

Annual Report

October 1, 2023 to
September 30, 2024



Message from the President

Bold and badass. That's the ONA we created together over the past year.

Of course, our union has always been a powerhouse. We have always been a leader. But guided by a strong Strategic Plan that ensures we are meeting your expectations and priorities and an exciting brand renewal that puts the emphasis right where it needs to be – on you and your fight – ONA has gone where we have never ventured. And you have been right there with us.

Take our new transparent bargaining strategy, for example. You're not only helping determine and vote on the proposals we take to the negotiating table from the outset, you're out there in the streets demanding them. As a result, we have made tremendous gains not seen in decades.

That same tenacity has spilled over into your workplaces where you're setting up action committees to push back against employer initiatives that put you and your patients, residents and clients at risk. And you're having much success.

This isn't easy work – effecting meaningful change often isn't – and I sincerely thank you for not settling for anything less.

As we continue to face challenges, including a government bent on privatizing our health-care system to line the pockets of their corporate buddies and a growing staffing shortage as many nurses and health-care professionals are simply too burned out and fed up with the lack of respect to stay, we need you to keep up the fight. Because here's something else we're facing: a provincial election. Together, we absolutely have the power to kick the Ford government and its regressive policies to the curb.

After all, this past year has certainly shown that our members don't fear the government. We don't fear our employers either. Quite the opposite. We're coming for them.



Erin Ariss, RN
Provincial President

Message from the CEO

There's no question about it: We have asked a lot of our members over the past year as we continue to deal with what can only be described as the Ford government's complete health-care debacle. And time and again, you have answered that call.

In fact, flip through the pages of this Annual Report, and you'll see just how involved you have been – and this is by no means a comprehensive summary of everything that has happened (for more, I encourage you to regularly visit our website, read our eNewsletters and eNews bulletins and follow us on social media).

Another thing you'll notice is that whenever you're out in the streets fighting for causes you shouldn't have to, often holding raw, powerful and impossible-to-miss handmade signs so indicative of our brand renewal, our staff is right there with you. They are rallying, chanting and supporting you every step of the way. Not to mention all

the work that goes on behind the scenes in all service areas to ensure your collective agreement and other rights are upheld.

Staff are your biggest allies. In many cases, they were once one of you, working on the front lines of a broken system. But no matter their background or team, or whether they service members directly, believe me when I say they understand your struggles and are committed to doing everything they can to make things better. Because we ask a lot of them too – and they all play a critical role.

It's that kind of collaboration that has resulted in significant wins for our union over the past year and incredible inroads in our member-focused Strategic Plan. And so I express my deep gratitude to you all – members, Board and staff – for the dedication and loyalty you show... together.



Andrea Kay, RN
Chief Executive Officer



ONA Board of Directors

ona.org/board



Angela Preocanin, RN
First Vice-President

Portfolio: Political Action (Locals)

The work in these two intersecting portfolios never stops, but then again, neither do our members. The strength and determination you've shown to ensure you can provide quality patient care in safe work environments through your refusal to accept anything less is beyond inspiring. I can't wait to see what you achieve next!

Karen McKay-Eden, RN
Vice-President, Region 3

Portfolio: Human Rights and Equity

When I think of the tremendous strides ONA has made in this crucial area, I know we're on the right path to ensuring everyone is included. But I also know there is much to be done, and it is incumbent upon each of us to ensure racism, oppression, discrimination and harassment have no place in our union, communities or society at large.

Dawn Armstrong, RN
Vice-President, Region 1

Portfolio: Education and Events

I'm extremely proud of ONA's cutting-edge education and event offerings, including workshops and lecturettes in digital and in-person formats and provincial meetings, which not only enhance our members' skill set, but empowers you to be even stronger nurses/health-care professionals, leaders and, most importantly, unionists.

Grace Pierias, RN
Vice-President, Region 4

Portfolio: Occupational Health and Safety

Despite strong language and legislation, you still face violence, harassment and threats. But when it comes to your health and safety, there is no "grey area," no argument and no doubt. Together, we must demand protections and resources, and use our collective strength to report, refuse and redevelop safety in the workplace.

Bernadette (Bernie) Robinson, RN
Vice-President, Region 2

Portfolio: Local Finance

While the work within this portfolio is labour-intensive and not glamorous, it's one of the most important functions of ONA. It has been my utmost pleasure to assist our dedicated Treasurers as they ensure the success of our Locals by maintaining a standard of accountability and transparency for all Local activities.

Alan Warrington, RN, BScN
Vice-President, Region 5

Portfolio: Labour Relations (Contract Administration)

Bargaining fair, respectful collective agreements and the day-to-day enforcement of our members' rights within those contracts through our grievance-arbitration process aligns with ONA's vision, mission and values and makes us stronger collectively. After all, a win for one member is a win for all members.



Strategic Plan Update

ona.org/stratplan

ONA's five-year Strategic Plan, launched in 2021, is at the heart of everything we do as a union.

As we continue to navigate significant challenges today and into the future that negatively impact our professional and union lives and those under your care, including regressive government legislation/policy and harmful employer initiatives, this plan guides our decision-making. It ensures we remain laser focused on what matters most.

Created with the input and insight of members with varying degrees of union involvement, leaders and staff, our Strategic Plan contains 22 strategic actions under six priorities. The following are highlights of work completed under each strategic priority over the past year as we continue to build a stronger, better connected and more responsive union.



PRIORITY A **MEMBERS INFORMED**

- ONA developed a new email strategy, including a schedule for the monthly eBulletin and quarterly issue-specific eNewsletters, and refinements in design, targeting, accessibility and content. We continue to see strong performance in our open rates, which are much higher than averages across industries.
- A social media strategy was created that includes five content pillars (main topics or themes that guide what we share online) to support ONA's strategic priorities and our Locals, enhance content and boost posting. Our follower counts on Facebook and Instagram continue to outperform comparator organizations, and our engagement rates are consistently strong.
- We conducted a communications survey among membership, and the majority supported moving to a digital *Front Lines* to reduce costs and environmental impacts, and prefer digital communications more generally. A comprehensive digital publication plan was developed, including making the fall 2024 issue of *Front Lines* our last in printed form.



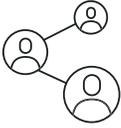
Ensuring our members are well-informed of ONA initiatives and events makes us even more powerful.

- ONA-administered Local websites are undergoing a full redesign to incorporate the renewed brand and enhance core content. Templated website navigation and page designs were developed and approved, and work with Locals began this past summer to move them to the new template. This work will continue gradually.
- A new website is being designed to mirror our corporate branding renewal. The main website will see an on-brand visual overhaul alongside content and technological updates to improve the user journey and performance.

"ONA's Strategic Plan will only make us stronger and better connected."

— Provincial President Erin Ariss, RN





PRIORITY B

MEMBERS SUPPORTED: Supporting You to Achieve Better Working Conditions

- Coordinator positions were implemented in Contract Administration, Professional Practice (PP) and Legal, as well as one PP secondee to provide more support to members and leaders and to provide advancement opportunities to staff with subject matter expertise.
- The Health and Safety (H&S) Team and Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) Appeals Team are now offering virtual information sessions via Ask a Specialist. The H&S Team also released two new toolkits this year: *Infectious Disease Toolkit* and *Psychological Injury Toolkit*.
- Our Legal Expense Assistance Plan (LEAP) Team is building internal capacity to do judicial reviews in-house as well as successfully representing a number of health-care professionals outside of nursing.
- Our contract administration target was achieved for the first time across the province from January 1 to August 6, 2024. During this period, 83 per cent of grievances not going to arbitration were resolved or withdrawn within six months of being filed.
- An eNewsletter was launched by the Contract Administration (Labour Relations) Committee, entitled *Winning Together: Your quarterly contract insights*, to help promote awareness of members' rights under the collective agreement, successes and how to advocate.



Supporting our members in their places of employment is a key priority of ONA's Strategic Plan.



Education opportunities, such as ONA's unique Leadership Summits, benefit all members of our Bargaining Units.



PRIORITY C

STRONGER BARGAINING UNITS: Equipping Your Bargaining Unit Representatives to Support You and Work With Us

- Sector connects were created for every sector, so members and leaders can learn about trends, emerging issues and receive the support they need.
- A review and update of competencies for all Bargaining Unit and Local Executive positions is underway with our Governance and Nominations Committee.
- Contract Administration (Labour Relations), via the Enhancing Labour Relations Services project, is evaluating what strategies can be used to enable quicker resolution/advancement of files.
- Two Leadership Summits were offered to leaders this year, in the spring and fall, providing new curriculum topics in anti-racism and anti-oppression, and emotional intelligence.
- Two Negotiations Labour Relations Officer positions were implemented as a resource to support bargaining and role clarity.
- The Member Education Team launched a survey for Local Coordinators to provide input in the education planning process.





Our members are frequently on the streets telling Ontarians the brutal truth and asking them to sign our petitions.



PRIORITY D
TELLING ONTARIANS
THE TRUTH

- ONA’s messaging has been strengthened through multiple rounds of advertising. Most recently, our Nurses Talk Truth campaign featured documentary-style footage of our members sharing stark insights (see more on page 13). The campaign won an international award for best Canadian online advertising campaign for 2023.
- We conducted an audit of ONA’s 2023 media coverage and found that we outperform comparator organizations. We received the highest proportion of media related to health-care workers, at more than 40 per cent, compared to the next closest union at 30 per cent. Another nursing organization received only 9 per cent.
- ONA invested in member mobilization and the amplification of members’ voices by hiring two additional mobilizers and one additional communications Labour Relations Officer.



PRIORITY E
EVERYONE INCLUDED:
Creating a More Diverse, Equitable
and Inclusive Union

- Our Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Working Group became a full team this past year, with three ARAO Specialists, including one focused on Reconciliation.
- An ARAO approach was added to ONA’s Statement of Beliefs and Constitution at our Biennial Convention. This statement, along with clarity on our ARAO approach, signals a commitment to integrating ARAO practices and principles into every level of ONA.
- The Board approved a *Declaration: Truth and Reconciliation* to establish a pathway that advances ONA’s goals and commitment to reconciliation, which is meaningfully incorporated in all aspects and activities of our organization and establishes guiding principles to advance the achievement of that goal.
- ONA engaged Rose Le May, a reconciliation consultant, to support implementation of Priority 1 in our ARAO Action Plan and create a ReconciliAction work plan.
- Resources for members have been created to further our ARAO work, including a Tip Sheet on Microaggressions, the ARAO Advocacy 101 Digital Toolkit in both English and French, the *Beyond Equity* eNewsletter, and modules on our eLearning platform, including Microaggressions, Beyond Good Intentions,



ONA’s commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression makes sure everyone is included.

Introduction to ARAO, and Demystifying and Decolonizing our Language (mini-course).

- ARAO Specialists attended Area Coordinators Conferences to share updates and assist with a regional approach to implementing our ARAO Action Plan.
- We launched a Communities of Support pilot project to offer virtual settings that allow a culturally safe(r) environment with the goal to rebuild trust and strengthen solidarity. In these spaces, members and elected leaders can share commonalities, seek guidance and feel empowered. They are also an opportunity for members to present their insights into the organization.
- The LEAP Team is applying an ARAO analysis to its cases and succeeding in showing how racism and differential treatment may affect allegations against members. In its written and oral advocacy at regulatory colleges, LEAP counsel provides evidence of systemic racism and other discrimination and urges decision-makers to weigh these factors in their decisions.
- ONA created the Retiree Network Advisory Team, which will support ONA's broader Retiree Network, which also launched this past year.



PRIORITY F

OUR WORK, FOR YOU:

Excellence For You, From ONA's Board and Staff

- The first ONA staff survey was conducted to learn more about our staff so we can create a more inclusive work environment, assess our progress against our strategic priorities and identify how we can further that progress, including our work in anti-racism and anti-oppression and diversity, equity and inclusion. The survey response rate was excellent at 86 per cent.
- ONA launched the Collaborative Leadership Framework Report, which supports the work between governance and operations.
- We created a Legal/Contract Administration Committee to foster cross-team collaboration (e.g., Legal/Labour/Health and Safety/Professional Practice meetings) and adopt a coordinated services approach to issue resolution.



The dedicated ONA Board of Directors and staff are committed to representing all members to the best of our abilities.

- Key investments in Information Technology (IT), Dues and Finance were made, including a team lead to support Local Finance, a team lead for Dues and Membership, and a data engineer and business analyst to support our growing IT infrastructure and analysis of organizational data.
- To enhance cross-team collaboration and streamline operations, ONA undertook significant organizational structural changes, including aligning reporting relationships more closely with the CEO and Provincial President portfolios and appointing two Senior Contract Administration Managers to specialize in negotiations and contract administration. In a strategic shift and to better align with the Strategic Plan, the Chief of Negotiations and Executive Lead Communications positions were eliminated and Manager 2 positions were realigned to Manager 1 positions. The aim is to provide more direct and focused support and alignment on crucial matters and reinforce role clarity while being fiscally responsible to ensure appropriate balancing for management resources within the organization and more front-line investing (see more on page 16).
- New Performance Development Reviews were developed for staff and launched. They include core competencies for positions as well as an opportunity for staff to identify development-related goals and supports.





New Provincial Bargaining Process

ona.org/bargaining

For the first time in ONA's history, members were given the opportunity to not only review our proposals being taken to provincial bargaining tables, but vote on them.

This decision was made by the Board of Directors and fully supported by ONA's CEO, following the last round of hospital, Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) provincial bargaining in 2023. It was based on member requests for more transparency in the negotiations process.

And so, for the 2024 round of nursing homes provincial bargaining, our Nursing Homes Provincial Negotiating Team (NHPNT) presented amended collective agreement language – our bargaining priorities – during a virtual demands ratification meeting in March to interested leaders and members in the sector, who were able to ask questions before voting.

The priorities were based on member feedback from two previous demand-setting meetings and the results of ONA's bargaining survey (the current state of our health-care system and member realities were also considered). Through this process, consistent themes emerged, namely short-staffing and its connection to for-profit care.

ESCALATING ACTIONS

To support the NHPNT, the Board also approved a campaign to enable our 2,500 nursing home members to organize the power they needed to win on these bargaining demands, similar to our 2023 hospital bargaining campaign, where members engaged like never before in a series of escalating actions, determined during newly-launched Bargaining Action Team meetings, that resulted in a favourable arbitration decision.

The tactics for our nursing homes campaign, which took place in early 2024, included a Sticker Up action, a phone zap, a rally outside for-profit Extendicare's head office, all-out pickets at 37 employers, and leafletting outside the Ontario Long-Term Care Association's general meeting. We also protested so loudly outside the Rotman School of Management where the Extendicare CEO was presenting, we could be heard – and seen! – from the inside, prompting another for-profit nursing home CEO to ask if they would be next.

While we were forced to mediation-arbitration in May, these actions clearly made a difference. Arbitrator Sheri Price issued a decision the following month, providing wage increases not seen in decades in this sector – 11.5 per cent over two years – proving when we come together, we win!

IMPACT ON OTHER SECTORS

This new bargaining strategy is helping members in other sectors win too.

In fact, a deal was reached during conciliation in November 2023 for our more than 4,300 HCCSS (now known as Ontario Health atHome) members, who also launched Bargaining Action Team meetings this round, just a few days after they made and sent hundreds of phone calls and emails to the Premier, Minister of Health and Ontario Health President on the need for safe staffing and fair wages. The two-year agreement, which we consider “a good start,” provided wage increases of 3 per cent per year for all classifications, along with other improvements.

Just before that contract expired on March 31, 2024, all 10 HCCSS Bargaining Units voted separately to accept a further one-year agreement from the government, providing a 3 per cent wage increase, so they could enter the mergers brought about by Bill 135 with a valid contract.

After receiving a disappointing decision from Arbitrator John Stout in December 2023, approximately 200 VON members also received unexpected compensation improvements in March 2024 through an agreement with the employer, following a government funding increase.

Would these offers have happened without the solidarity and determination members showed?

MOVING FORWARD

With the next round of hospital bargaining commencing in 2025, this is a process we're continuing. Our first action in September 2024 (a pledge to participate in collective action) was decided at Bargaining Action Team meetings, followed by demand-setting and demands ratification meetings.



Timeline

Key ONA events from the past year

OCTOBER 12

ONA and the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) brief the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers on the impacts of excessive consecutive hours of work and the increase in the use of private agency nursing, providing concrete recommendations.

NOVEMBER 6

Under the theme, *Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion and Creating Equitable Communities*, more than 460 members attend our annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus, with 90 per cent saying they were either **very or extremely satisfied** with it.



JANUARY 10

Provincial President Erin Ariss presents our prebudget submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, providing 24 recommendations to the government on improving our public health-care system, while highlighting the staffing crisis, violence in the workplace, accountability, unreliable funding streams, privatization and hurdles faced by nursing students.



FEBRUARY 9

While ONA welcomes the commitment of the federal government to provide funding in a new health-care agreement for Ontario, we have no faith the Ford government will direct the funds to where they are most needed: the public system.

APRIL 5

Following the release of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare's plan to decrease access to local care, ONA17 members rally and don stickers reading, "RNs: Staff Us, Retain Us," while a delegation of 30, accompanied by Provincial President Erin Ariss, meet with top executives to demand workplace changes.

2023

2024

OCTOBER 30

Having worked without a current contract for four years, medical radiation therapists at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, ONA97, stage a rally and call on University Health Network's CEO/President to immediately negotiate a fair contract.



NOVEMBER 9

At ONA's Biennial Convention, which celebrates our 50th anniversary, we launch an exciting, renewed brand identity, giving members the tools needed to reclaim their voices and take action at the Local level.

JANUARY 26

For the second time in as many years, an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) issues 99 sound recommendations for Kingston Health Sciences Centre, this time on the Connell 10 Medicine Unit, to improve patient care, working conditions, and staffing and retention.

MARCH 26

The Ford government's 2024 Ontario budget fails to commit to the province's public health-care system in a meaningful way and lacks any details on how the health-care funds announced will be used, ONA says in a statement.

APRIL 29

Under the theme, *Preventing and Responding to Violence-Related Incidents in the Workplace*, the first of five Health and Safety Caucuses (one per region) is held to provide our health and safety leads and other members with information and tools to apply in their own workplaces.



99%

Respondents to our most recent Legal Expense Assistance Plan Team survey, who say they were **satisfied** or **very satisfied** with the quality of representation



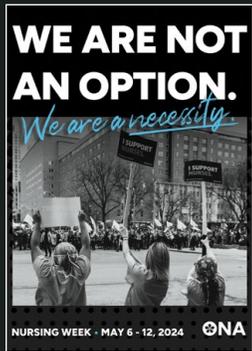
MAY 6

Under a new mandate, ONA's Provincial Nursing Week Advisory Team, comprised of members from each region, comes up with the applicable theme of *We are not an option. We are a necessity* for Nursing Week to tell Ontarians the brutal truth about the staffing shortage.



JUNE 4

Provincial President Erin Ariss speaks in support of the NDP's Bill 192, *Patient-to-Nurse Ratios for Hospitals Act 2024*, which would guarantee such ratios in hospitals, at a Queen's Park media conference.



JUNE 29

It's a sea of purple as ONA members, wearing t-shirts bearing an inspirational message of acceptance, march in Toronto's Pride parade (and other locations throughout the province) to recognize and support the diversity of our members and staff and join in the fight against discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



AUGUST 3 AND 17

ONA sponsors and participates in the Toronto Caribbean Carnival and, for the first time, Carnival North in Collingwood to leverage our leadership position to work with community-based organizations and Ontarians to develop responsive approaches to address intersectional forms of racism.

SEPTEMBER 18

The ONA Board of Directors, members and staff come out in full force to support the Grassy Narrows River Run, a march through downtown Toronto streets culminating at Queen's Park, to bring attention to the lasting effects of mercury poisoning on the community.

MAY 24

The 10 members from Lakeshore Area Multi-Service Project, ONA115, let their stickers do the talking on Sticker Up day to demand a contract with fair wages to retain and recruit nurses.

JUNE 11

Region 2 is the host as our June Provincial Coordinators Meeting gets underway in the shadow of Parliament Hill in Ottawa, featuring updates on key service areas, member stories, guest speakers and a screening of the heart-wrenching long-term care documentary, *Stolen Time*.



JULY 16

Nurses' unions from across the country, including ONA, bring solutions to alleviate staffing pressures, from primary care to long-term care, at a CFNU policy breakfast with Canada's premiers.

AUGUST 15

Provincial President Erin Ariss and member Michelle Bobala, a forensic nurse and sexual assault nurse examiner, present ONA's submission to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's subcommittee studying intimate partner violence, outlining steps the province must take to end it.

OCTOBER 10

Insightful questions are posed to Provincial President Erin Ariss and CEO Andrea Kay after they present to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs as part of its study on Bill C-321 (assaults against persons who provide health services and first responders).



302

Number of new members ONA organized in this timespan



Defending Your Rights

ona.org

Ensuring the collective agreement and other rights of our members are upheld by employers and the government is paramount to ONA. And when that doesn't happen, we have tried and true ways to ensure they do.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION WINS

One method is through our grievance-arbitration process, such as the following examples from the past year.

- This grievance win further protects ONA members' privacy. To receive reimbursement for a medical note for absences under seven days, a hospital employer required members to submit the receipt to their immediate supervisor. ONA grieved, noting that receipts contain information such as the name of the clinic or speciality of the physician, thereby providing insight into the type of medical services sought. We achieved minutes of settlement (MOS), giving members the right to submit the receipt directly to Occupational Health, bypassing their supervisor.
- Two policy grievances, also in the hospital sector, were filed for union interference and failure to provide a safe work environment between 2022 and 2023. A third individual grievance alleged anti-union animus and harassment related to the Bargaining Unit President's union leave. These files were consolidated and scheduled for hearing in 2025, but the employer settled in advance. Compensation was paid to both the Bargaining Unit President and Local. The grievances succeeded because ONA continued to gather evidence of improper behaviour from individuals who were the subject of the grievances and convinced the employer of their culpability. The manager and volunteer at the hospital were found culpable of code of conduct violations.
- Too often, internationally educated nurses are overlooked for advanced placement on the wage grid as credit for recent and related experience in their country of origin. ONA grieved after a long-term care employer placed our member at the start rate. We built a timeline to demonstrate they should be credited with four grid steps, highlighting that any gaps in practice were based on extenuating circumstances such as furthering education (a master's degree in Gerontology), starting a family, emigrating, the

pandemic and time to become accredited to practice in Ontario. After the Step 2 grievance meeting, the MOS were achieved, advancing the nurse to the fourth step on the wage grid.

BILL 124 FIVE-YEAR FIGHT ENDS

Defending your rights goes far beyond collective agreements.

One of our most significant legal wins came after the Ontario Court of Appeal sided with the lower's courts decision on February 12, 2024 and struck down the wage-suppressing Bill 124. The court found it violated the constitutional rights of unionized employees to meaningful collective bargaining, as guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Soon after, the Ford government announced it would not appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, and on February 23, 2024, repealed Bill 124 in its entirety through an Order in Council.

ONA's five-year fight against this heinous bill began soon after it was introduced in 2019, with the launch of a Charter challenge. Members also took to the streets decrying the bill at every opportunity. While the Ontario Superior Court declared Bill 124 "void and of no effect" on November 29, 2022, the Ford government unsuccessfully appealed to the Ontario Court of Appeal.

ONA had the foresight to include reopener clauses in contracts of members subject to the bill, and as a result, achieved arbitrated decisions with additional wages. We also fought for improvements in workplaces that didn't achieve reopeners and wage equality across sectors more broadly.

4,937

**grievances
filed during
this period
with**

2,068

**cases resolved
or closed
and**

1,143

**cases advanced
to arbitration**



Nurses Talk Truth Campaign

nursestalktruth.ca

With our public health-care system under severe attack thanks to the disastrous policies of the Ford government that are driving so many nurses and health-care professionals away, ONA needed a strong advertising campaign to tell Ontarians what's really going on.

Nurses Talk Truth has done precisely that.

Launched on October 30, 2023, the campaign calls out the Ford government on the critical staffing shortages, its drive towards privatization, the drastic underfunding of every sector of our health-care system and the closure of various hospital services, such as emergency departments, throughout the province. Combined, these initiatives have starved our health-care system of much-needed resources and eroded its quality and timeliness, leaving Ontarians frequently unable to access the care they need.

Following the month-long fall campaign, Nurses Talk Truth continued in February 2024 before turning its focus in the spring on a sector that has been particularly ravaged: long-term care. This shift was timed to align with the start of nursing homes provincial bargaining, which we anticipated would be very difficult.

Particularly meaningful is that the campaign features ONA members sharing, in their own unscripted words, their realities of working on the front lines in a series of powerful black and white advertisements for television (documentary-style), social media, radio (cross-province), transit shelter (placed strategically near Queen's Park) and print (*Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and *Hospital News* magazine).

For example, one member featured in the first set of advertisements said, "I don't think Doug Ford should be trusted with health care; he needs to listen to nurses," while another added, "the government has proven time and time again that they have to be forced to do the right thing, and that's why we keep fighting."



Our powerful campaign ads pepper ONA's social media channels (bottom) and are placed in areas hard for politicians to ignore, like this Queen's Park transit shelter.

All advertisements, which reflect the diversity of ONA members, urge the public to send a message to decision-makers to invest in our public health-care system instead of selling it out through the campaign's website, which also contains all Nurses Talk Truth advertisements (and several from previous campaigns) and facts about the Ford government's handling of health care.

Metrics show the campaign has reached a substantial number of Ontarians, and comments from the public are overwhelmingly positive, with many thanking us for our strong advocacy on their behalf.

ONA will continue to bring attention to the Ford government's serious mismanagement of our health-care system by running Nurses Talk Truth print advertisements monthly and frequent social media ads throughout 2024. We will also tailor our advertising as needed.



Privatization

ona.org/submissions

Never in the history of our union have we seen such a serious threat to our cherished public health-care system.

While Premier Ford didn't campaign on a privatization agenda, the examples of it creeping into our system since his government's 2022 election, largely over the past year, are numerous, including:

- Bill 60, the deceptively named *Your Health Act*, which allows more private for-profit clinics to permanently perform publicly funded surgeries and diagnostic procedures.
- Bill 135, which expands the role of client service provider companies in home and community care, including for-profits.
- Bill 151, which gives the Minister of Infrastructure oversight of properties belonging to Public Health Ontario, Ontario Health and Ontario Health atHome, making it easier for the Ford government to sell public health facilities to private, for-profit developers.
- Violation of the *Voluntary Blood Donations Act*, which bans donor payments and forbids profiting from the sale of blood and plasma donations to ensure a safe supply, after the Ford government announced a multinational private pharmaceutical company would open private, for-profit paid-plasma collection sites in three Ontario cities.



Provincial President Erin Ariss (second from left), NDP Health Critic France Gélinas and our union allies show we mean business at a Bill 135 media conference at Queen's Park on May 8, 2024.



Sign of the times: With privatization increasing in the province, members are displaying their anger more and more.

The list goes on. In fact, an Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) report, *Illegal, Unlawful and Unethical: Case Studies of Patients Charged for Medical Care in Ontario's Private Clinics*, released at a media conference at ONA's provincial office on April 16, 2024, provides evidence from more than 100 patients, who were charged up to \$8,000 or more for eye surgeries and tests; appointment, membership and administrative fees for primary care; and user fees for diagnostics and physician-ordered lab tests.

NURSING AGENCIES

ONA knows that as more services are conducted by private providers, the public system receives less funding, eroding the quality and timeliness of care and making an already dire staffing shortage worse, as private providers lure nurses and health-care professionals away.

A Canadian Institute for Health Information workforce report released in February 2024 found a 9.2 per cent growth in nurses working for nursing agencies in 2022. A subsequent report from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, *Opening the black box: Unpacking the use of nursing agencies in Canada*, found that \$1.5 billion



ONA members, members of the Board of Directors and staff were (quite literally) front and centre during a mass Ontario Health Coalition anti-privatization march through the streets of downtown Toronto and rally at Queen’s Park on May 30, 2024.

public health dollars – a good chunk in Ontario – are projected to be paid out to for-profit nursing agencies in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, a six-fold increase in just over three years. Because these agencies charge hourly rates of up to \$312 for an RN, operational budgets for hospitals and clinics have skyrocketed. This is money that would be better spent on improving working conditions, offering competitive wages and supporting nurses in our public system.

FIGHTING BACK

The good news is that ONA and our members are fighting back and telling Ontarians the brutal truth about how Premier Ford is prioritizing the profits of his corporate buddies at the expense of the public purse and what it really means for their health.

We have provided written and verbal submissions on the above legislation (read at ona.org/submissions) and sent letters to MPPs. We have spoken out at media

conferences, such as on Bill 135 on May 8, 2024 and through several media releases, letters to the editor and op-eds. Our campaigns, including nursing homes bargaining, contained a strong anti-privatization component. We have staged and joined large protests, including at the Ottawa Hospital on June 13, 2024, where private orthopedic surgeries are being performed under a veil of secrecy on weekends (Riverside Campus); at a mass OHC anti-privatization rally at Queen’s Park on May 30, 2024; and as part of a strong five-union anti-privatization coalition that held our seventh and final rally at St. Joseph’s Care Group in Thunder Bay on October 25, 2023 and delivered signed petitions to all CEOs to invest in public hospitals.

Our message is clear: privatization has no place in our system, and the nurses and health-care professionals of this province will stop at nothing to ensure it comes to an abrupt end.



Organizational Changes

ona.org

We are constantly evolving our organizational structure and processes to reflect and support our Strategic Plan and make ONA as strong and effective as we can be. And this past year has been no exception.

One thing that hasn't changed though is the dedication of our Board of Directors, Local and Bargaining Unit leaders, front-line members and staff, who continue to work together to effect positive change and enhance our union.

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors Constitutional Amendments

At the November 2023 Biennial Convention, voting delegates supported Constitutional amendments regarding the ONA Board of Directors, effective January 2025.

These amendments include the creation of a Treasurer position to ensure Local membership dues are spent with integrity. The Treasurer, who will be elected in fall 2024, will assist Local Executives in developing strategic budgeting practices and aligning Local financial policies with provincial financial policies so the fiduciary requirements of the Locals are met. They will also provide guidance and support to Local Treasurers.

OPERATIONS

Management Team Reorganization

Reorganization within our Management Team over the past year has better aligned structure, role clarity and succession planning.

This entailed the realignment of executive positions and titles, one of which is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) position, the second highest-ranking executive in the organization. The COO reports directly to and works in partnership with the CEO. The CEO is the only employee of the Board of Directors and the direction remains that the holder of the CEO position in the organization will be a registered nurse or health-care professional.

To support the day-to-day work of staff, the COO will specifically focus on operational excellence, resource management and cross-functional collaboration to help



Establishing a framework for ONA's future sustainability and growth means reviewing and assessing staffing needs to ensure members are fully supported, including at provincial meetings.

ensure ONA's success and implementation of the CEO's vision, strategies, organizational objectives and strategic direction. Simply put, the CEO is in charge of the plan while the COO makes that plan happen. The COO can also step in for the CEO when needed at a moment's notice for any short-term coverage or delegated duties of the CEO.

We also implemented the position of Senior Strategy Project Manager (Office of the CEO) to support the development and execution of long-term organizational goals and strategic planning, and help guide the implementation process.

All changes have now been fully implemented by existing staff, as we continue to build a strong management team to support our union today and in the future.

Permanent Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Team Formed

In January 2024, our Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Working Group, comprised of seconded staff from



other teams, became its own permanent team. The ARAO Team, which includes a manager, two ARAO Specialists to support members in all five regions and an ARAO Specialist with a focus on reconciliation, guides ONA's critical work in this area and ensures the roll-out of our four-year ARAO Action Plan.

Communications and Government Relations Team Realignment

On August 1, 2024, our Communications and Government Relations Team, which has expanded greatly over the past few years as we focus on Local political action and telling Ontarians the brutal truth, became two separate teams, each with a manager 1 (both of whom were former manager 2s on the team): The Communications Team reporting to the CEO, and the Government Relations and Member Mobilizing Team reporting to the Executive Lead, Provincial Services. Each team now has their own intake email for member inquiries and assistance.

In a strategic shift and to better align with the Strategic Plan, the position of Executive Lead of Communications and Government Relations was also eliminated with that staff member's retirement.

New Negotiations Team Structure

In fall 2023, the Hospital Central and the Long-Term Care Non-Institutional Project teams were disbanded and a streamlined structure created.

As a result, the position of Chief of Negotiations was eliminated, and two Senior Contract Administration Managers were appointed to specialize in negotiations and contract administration.

We also now have two full-time dedicated negotiations Labour Relations Officers reporting to the Manager of Negotiations to support provincial negotiations. Our Region 3 Manager attends all provincial negotiations to ensure that contract administration issues and trends are shared with the Negotiations Team.

These changes were made based on feedback from front-line and management staff on the requirement for improved role clarity with and between contract administration/labour relations and negotiations services.

Additional Staff to Meet Member Needs

As members' needs grow, so too does our staff. To ensure we have adequate capacity to accomplish the work of our union, with succession planning in mind, more staff have been hired over the past year in specialized areas, including labour relations, professional practice, government relations, finance, communications and member mobilizing.

Enhanced Professional Practice Process

Because ONA leaders and front-line members are advocating more and more for safe, quality patient care, we continue to see complex professional practice concerns in all sectors.

Professional Practice is now involved earlier in the process with the goal of reaching resolution directly with members' employers instead of proceeding to the final step in the process: an Independent Assessment Committee hearing, on which we had been increasingly relying.

Engaging Professional Practice earlier allows them to support timely resolutions and/or advancement of files to obtain, with the collaboration of Local leadership and members, the best possible outcome and assist those leaders on how to better manage Professional Responsibility Workload Forms (PRWFs) at their workplace. The Professional Practice Team also continues to engage and educate members in reviewing PRWFs submitted to ONA, our existing processes and the challenges experienced across all sectors.



2023 CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2023

Balance Sheet

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash and short-term investments (at market value)	\$ 22,174,585	\$ 21,273,495
Dues and other receivables	8,659,803	9,060,571
Prepays	2,092,103	2,303,648
	32,926,491	32,637,714
Capital assets (at net book value)	7,582,460	7,597,761
Marketable investments (at market value)	47,420,314	44,126,954
Investment in ONA Liability Insurance Ltd. (equity method)	17,442,755	15,793,406
	\$105,372,020	\$100,155,835
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 14,334,037	\$ 14,019,824
Current portion of capital lease obligations	606,263	414,607
	14,940,300	14,434,431
Capital lease obligations	728,240	235,929
Employee future benefits	25,422,400	22,143,500
	41,090,940	36,813,860
NET ASSETS		
Invested in capital assets	6,247,958	6,947,228
Invested in ONA Liability Insurance Ltd.	17,442,754	15,793,405
Internally restricted	30,861,591	32,233,064
Unrestricted	9,728,777	8,368,278
	64,281,080	63,341,975
	\$105,372,020	\$100,155,835

The above information is a condensed version of the Association's audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2022 and December 31, 2023. For any inquiries, please send them to the Office of the President.



2023 CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2023

Statement of Operations

	2023	2022
REVENUE		
Membership dues	\$ 78,709,212	\$ 72,895,931
Investment income	2,873,084	1,692,799
Other	966,976	897,174
	82,549,272	75,485,904
EXPENSE		
Governance/External vision	3,870,911	2,710,536
Membership services	6,203,154	3,770,366
Service teams	32,075,033	30,511,000
Support teams	22,343,737	21,841,049
Fixed costs	11,742,301	11,121,609
Program costs (Security/LEAP/Critical Illness/LTD/Supplementary)	6,158,126	5,139,475
	82,393,262	75,094,035
Excess of revenue over expenses before undernoted items	156,010	391,869
Amortization	(1,999,861)	(1,743,161)
Unrealized loss on investments	1,294,907	(4,337,236)
Share of net (loss) of ONA Liability Insurance Ltd.	3,150,149	(3,764,852)
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$ 2,601,205	\$ (9,453,380)

The above information is a condensed version of the Association's audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2022 and December 31, 2023. For any inquiries, please send them to the Office of the President.





“Over the past year, the voices of nurses and health-care professionals have never been louder, our resolve never stronger. You don’t fear power when it comes to protecting your patients, residents and clients. You don’t back down in the face of adversity. Our union is strong, united and visible – and each and every one of you are the reason why.”

— Provincial President Erin Ariss, RN

