FINANCE

The Board approved the annual budget for 2024 based on the dues increase passed at the Biennial Convention. The Board also approved the third-quarter variance report.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Work on the four Board committees resumes in the new year. Thank you to all front-line members, leaders and Board members who hold positions on the following committees: Quality of Service to Members, Enterprise Risk Management, Governance and Nominations, and Political Action. Because of the increased regional representation for the 2024-2026 term, we are holding an orientation session for all members of the four committees on January 17, 2024.

QUALITY OF SERVICE TO MEMBERS COMMITTEE

▶ The membership survey, “Share your Voice!”, was launched at the Biennial Convention in November 2023. It is Phase 1 of the Data Collection and Reporting Project. Comparing the data every two years will help gauge whether ONA’s efforts are assisting us to achieve our strategic priorities. The survey results will be an important source of data for the Quality committee itself as it considers what priorities it wants to set for the 2024-2027 term. Bargaining Unit Presidents (BUPs) who promote the survey to their members are

entered into prize draws. The next draw date is January 4, 2024, with the final draw on January 16, 2024. Every member who completes the survey also has a chance to win prizes, including an iPhone! The survey closes on January 12, 2024.

- For BUPs: Complete the prize draw checklists in Access ONA at ona.org/access/
- For leaders and members who haven’t completed the survey, see [Complete the survey](#).

▶ This committee will be discussing amendments to its mandate in 2024. The mandate was written prior to the release of ONA’s strategic plan, and considerable progress has since been made regarding the development of our measures. With a new term commencing, the committee has a good opportunity to review the mandate to ensure it aligns with the work of the strategic plan and its role in it.

ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- ▶ ONA faces several risks, both internally and externally. Some of the risks recently identified include:
- Gaps in Local policy that open Locals to risk in their day-to-day management of the Local, such as elections and finances.
 - Gaps in ONA’s Information Management System. ONA staff and leaders are knowledge workers; having trouble accessing the information required to do the work can lead to loss of productivity, a loss of history, dissatisfaction and errors in decision-making.
 - Cyber-security threats are increasing in the external environment, which impacts the security

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the December Board of Directors meeting will be available at ona.org once approved.

of information for ONA members and staff. Recent examples include data leaks at several Ontario hospitals within the last year.

- There is significant risk of non-compliance with the Canada Revenue Agency and Employee Health Tax for Locals. This risk is exacerbated with inconsistent financial reporting from Locals.
 - ONA is further vulnerable to third-party systems used by our Locals where ONA does not have control over the security of the network used.
 - Bargaining Units without presidents: Quality of service to members is at serious risk where there are Bargaining Unit President vacancies. ONA's ability to represent members and mobilize on issues is severely limited and apathy grows where there is no ONA representative in the Bargaining Unit.
- ▶ The committee's scope of work includes recommending an annual work plan to the Board of Directors, as well as creating a risk framework for ONA and reporting on its adequacy. To make progress on this deliverable in 2024, the committee will consult with senior executives to provide more information and background to the risks identified above, as well as any other risks impacting ONA. The committee will then make recommendations to the Board regarding 2024 priorities.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

- ▶ The committee completed its work on Constitutional Amendments, which were supported by the Board of Directors and carried by voting delegates at the Biennial Convention. The committee will oversee the policy work resulting from the Constitutional Amendments.
- ▶ The committee continues to review the member policy manual, suggesting changes and bringing them to the Board of Directors as recommendations. Policies that have a labour relations lens will be referred to the new Labour Relations Committee for review and next steps.
- ▶ The committee will also be reviewing the Guide to Leadership Competencies and Accountabilities.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

- ▶ It is the mandate of this committee to identify province-wide trends on workplace or political issues impacting nurses, health-care professionals, patients, residents and clients, and their communities. ONA members

have vocalized the need for change in various areas. Accordingly, this committee will recommend political action plans to achieve and maintain high-quality patient care and healthy communities.

- ▶ The committee is bringing to the Board a recommendation for a province-wide political action plan. This ONA plan would be a two-and-a-half-year campaign, implemented in phases from fall 2024 until June 2026. The campaign would incorporate the next round of hospital bargaining in March 2025 and nursing homes bargaining, and it will be the basis of ONA's provincial election campaign demands leading into June 2026.
- ▶ The committee identified safe staffing and anti-privatization as the top issues for our members in their workplaces.

POLICY UPDATES

- ▶ The Board concluded the review of the Governance and Nominations Committee recommendations for housekeeping changes to Sections 18 to 27 of the Policy Manual. In addition to the housekeeping changes, the following policies were approved by the Board:
- Policy 3.9 – Student Scholarships
 - Policy 5.5 – Role of Board at Area Coordinator Conferences
 - Policy 8.9 – Principles of Care Guidelines and Anti-Virus Guidelines
 - Policy 8.13 – Mobile Devices (Deleted)
 - Policy 10.1 – Retiree Network Advisory Team Mandate (New)
 - Policy 10.1 – Hospital Provincial Negotiating Team Mandate
 - Policy 16.35 – Political Action Kit (New)
 - Policy 25.1 – Expenses for Provincial Negotiating Teams
 - Policy 25.3 – Negotiations: First Collective Agreement or Pay Equity
 - Policy 26.12 – New Executive Partnership, New Treasurer and New LC Workshops
 - Policy 26.19 – Funding for Annual Provincial Leadership Meeting
 - Policy 26.21 – Funding for Biennial Convention
 - Policy 26.24 – Funding for Annual Treasurer Conference

The revised policies will be provided to leaders in ThisWeek@ONA, and can also be found under “Executive Content” in [Access ONA](#).

DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

The following were approved by the Board:

- Donation of \$5,000 to Operation Christmas Cheer for 2023
- Donation of \$25,000 to Justice4Workers for 2023
- Donation of \$10,000 to [BloodWatch.org](#) for 2023
- Donation of \$1,000 to the Black Class Action Lawsuit
- Continued support of \$2,500 to Ontario Legislative Internship Program (OLIP) for 2023/2024
- Continued support of \$10,000 to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women for 2024
- Continued support of \$50,000 to the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) for 2024

REGIONAL REPORTS

The regional reports are contained in the Board materials. The following is just a sampling of what is going in the regions. The most significant challenge appears to be coping with staffing shortages.

- ▶ **REGION 1:** Staff are returning to hospitals post Kaplan award. High acuity and increased presentations to small emergency departments of patients with mental health, addiction and homelessness. There are no resources available in these communities to assist. Hospitals with high Alternative Levels of Care (ALC) occupation looking for other options to move patients. Large vacancy rates across all sectors and continued use of agency nurses. Positive feedback on the new Professional Practice program.
- ▶ **REGION 2:** Professional Practice is preparing for Independent Assessment Committees (IACs) in several Bargaining Units (BUs). Many other BUs are working through Professional Responsibility Complaints (PRCs), and MOSs are being signed at Quinte Health in ICU and ER, as well as ER at Trenton; Niagara has professional practice involved in their PASS unit and Brockville Mental Health. Many employers are noted as not attempting to resolve grievable issues with ONA, preferring to send to arbitration. Agency use is routine in many long-term care facilities and hospitals and continues to be excessive in many BUs.

▶ **REGION 3:** The Board approved the transfer of the Women’s College Hospital (WCH) Bargaining Unit from Local 80 to Local 82. A total of 177 dues-paying members at WCH overwhelmingly support this merger. This will be effective January 1, 2024 and the Regional Vice-President will work with the Locals to ensure a smooth transition. Local 111, Leisureworld, consists of eight homes all with separate collective agreements under same the employer umbrella. Some of these homes “share” staff. Members pay dues at each home even though it is the same employer. The BUP raised the concern that the elimination of the dual dues refund will significantly reduce the number of members that will work at more than one site, and would negatively impact the already stretched workforce. BUP has raised the issue of having one collective agreement for this employer. These homes are considered one bargaining unit for ONA governance purposes. ONA staff are reviewing since there was previous direction to the Employer to only deduct dues once per month regardless of how many sites a member may work at.

▶ **REGION 4:** All Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) BUs ratified their new collective agreement. Region 4 members are disappointed in the lack of improvements to mileage and safety concerns/ protections. Central West Specialized Development Services did not ratify the Memorandum of Agreement on November 20. The employer is claiming “no money” but used millions in Agency in 2022-2023. Next steps include a media campaign and a meeting with members. Local 17 (Muskoka Algonquin Health-Huntsville and Bracebridge sites) reports almost \$40,000 in fees returned to the Local from Agency use. There are professional practice issues and the employer is not responding to PRWFs or grievances. IACs are upcoming. A mobilizing campaign will begin shortly. Team-based models are being implemented in hospitals across the region. St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s are implementing the model in acute care areas. Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) are being exploited. There have been several terminations and disciplines across the region. Senior nurses are being used as “mentors” and are overwhelmed and bearing the brunt of the additional responsibilities and practice concerns. Grand River Hospital NICU OHCOW Investigations: The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is aware of at least 14 RNs diagnosed with a form of cancer in the last five years; all

worked on 4C and 4D wings of NICU. Investigation is ongoing. Brant Community Health Care, Local 7, settled professional practice issues avoiding an IAC. We are monitoring IAC implementation at Collingwood General Marine Hospital.

- ▶ **REGION 5:** Global cyberattack issues are affecting Windsor Regional Hospital, Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital, Bluewater Health, Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, and Erie Shores. Essex County Nurse Practitioner (NP) Led Clinic ratified a one-year deal, expiring March 2024. Rapids Family Health Team is awaiting next steps following a meeting with Local MPP, Bob Bailey, where a request for a joint letter from ONA and the employer be re-drafted with increases to the monetary request from the government. There are leader apprehensions about changes to the professional practice process specifically regarding professional practice specialist involvement from the beginning of the process and not just upon referral. Public Health Unit layoffs occurring due to budgetary deficits.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Communications and Government Relations

- ▶ **ONA REBRANDING:** The new ONA logo and branding styles, including formats and colours, were launched at the Biennial Convention. Leaders and staff are receiving support to utilize the rebranded materials.
- ▶ **ONA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS:** ONA is carrying on this fight in 2024 and will continue to advertise broadly and to speak publicly about such critical issues as the shortage of nurses and health-care professionals, and the provincial government's expansion of for-profit services. Our advertising campaigns really hit the mark. In the last three months we focused on public health care, the real cost of privatization and the staffing shortage. ONA continues to insert monthly print ads in Hospital News for maximum industry coverage. We launched a new suite of advertisements on October 30 under the *Nurses Talk Truth* slogan. The campaign features health-care workers sharing unscripted, stark truths of working on the front lines of the province's public health-care system, showcased in black and white advertisements for television, social media and in print during the month of November. It focusses on staffing, privatization, and underfunding, urging the public

to send a message to decision-makers through the campaign website: nursestalktruth.ca.

- ▶ **MEDIA COVERAGE:** Third-quarter media hits for ONA total more than 1,400. Much of this is due to the exceedingly high level of media interest in the release of the hospital sector arbitration award, resulting in massive media coverage across Ontario. The most-viewed television report on ONA issues was CTV's coverage of the release of the arbitration award. The most-read article was in the *Toronto Star*, regarding the nursing shortage/health-care crisis and the use of agency nurses. Also receiving daily coverage from a robust group of Hastings & Prince Edward County journalists was the strike by 50 health nurses at the counties' health unit. ONA's efforts to keep media informed of the day's events through daily early-morning media briefings had a huge impact on media coverage.
- ▶ **PUBLICATIONS:** The Board passed a motion to phase out the print edition of *Front Lines* and move to publishing timely union news and stories on line.
- ▶ **PODCAST:** ONA Provincial President Erin Ariss and First Vice-President Angela Preocanin recorded their most recent podcast in the third quarter in mid-September. This episode focused on the state of the province as we move through the second term of Doug Ford and his PC government.
- ▶ **WEBSITE: (ona.org)** We continue our efforts to modernize and update our website, streamlining our many pages and content to be more easily navigable and efficient. Important events and news pertaining to our members and our grassroots membership mobilizing activities are promoted on our home page. ONA's rebrand is now well integrated into our website.
- ▶ **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Our social media pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are constantly hopping with members comments on issues impacting on their work and our union. Social media has proved an effective way to directly communicate with members and share their views not only within ONA but the public as well. Top stories attracting the most attention on our social media pages include the Kaplan arbitration decisions for hospital members and ER closures.
- ▶ **E-BULLETINS:** We continue to keep our members informed about professional practice (*Practice Matters*),

health and safety (*On the Safe Side*) and many other bulletins, generally important messages from the President's Office, through Action Network. ONA leaders receive *ThisWeek@ONA* for important news.

NURSING WEEK

► The Provincial Nursing Week Advisory Team has a new mandate approved by the Board in June and a new chair in Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington. The mandate calls for three meetings a year using virtual technology. The first meeting was held on September 29, and the team discussed its new mandate and brainstormed ideas for theme, poster and gifts. The team put forward a number of theme and gift suggestions and the Board accepted the following for the theme:

*We are not an option. We are a necessity.
Nous ne sommes pas une option. Nous sommes une nécessité.*

The gift for members with entitlements has been chosen and work is underway to have it produced and delivered in the spring *Front Lines* mailing. Make sure your new members sign up! Nursing Week Team members will be making presentations at their February Area Coordinators Conferences on various plans for Nursing Week, which will be held May 6-12. In the meantime, work on the Nursing Week poster has begun, as well as other resources like the Nursing Week Planning Guide and a variety of other materials.

MEMBER MOBILIZING/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

► Following huge success in mobilizing members across the province to support hospital bargaining, we continue to expand on our outreach to encourage front-line members to take part in rallies and actions promoting our key messages around privatization, health-care workers wages and staffing shortages. We also have marked success in various Locals, conducting campaigns for safe staffing and protecting RN jobs.

LABOUR RELATIONS

► A continuous two-year review cycle is being implemented to review direction to ensure staff utilize the most current and up-to-date positions and guidance, while also having a fulsome historical knowledge base. Labour relations staff direction currently under review includes.

1. Direction re Emergency Leave under the ESA and ONA Collective Agreements.
2. Seniority, Service & Benefits while taking Emergency Leave, as defined in the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*.
3. Direction for Medical Costs Incurred for Long-Term Disability Appeals.
4. Criminal Reference Checks.
5. Labour Relations Strategy re RN/RPN Scope Issues in Elimination of Positions and Layoff Situations.
6. Pyramiding.
7. Mandatory Flu Vaccination.

► New direction was sent to hospital BUPs in November 2023, outlining ONA's position on the awarded quarantine and isolation salary continuance language located in Article 6.05 (f).

► Grievance Trends:

- ONA filed over 4,200 grievances in 2023 as of November 22, 2023.
- Over a quarter of these grievances were filed in Region 3.
- Scheduling violations persist across the province and account for the top three issues grieved in four of the five Regions.
- Premium Pay violations (e.g., Article 14.06, Consecutive Shift and Weekends etc..) sit in the top five issues grieved in each region.
- Other top five issues grieved in more than one region include violations of the job posting, discipline/ termination/suspension, accommodation and sick leave/short-term disability provisions of collective agreements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

► The theme for the Health and Safety Caucus in May 2024 was *Preventing and Responding to Violence Related Incidents in the Workplace*.

► ONA attended the Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) AGM as a voting member, and all motions were passed. Psychosocial Health and Safety was a prominent topic of conversation, and our challenges in the healthcare sector were acknowledged.

► In the coming year, the Workplace Mental Health in Long-Term Care project will focus on addressing workplace hazards that lead to psychological harm. PSHSA also introduced its plan to publish an

Occupational Psychological Risk Assessment form, a new tool for JHSCs to identify, assess and control job factors that may contribute to work-related psychological harm.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR (OFL)

A representative from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, & Skills Development (MLITSD) share results of the five-year review for JHSC Certification Training Standards, which ONA and other unions submitted in late 2022. The results indicate that the knowledge uptake has a slight variance between the delivery modes, but in-person provides more participant engagement. The committee also conducted a gap analysis on the MLITSD’s proposed draft documents for Heat Stress and Outdoor Air Quality Ontario Health and Safety Association (OHSA) regulations, and ONA, accordingly, submitted its proposed amendments to the Ministry. Elections were held for the 2024-25 OFL executive officer. Team Ignite were the winners of the basically uncontested elections. Laura Walton of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Jackie Taylor of the United Steelworkers (USW) and Ahmad Gaied of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) have been elected as the new executive officers in the roles of OFL President, Executive Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectfully. Running together as Team Ignite, these members received a strong mandate to conduct the renewed energy of the labour movement to organize workers, build workers’ power, and win a better future for workers and all residents of the country’s most wealthy province. During the 2023 convention, overwhelming support was received from members and affiliates to approve the 2024-2025 Action Plan. The Action Plan outlines priorities and will act as the roadmap guiding all decisions of the OFL Executive Board and staff, and Executive Committee.

MEMBER EDUCATION

▶ The Member Education Team (ME Team) continues to provide a variety of workshops and lecturettes to members to enhance their skill set. The ME Team supports ONA’s strategic priorities by empowering members through knowledge transfer and application. Our education brochure and learning pathways facilitate workshop scheduling to meet Local and BU needs. Education is delivered in digital format, in person and through our eLearning platform. Member registration

via Access ONA is steadily increasing, with almost 70 per cent of workshop registrations done in this way. Members can still register for workshops by the online Workshop Registration Form, email, phone, and walk-in. Since January 1, 2023, there have been 2,383 registration records logged for workshops.

▶ **Health and Safety Caucus**

The 2024 Health and Safety Caucus dates have been set. The 2024 Caucus topic is “Preventing and Responding to Violence Related Incidents in the Workplace.” The regional caucuses will be scheduled between April 29 and May 28, 2024.

▶ **Spring 2024 Leadership Summit - Hilton, Niagara Falls, April 22-26**

ONA is planning a one-time event for a Spring Leadership Summit. This stems from feedback received from our advanced Local leaders, in alignment with ONA’s strategic plan. Further updates will be provided as the planning process proceeds.

▶ **Treasurer Meetings and Conferences**

Successful workshops were held in December for the New Executive Partnership, New Local Treasurer and New Local Coordinator groups. A two-day Treasurer conference is planned for October 2024 (in person).

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

▶ The Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team assisted in designing and presenting the HRE Caucus during Biennial Week in November; our theme *Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion and Creating Equitable Communities*. We welcomed over 429 attendees, which included members, leaders, guests, Board members and staff. In designing this year’s Caucus, a key objective was to continue building our Communities of Support (COS). HRE team members and staff facilitated discussions in the six breakout rooms to ensure that the spaces were safe and that conversations had an organic flow. The COS are a valuable opportunity for members to engage with other members within their equity group. The only difference to this segment in the Ally room was the addition of table work for this larger group, where we asked attendees to share an experience where they felt empowered and supported as an ally or where they supported someone as an ally. Action items

will be shared with the HRE Team and will form the basis for our work next year.

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION (ARAO)

▶ The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group (WG) assisted in the design and facilitation of caucus rooms at the 2023 HRE Caucus. Members of the WG offered support to participating members in their respective caucus rooms. At this year’s Biennial Convention, there was an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) booth in the Exhibitor’s Hall that was staffed by WG members. At this table we offered giveaways, such as Cards Against Inequities from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, the book *Moving Beyond Borders: A History of Black Canadian and Caribbean Women in the Diaspora* by Dr. Karen Flynn, tobacco bundles and post cards with eLearning education. We also informed members that the Member Communities of Support (COS) will launch in early 2024. The WG will offer Peer Facilitator training to those members who have expressed interest in co-facilitating a COS. The initial training will be virtual and subsequent training will be available on-demand. On October 5, 2023, we launched the inaugural edition of

ONA’s quarterly email newsletter *Beyond Equity*, that will promote ONA’s ARAO/HRE programs and activities that are designed to address the HRE/ARAO issues that research, data and our member feedback, acknowledge are intertwined with the determinants of health. Next year, the permanent ARAO team will begin. We will be transitioning from a working group to a team and look forward to integrating our work throughout the organization and our membership.

NURSE PRACTITIONER FOCUS GROUP

▶ The Nurse Practitioner Focus Group (NP Focus Group) is a standing committee established by the Board of Directors and is responsible for ensuring there is a consistent voice for ONA’s Nurse Practitioners (NPs). They are scheduled to meet on January 16, 2024.

ONA RETIREES

▶ Planning continues for incorporating ONA retirees into the organization, including eliminating the fee for the retiree membership and creating the infrastructure to support the ONA Retiree Network.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held on March 19, 20 and 21 in 2024.

If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact ONA Provincial President Erin Ariss, 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 2023: Erin Ariss, Provincial President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison (#7755); Angela Preocanin, First Vice-President, Political Action/Professional Issues (#7707); Dawn Armstrong, Region 1, Education (#7706); Bernadette Robinson, Region 2, Local Finance (#7756); Karen McKay-Eden, Region 3, Human Rights and Equity (#7704); Grace Pierias, Region 4, Health and Safety (#7709); Alan Warrington, Region 5, Labour Relations (#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.

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