



ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION

Pay Fair for Home Care Campaign

VON Bargaining Campaign Resource Guide

The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) is the union representing 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as more than 18,000 nursing student affiliates, providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry.

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Know Your Rights

Sometimes it can seem risky to participate in activities that assert your rights as a worker, but there is nothing wrong or illegal about any activity in the Pay Fair for Home Care campaign. In fact, your collective agreement states clearly that the employer cannot retaliate against an employee who exercises their rights.

Article 5.01 and 5.02 of the collective agreement state:

- 5.01 The Employer and the Union agree that there will be no discrimination, interference, intimidation, restriction or coercion exercised or practised by any of their representatives with respect to any Nurse because of their membership or non-membership in the Union, activity or lack of activity on behalf of the Union or by reason of exercising their rights under the Collective Agreement or any applicable legislation.
- 5.02 The Union agrees that there will be no Union activity, solicitation for membership or collection of Union dues on Employer premises or during working hours except with the written permission of the Employer or as specifically provided for in this agreement.

These clauses mean two things.

Clause 5.01 says that VON management can't get you into trouble for participating in ONA activities, like this campaign. For example, they can't reprimand or punish you for wearing an ONA lanyard, putting a sticker on your car or work materials, or talking about the issues you're facing with your friends, family, or wider community.

Clause 5.02 says that ONA members at VON cannot engage in "union activity" during work hours, specifically mentions soliciting memberships and collecting union dues. To be safe, we advise not directly discussing this campaign while on shift. Displaying ONA materials is not the same as participating in "union activity" and is therefore ok, as is participating in union activities outside of work hours (eg. Before/after work or during lunches or breaks).

If you have questions or are unsure about a particular activity, contact your Bargaining Unit President. Find yours by visiting ona.org/bup.

Template Op-Ed

Instructions

If you are concerned about employer retaliation, you may ask your Bargaining Unit President or Local Coordinator to submit the piece on your behalf with their name as the author.

Use this template to submit an op-ed to your local news outlet. Before submitting, **replace all highlighted text** with your information.

Most outlets have instructions on how to submit as well as the general format they prefer. When submitting, include a short note that explains who you are and your connection to the subject matter (ie. Why you are the right person to write it).

Submit to one outlet at a time.

If you need to amend or shorten the op-ed to meet publication specifications, contact media@ona.org for assistance.

Submission email subject line:

Op-ed submission: Fair home care wages are needed to ensure access

Submission email body text:

Hello **[editor's name]**,

My name is **[insert your name]**. I'm a member of the Ontario Nurses' Association, which represents nurses and health-care professionals, including workers at Victorian Order of Nurses, a home care organization that operates in **[community where the newspaper is located]**. Allow me to submit the following op-ed for consideration to include in your publication.

Fair home care wages are needed to ensure access in **[community name]**

As a **[insert profession here]** and a resident of **[insert community name]**, I feel a duty to let my neighbours know about the precarious state of home care in our community and across the province.

Home care nurses provide necessary, specialized care. They work with clients to make sure they can access high-quality care in their homes, often keeping them out of overflowing hospitals and long-term care facilities. They provide essential care, but you wouldn't know it by how they're treated.

For example, did you know that home-care registered nurses are the lowest paid in the province? Over the last decade, health-care professionals working at the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) have seen a 14 per cent decline in their take-home

wages. Home care nurses deserve to be paid the same as those in other sectors – after all, we all provide the same level of care.

As if being underpaid during an affordability crisis weren't enough, my VON colleagues are being pushed out of their jobs by poor benefits, unreasonable schedules, and workplace violence.

Home care nurses often work in remote areas and do many home visits alone, leaving them vulnerable to violence on the job that is far too common. They're often scheduled to see clients back-to-back, even though clients may live hours apart. They pay out of pocket for gas to travel to clients and don't get added pay for working weekends, late nights and holidays.

More and more home care nurses are leaving their jobs. While I don't blame them, we should all worry about what will happen to our home care services if there is no one left to do the job.

Many of my fellow nurses and health-care professionals remain committed to home care, and Ontarians place high value on being able to access it. More than two-thirds (78 per cent) of Canadians say they want to age in place, and that jumps to 81 per cent for seniors. In 2020, more than 82 per cent of households that accessed home care services in the past 12 months felt like those services were very helpful in allowing the patient(s) to stay at home.

We all want to be able to live a full life at home for as long as possible and having access to home care is a crucial part of that. With Ontario's aging population expected to grow by more than 650,000 over the next six years, there will be a huge increase in demand for home-care services, but no extra staff to provide it. Without home-care nurses and health-care professionals, I worry that my family, friends and community won't get the care they need and deserve.

It is time to invest in home care and retain the nurses we need to provide it. I urge the public to join me in calling on the VON Board of Directors to negotiate fair pay and improved benefits with nurses and health-care professionals in their next contract.

The VON Board and the Ford government must fix the working conditions in home care and pay VON members like they're essential – because they are.

It's time for VON and Ford to pay fair for home care.

NAME

CONTACT INFO (email/phone)

Profession, Community

Template Letter to the Editor

Instructions

If you are concerned about employer retaliation, you may ask your Bargaining Unit President or Local Coordinator to submit the piece on your behalf with their name as the author.

Use this template to submit a letter to the editor to your local news outlet. Before submitting, **replace all highlighted text** with your information.

Most outlets have instructions on how to submit a letter to the editor. When submitting, explain your connection to the subject matter and a link to a recent piece that outlet has published that your letter is responding to.

If you need to amend the letter to the editor to meet publication specifications, contact media@ona.org for assistance.

Submission email subject line:

Letter to the Editor: Home care professionals deserve fair pay and benefits

Submission email body text:

Hello **[editor's name]**,

As a [insert profession here] and a resident of **[insert community name]**, I feel a duty to respond to the recent article entitled **[NAME OF ARTICLE]** and let my neighbours know about the precarious state of home care.

Home care nurses provide necessary, specialized care. They work with clients to make sure they can access high-quality care at home, often keeping them out of overflowing hospitals and long-term care facilities.

They provide essential care, but you wouldn't know it by how they're treated. Home-care registered nurses are the lowest paid in the province. Over the last decade, health-care professionals working at the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) have seen a 14 per cent decline in their take-home wages. They deserve to be paid the same as nurses in other sectors – after all, we all provide the same level of care.

As if being underpaid during an affordability crisis weren't enough, VON nurses also face poor benefits, unreasonable schedules, and workplace violence. More and more are leaving their jobs, and while I don't blame them, I do worry what will happen to home care if there is no one left to do the job.

With Ontario's aging population expected to grow by more than 650,000 over the next six years, there won't be enough staff to provide the home-care services we need unless the VON Board of Directors negotiates fair pay and benefits in their next contract.

To continue providing essential care, VON nurses must be paid like the essential workers they are.

It's time for VON and Ford to pay fair for home care.

NAME

CONTACT INFO (email/phone)

Profession, Community

Guide to Social Media

How to Use Social Media to Have Your Voice Heard

1. Check out ona.org/VON to learn more about what home care nurses and healthcare professionals are fighting for and so you can share to your own social media profiles.
2. When posting to social media, use the hashtag #VONPayFair to draw attention to the campaign! You can also include #ONHealth to have your voice heard in the conversation about the future of our province. When possible, you can also include hashtags like #ONlab or #VONPayFair to further increase visibility of your post.
3. Post about your support for home care nurses or share the Pay Fair for Home Care shareables on whichever social media platform you prefer to spread the word. A variety of shareables are available to download at ona.org/VON.
4. Whether you participate in the phone zap, or submit an op-ed or letter to the editor, or share about this campaign with your community, post about your experience using #VONPayFair and remember to tag @ontarionurses on Facebook and X/Twitter or @ontario.nurses on Instagram!
5. Share selfies of yourself with your “Pay Fair for Home Care” swag using #VONPayFair to tell your followers that you support home care nurses!