

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS



Making Important Decisions for You!

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, September 17-20, 2024.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSIONS and decisions on a number of key topics. You can read minutes from the Board meeting after they are approved at the next board in December and posted on our website.

FINANCE

- ▶ The Board approved the Variance Report for the period ending June 30, 2024. The Board also approved the 2025-2027 Multi-Year Plan Operating/Restricted Funds as presented by the Chief Financial Officer. This is in keeping with the Board’s governance, fiduciary duty and accountability to approve the Multi-Year Plan Operating/Restricted Funds, ensure internal controls are in place to safeguard assets and approve financial resource allocation in a manner consistent with and supportive of the achievement of the strategic goals and the ONA Constitution. The Multi-Year Plan will be discussed with leaders at the October Area Coordinator Conferences (ACCs).

BOARD COMMITTEES

QUALITY OF SERVICE TO MEMBERS COMMITTEE

- ▶ Briefed by the Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Manager and Executive Lead, Provincial Services, on the ARAO Action Plan, initiatives and French translations.
- ▶ Only two workshop cancellations in 2024 – an excellent improvement from 2023 – due to changes in process and scheduling. Workshop satisfaction remains positive.
- ▶ The annual education survey will now also go to Bargaining Unit Presidents.

ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- ▶ Draft policies replacing Policy 8.9 – Computer Equipment and Account Usage Guidelines – are under review.
- ▶ Locals who only use ONA accounts to send out emails and retain member information are covered under the ONA Cyber Insurance plan. For Locals that use non-ONA accounts, our provider, Coalition, can set up a Cyber program for them.
- ▶ Collaborative Leadership Framework approved.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

- ▶ The Committee has been discussing the governance implications of the amalgamation of the Home and Community Care Support Service (HCCSS) units into one new service organization, Ontario Health atHome.
- ▶ The Board supported the recommendation of the Committee to leave the current HCCSS Bargaining Units with their existing Locals for governance purposes. This is the least disruptive option for our Locals and Bargaining Units. This will require negotiating with the employer terms that would support our proposed governance structure, particularly with respect to the provision of membership dues lists.
- ▶ The Committee will revise policies to reflect the new Board Treasurer position effective 2025.
- ▶ Revised policies to reflect Article 5.04 on interim CEO.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

- ▶ Identify issues members want to organize on provincially.
- ▶ High participation at Regional Political Action Committee (RPAC) meetings. In total, 61 members attended. Many indicated they wanted to engage their co-workers face-to-face and start taking province-wide collective action.
- ▶ Committed to getting every Local to identify RPAC representatives to build mobilizing capacity.
- ▶ Briefing note “PAC Discussion Sessions” was submitted for further Board discussion.

POLICY UPDATES

- ▶ The Board approved a new policy 26.25 Supplementary Fund – Use of Monies as recommended by the

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full minutes from the September 2024 Board of Directors meeting will be available at www.ona.org once approved.

Governance and Nominations Committee. The policy outlines the guidelines for utilization of the fund and will be sent to all leaders.

DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

- ▶ A Title Sponsorship has been approved in the amount of \$10,000 for the Jack Layton Awards as put on by the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation for Social Democracy.

REGIONAL REPORTS

▶ Region 1

- Member-to-member conflict an ongoing issue, especially in the nursing home sector.
- Staffing shortages continue in hospital, LTC and home care sectors.
- Continued reliance on ERs for home care needs in rural hospitals due to lack of available home care.
- RPNs are triaging at one hospital. The employer has vast RN recruitment issues.

▶ Region 2

- Overall, staffing and inability to recruit RNs continues to be an issue in this region.
- One hospital with 39 members is experiencing significant staffing shortages and is utilizing eight full-time agency nurses. Professional Practice is preparing for an IAC for ER issues.
- RN staffing shortages are resulting in unsafe workload assignments.
- Working conditions in the ER are a significant concern due to staffing issues.

▶ Region 3

- Locals are reporting an increase in benefit premiums for employers. Some are as high as a 25 per cent increase, citing increases in usage rates with the unlimited mental health benefit award.
- Reports of employers meeting with members without ONA representation, issuing “counselling letters” that are disciplinary in nature. Grievances have been filed.
- Issues occurring at occupational health departments across Region 3. Replacing occupational health nurses with unregulated workers, who are reportedly bullying members. Occupational health MDs overreaching and denying short-term disability (STD) even when members supply documentation from a specialist.

▶ Region 4

- RNs are being replaced by RPNs. The model of care change is being challenged and held back at ONA75.
- Heavy workloads and high nurse-to-patient ratios.
- Extreme violence reported in ED, medicine and psychiatry units.
- Physician disruptive behaviour a new epidemic in Region 4.
- Agency use an issue in home care.
- Safety concerns caring for unpredictable clients in community setting.
- Scope grievance filed as the new RPN team taking ONA members’ work.

▶ Region 5

- Erosion of RN work continues as employers delay posting vacancies and continue to challenge current models of care that favour our members.
- Increased engagement with local and provincial political action/mobilizing.
- Privatization initiatives throughout the region are being monitored (i.e., endoscopy services not being offered).
- Lack of funding in public health and primary care services (community health centres, family health teams, NP-led clinics) continues to frustrate.
- In the right-to-strike sector, we are seeing strong strike mandates and high membership support. There are many conciliation dates scheduled.
- Significant retention and recruitment issues, and increased agency usage. Completion of PRWFs is on the rise, and health and safety issues continue, including working alone. Grievances are declining but many remain unresolved.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ The Board received two communications briefing notes and approved the following:
 1. An annual all-member mailing, commencing in late 2024. With the shift from a printed *Front Lines* magazine to a digital news platform (microsite), the Communications Team recommended that ONA prepare a special fall mailing for members each year. This mailing would include the popular pocket calendar, along with an eight-sided fold-out brochure that could include a message from the ONA President (an end-of-the-year reflection and/or a look ahead to

the following year), along with other pertinent union information.

- 2. Appreciation Gift (in lieu of a Nursing Week gift) to go out in the all-member mailing.
- ▶ The Board also received an update on the work to date on the main website redesign.

ONA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN: NURSES TALK TRUTH

- ▶ We continue to run a monthly ad on the inside cover of the Hospital News. Our latest was in the Hospital News August Edition 2024. Turn to the inside cover for our ad entitled “The big sell-off.” We also shared the ad on social media, sparking a strong response. Preparation for fall advertising is underway. We will be continuing the *Nurses Talk Truth* campaign but featuring more members and new perspectives, with themes related to staffing, privatization and more. In our paid media campaign, we expect to make use of this footage by undertaking more online video advertising, possibly on new platforms, supplemented by print ads.

NURSING WEEK

- ▶ The Board has determined our new Nursing Week Advisory Team to prepare for Nursing Week 2025, and our first meeting has been set for October 7. ONA Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington will again steer the committee as chair for his second year. This team is mandated to begin planning for theme, poster art, products and supporting resources. Their ideas and recommendations are relayed to the Board for final decisions.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- ▶ The Board approved two province-wide mobilizing campaigns for the upcoming federal and provincial campaigns. The goal of the Nurses Vote campaigns is to defeat Conservatives, empower nurses and health-care professionals to make informed choices as well as to build our membership’s internal capacity to organize collective actions.
- ▶ On June 27, 2024, the Ontario government announced it will begin consultations with the College of Nurses of Ontario and other health-care partners on expanding the scope of practice for nurse practitioners.

ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION (OHC) TOUR

- ▶ In June, the OHC organized a cross-province tour to develop recommendations for the future of local hospitals, including small, rural and northern community hospitals. The tour was led by OHC Executive Director

Natalie Mehra alongside NDP Health Critic France Gélinas and Liberal Health Critic Dr. Adil Shamji.

- ▶ Four ONA leaders participated, supported by government and external relations staff, including Loretta Tirabassi, RN, Bargaining Unit President ONA26; Ruth Shaw, RN, Bargaining Unit President ONA17; Donna Wheal, RN, Bargaining Unit President ONA73 and Cheryl McSweeney, RN, Vice-President Political Action ONA73.
- ▶ The OHC will be releasing a report calling for government action based on what they learned on the tour.

MEMBER EDUCATION (ME) REPORT

- ▶ To date, the ME team has delivered more than 150 workshops. In the last quarter, (April 1 to June 30) only two prescheduled workshops were cancelled, versus 15 during the same timeframe last year. In response to member requests, 16 additional workshops for Executive Skills I and II have been received and scheduled.
- ▶ The use of the Access ONA portal for workshop registration remains consistent at 75 per cent of registrations completed through the portal.
- ▶ The Fall Leadership Summit was held at the Oakwood Resort in Grand Bend from September 23-27, 2024. There were three streams this year, Novice, Advanced and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

MEMBER EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS (MEE) REPORT

- ▶ The Board approved a recommendation that the Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) will not be held as a hybrid meeting and will be an in-person only member event with no virtual option. The intent of the PLM is for Bargaining Unit Presidents and other leaders to have the opportunity to network and form peer-to-peer relationships and mentorships within sectors and as an ONA collective. The virtual experience does not provide for the type of connection and experience the intent of the member event is set to achieve. With the PLM being ONA’s most complex member meeting to run with all the sector breakouts and moving from room to room, the costing of a virtual environment is significant, and this funding used for the virtual portion would be better served enhancing the in-person event to achieve the Board of Directors strategic vision.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Second quarter (April 1 to June 30) achievements include:

- ▶ 33,444 RN hours gained, including 4,380 RPN hours and 5,840 clerical support hours.
- ▶ Education/Orientation: numerous increases to existing orientation practices consisting of both theory and practicum.
- ▶ Equipment: communication and processes developed for broken, missing or new equipment requests. New equipment purchased such as isolettes and Alaris syringes.
- ▶ Health & Safety: non-violence interventions training, increased security training and rounding with communication process developed for the department, daily huddle implementation.
- ▶ Standardization of work processes: overcapacity policies developed; ensuring process and supply for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

COLLEGE OF NURSES (CNO) UPDATES

In June 2024, the CNO released several new/updated documents:

- ▶ Discontinuing or Declining to Provide Care. This standard focuses on three main principles, Professionalism, Communication and Safety. ONA's professional practice team is developing an Ask a Specialist on this standard and it will be offered as the first available session in October.
- ▶ Nurse Practitioners (NPs): The CNO held a town hall on September 5 to discuss plans to move forward on changes around the existing classification; primary, adult and pediatric to a single NP classification.
- ▶ The framework is expected to ensure consistency in graduate-level education programs aligned with revised NP entry-level competencies (ELCs), a single national NP entry-level exam for all NPs across Canada and one NP registration classification based on core NP ELCs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ▶ The Board approved the topic *First Principles: From Bad to Good Employers – Strengthening Foundational Approaches* for our Health and Safety Summit 2025. A significant increase in workplace violence and difficulties in addressing health and safety concerns require immediate action. This caucus is designed to provide nurses with essential health and safety knowledge, effective risk management strategies, and actionable

solutions to promote a safer work environment. The caucus aims to strengthen the fundamental health and safety principles among our membership. By reviewing key concepts, we seek to reduce workplace incidents, enhance the overall safety culture, and ensure compliance with regulatory standards.

- ▶ The Health and Safety (H&S) Team reported ongoing collaborative efforts with the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and other unions to address gaps in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standard Z94.4 on respirator use.
- ▶ Key updates include the Section 21 Committee's review of the Musculoskeletal Disorders compliance initiative, with significant findings from 732 field visits across 575 workplaces.
- ▶ The Section 21 Committee is also revising Safety Engineered Medical Devices Guidance Notes and preparing new guidance on mechanical lifts and psychological health.
- ▶ Several significant grievances and appeals were addressed, including issues related to workplace violence, harassment and safety policy violations, with many cases advancing to arbitration.
- ▶ The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) has announced the 2024-25 compliance initiative focusing on Slips, Trips, and Falls and worker exposure to chemical agents.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY (HRE) TEAM

- ▶ The Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team helped organize a successful Toronto Pride parade on June 30.
- ▶ The team also developed the HRE Caucus agenda for November. HRE team members are preparing to act as facilitators in their respective caucus rooms, with the assistance of a staff co-facilitator. The participants in the Ally caucus room will be introduced to the newly structured HRE Representative and Accommodation/ RTW Representative Competencies and Accountabilities documents. These documents have been updated and revised by the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- ▶ In recognition of the importance of the two equity groups selected for the day, there will be two panels, one of which will be conducted entirely in French – a first for ONA.
- ▶ **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Team**
 - The ReconciliACTION Working Group (RWG), met with Rose LeMay, Reconciliation Consultant on May 28, June 27, July 10 and August 14 to discuss

upcoming initiatives, include a proposed Declaration and communications for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30).

- The ARAO Team held a Communities of Support information session for interested peer facilitators on May 29, June 21, and July 25 to meet with members and offer a space for them to share how they would like to be supported.
- The ARAO Team collaborated with the ME Team for a new stream in this year's Fall Leadership Summit, September 23-27, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The stream was entitled Everyone Included/Telling Ontarians the Truth. This stream provided key learnings about ARAO approaches, recognizing it as a core component of ONA's work, and was facilitated by ARAO specialists and ME Team educators.
- At the Toronto Caribbean Carnival on August 3, ONA sponsored 20 costumes for members in the Gaia section of the Toronto Revellers band. Members were joined by Erin Ariss, Provincial President; Karen McKay-Eden, Vice-President Region 3, Human Rights and Equity portfolio; Kieran Maxwell, Manager, ARAO; and Ingrid Garrick, Bargaining Unit President, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.
- On August 17, at Carnival North in Collingwood, ONA sponsored the Steelband Orchestra and engaged with community members in Region 4.

► **Member Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team**

- The ARA Team met on July 17, 2024. The Team discussed the increase in antisemitism, Juneteenth vs. Emancipation Day, Human Rights and Equity Representative competencies, and upcoming events. As is customary, there was a members-only hour where members sought and offered support to each other as they discussed ongoing issues in their workplaces.

► **March for Social Justice**

- On September 18 in Toronto, ONA members joined in a massive march in solidarity with youth and community members from Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek, also known as Grassy Narrows First Nation. About 8,000 marchers participated. An environmental disaster caused by a paper mill 50 years ago poisoned the waters in the Grassy Narrows community. Mercury levels in fish remain high and long-term exposure has resulted in increasing symptoms in the community of mercury poisoning, including disease, suicide and premature death.

► **Migrant Rights Network Rally in Toronto**

- ONA members joined the Migrant Rights Network to say no to racism and demand permanent resident status for all migrants and equal rights for all at a rally on September 15 at Toronto City Hall.

LABOUR RELATIONS

► **Long Term Disability (LTD) Appeals team**

- The LTD Appeals Team reports consistent positive performance in managing and closing cases, with significant retroactive payments secured for members across all regions.
- The team handled 149 appeals, with Manulife and Desjardins managing the most cases. Notable trends include Region 3 having the highest number of appeals, particularly from William Osler Health System and Scarborough Health Network.
- The team has identified and is addressing numerous challenges and delays by Industrial Alliance and complex settlement discussions involving Desjardins.
- The team continues to focus on improving appeal efficiency and addressing policy inconsistencies in LTD benefits.

► **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Appeals team**

- The WSIB Appeals Team reports completing 88 member appeals from January to July 2024, with 36 successful and 30 unsuccessful while other responses are pending. This resulted in recovering over one million dollars this year in benefits for members. A notable COVID-19 appeal case was won by successfully arguing the relevance of the incubation period and pre-symptomatic infectiousness.
- Of the 97 open COVID-19 WSIB appeal files to date, 72 have been closed, with an increase in new appeals related to long-term effects and psychological impairments.
- Monthly Ask A Specialist sessions continue to support members, with a recent session focusing on WSIB claim forms.
- The Labour and Injured Worker Advisory Committee (LIWAC) discussed updates to WSIB policies on foreign agriculture workers and the reconsideration process, legislative changes, and expanded presumptive coverage for wildland firefighters and investigators.

NEGOTIATIONS

- ▶ Local issues negotiations are ongoing and arbitration hearings will take place in January 2025 for participating nursing homes in the long-term care sector.
- ▶ Negotiations for renewal collective agreements continue for non-participating homes.
- ▶ Bargaining continues in the retirement homes sector and outcomes are providing percentage increases higher than those obtained in the nursing homes.
- ▶ All Bill 124 related matters are resolved in the homes for the aged sector. Settlements have been achieved in some Bargaining Units, however the majority are proceeding to interest arbitration due to employers not wanting to agree to isolation pay and unlimited mental health.
- ▶ In provincial hospital bargaining for 2025, Orientation Part II took place, and the team developed a proposal package based on the demand setting meetings and priorities of the members. The vote on proposals will take place on November 6, 2025.
- ▶ There are 16 non-participating hospital bargaining units. Bargaining is ongoing with some settlements.
- ▶ In HCCSS bargaining, all collective agreements are current. Legislation to proclaim all HCCSS bargaining units into Ontario Health atHome was released on June 28, 2024. It is expected one of the parties will file the *PSLRTA* application in the near future. ONA continues

to monitor, assess and strategize to determine the best course of action to preserve our representation rights.

- ▶ There have been six settlements achieved at public health units across the province, general wage increases range from 2.5 per cent to 3.75 per cent per year.

ORGANIZING

- ▶ Votes have been successful at the following locations:
 - Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home – 12 RNs
 - Margaret Bahen Hospital – 24 RNs, RPNs and PSWs
 - Centretown Community Health Centre – 33 RNs
- ▶ Eleven other groups have reached out and initial meetings are being set up.

RETIREE NETWORK ADVISORY TEAM (RNAT)

We have now chosen our Retiree Network Action Team (RNAT). Working alongside Board members and staff, RNAT members will organize opportunities for ONA retirees to participate in actions and rallies; promote the retiree network to ONA retirees; and host virtual provincial networking opportunities. The members of this new and exciting team underwent two half-days of orientation on July 9 and August 27, 2024. They are now preparing for the official launch of Retiree Network on October 18 from 10-11:30 a.m., and the second Retiree Network meeting scheduled November 20, 2024.

The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held December 3-5, 2024, following the Human Rights and Equity Caucus and the Provincial Coordinators Meeting November 12-15.

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 2024: 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.