

# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS



## *Making Important Decisions for You!*

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, March 25-27, 2025

**THE BOARD MET MARCH 25-27, 2025.** This report summarizes high level Board discussions and decisions from this meeting.

### FINANCE

- ▶ The Board reviewed a briefing note recommending that the process for supplementally funding Locals be simplified, minimizing restrictions on spending and considering Locals' specific challenges.
- ▶ The Board approved the creation of a Treasurers Advisory Team to assist our Treasurers with their accountabilities and compliance with policies and legislation.

### BOARD COMMITTEES

#### Quality of Service to Members Committee

- ▶ ONA's Member Survey is set to launch again at the November Biennial Convention.
- ▶ A briefing note was presented to the Committee proposing that ONA track health-care coverage to gauge public awareness. The committee accepted this recommendation.

#### Governance and Nominations Committee

- ▶ A briefing note and the complete revised Guide to Leadership Accountabilities and Competencies were approved by the Board in December and the document was provided to leaders in January. Further discussion was planned for the February Area Coordinators Conferences (ACCs).
- ▶ Discussion on the role of the Site Representative and a possible audit of this role as it varies across the province continued at the March Board meeting. Language for this position will be added to the Guide once approved.

#### Enterprise Risk Management Committee

- ▶ The Committee addressed members on leave doing union business as this was identified as a risk. A Governance Risk Framework Working Group will be established to identify our most significant governance-related risks and to develop strategies to prevent them.

### Political Action Committee

- ▶ The provincial Political Action Committee (PAC) continues working to promote their legislative petition to stop privatization and support staffing ratios. Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4 held successful actions.
- ▶ PAC members reached out to Local Coordinators to start grassroots membership discussions on campaign issues.

### DOCUMENTS APPROVED

#### Health Care Restructuring

- ▶ The Board has approved a number of revised addendums regarding health-care restructuring in the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act (PSLRTA) Guide for ONA Leaders*. A template PLSRTA Tip Sheet and a Tip Sheet specific to Ontario Health atHome have been developed.
- ▶ All updated and approved documents will be used in education sessions.

#### Revised Nursing Home Contract Interpretation Manual for Leaders

- ▶ The Board accepted a number of revisions for the manual, including adding the 2021-2024 Stout award, an addendum to reflect changes resulting from the repeal of Bill 124 for the not-for-profit group of homes and the 2024-2026 Price Award.

### POLICY UPDATES

- ▶ The following policies or policy revisions were approved by the Board:
  - **Policy 10.1** – Nursing Homes Provincial Negotiating Team Mandate – composition will now include two members from each region.
  - **Policy 14.1** – Member's Rights and Resolution of Conflict – added re involvement of Litigation Team.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?** The full minutes from the March Board of Directors meeting will be available at [ona.org](https://ona.org) once approved.

- **Policy 18.6** – ONA Group/Negotiating Teams Election Policy – brought into alignment with Provincial Election Policy.
- **Policy 24.1** – Health Care Restructuring (*PSLRTA* and Sale of Business) Service Delivery Accountabilities – **New**.
- **Policy 26.6** – Demergers – provided greater clarity on process for transferring funds.
- **Policy 26.10** – Funding for *PSLRTA*/Sale of Business Activities – added up to two additional members to be funded for education session.
- **Policy 26.16** – Failure to Meet Financial Accountabilities – added language where Locals unable to fill the Local Treasurer position.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### REGION 1

- ▶ Although employers are trying to decrease agency use, it is still prevalent, especially in smaller rural areas and nursing homes.
- ▶ Health Sciences North (HSN) has not put any supports in place to assist internationally educated nurses (IENs). IENs are reporting harassment and bullying and are being terminated within their probationary period.
- ▶ ONA13 and ONA20 report RPNs replacing RNs in day surgery, renal, OR, PACU and internal med units. Members encouraged to file PRWFs to protect work.

### REGION 2

- ▶ Supplementary Funded (SF) Locals are finding it difficult to support education for their members and new leaders because of budgetary restrictions.
- ▶ ONA74, Brockville: unregulated social workers being counted as staff and taking RN work. RNs filing PRWFs.
- ▶ ONA42, Montfort: RPNs doing telemetry without training. The Bargaining Unit has lost a total of nine FTE RN positions on the Birthing Unit and Medicine Unit.
- ▶ ONA42, Hawkesbury: The employer wants RPNs to do on-call for endo on own. PSWs are covering RNs on nights.

### REGION 3

- ▶ RPNs doing RN work at a number of sites.
- ▶ Sienna-owned long-term care (LTC) homes in the Greater Toronto Area implementing PSW medication administration.
- ▶ All hospital BUPs report an increase in and “normalization” of hallway medicine.

### REGION 4

- ▶ Loss of BUPs in long-term care (LTC).
- ▶ Mergers occurring and causing member conflict.
- ▶ Hospital budget shortfalls causing erosion of RN positions across the region.
- ▶ Heavy workloads and high nurse-to-patient ratios are being reported in hospitals.
- ▶ Safety concerns caring for unpredictable patients in the community setting.
- ▶ NPs and RNs at Grand River Community Health have mobilized around workload and pay in primary-care sector. A rally was held on Jan 15.

### REGION 5

- ▶ London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), Hanover & District Hospital, Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, Listowel Memorial Hospital and Alexandra Marine & General Hospital are working through the provincial framework to settle COVID-19 Vaccinate or Terminate grievances.
- ▶ Brightshores Health System: improper HOOPP deductions/contributions is affecting part-time members.
- ▶ LHSC possible layoffs due to huge budgetary deficit; oversight by provincially-appointed Supervisor David Musyj.
- ▶ Harrow Health Centre Family Health Team (FHT), Rapids FHT and Essex County NP Led Clinic continue to lose members due to the lack of funding in this sector.
- ▶ New LTC beds, with little to no additional staff at Brouillette's Manor, Maitland Manor.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

### COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Our new digital storytelling microsite, F-Word, was launched at the spring Provincial Leadership Meeting (PLM) to great fanfare on April 16. The microsite will allow for greater alignment with our brand but continue to deliver meaningful content on the issues that are important to our members' union and professional lives. With the end of the printed *Front Lines*, our first annual mailing was prepared late last year and arrived in members' mailboxes in January.
- ▶ In the final quarter of 2024, ONA was mentioned in the media a total of 2,060 times, with a total potential reach of more than 227 million.

**ADVERTISING**

- ▶ Anticipating an early election call in Ontario, ONA aired a short and intensive run of new video ads on social media. ONA extended the fall-winter 2024 “Ontario Deserves Better” campaign to a compact, five-day campaign, “Demand Better.” The messaging clearly set its sights on the Ford government’s failures in health care.
- ▶ Our eight variable length ads (25-30 seconds) featured 14 different ONA members. The ads began running about a week prior to the election call on January 29.

**RETIREE NETWORK ADVISORY TEAM (RNAT)**

- ▶ The Retiree Network Advisory Team (RNAT) met on February 3. They discussed the snap provincial election call and strategies to engage retiree members in the Nurses Vote campaign on the phone banks.
- ▶ RNAT members have been attending monthly Bargaining Action Team meetings to learn skills and keep up to date on collective actions.
- ▶ RNAT members will also be connecting with their counterparts on the board’s PAC and are invited to attend future Regional Political Action Committee (RPAC) meetings.

**PROVINCIAL CAMPAIGNS AND MOBILIZING****Hospital Provincial Bargaining Campaign 2025**

- ▶ On January 9, a phone/email zap was held targeting hospital CEOs; 72 people participated, making 70 calls and sending 295 emails.
- ▶ On January 29, an All-Out Rally took place in front of the Hilton Hotel in downtown Toronto during hospital mediation. About 400 ONA, union, labour and community members participated.
- ▶ The Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) petition banner structure test targeted candidates for the provincial election in hospital catchment areas. The delivery of these petitions started February 24.
- ▶ For the Have a Heart structure test, members delivered hearts to their hospital CEOs February 10.

**Provincial and Federal Elections**

- ▶ 20 secondees joined the Nurses Vote campaign with more than 80 volunteers.
- ▶ Seconded members had one-on-one conversations with ONA members in target ridings through phone banks and mass texting.

- ▶ Community leafletting and door-to-door canvassing on key election issues took place in target ridings.
- ▶ The Nurses Vote campaign for the April 28 federal election shared the same tactics as the provincial election.

**Stop the Closures of Supervised Consumption Sites**

- ▶ After the Supervised Consumption Sites (SCS) education and action session in November 2024, 39 members volunteered to be part of lobby teams to meet with MPPs. The demand is to stop the closures of these sites.

**WORKPLACE ORGANIZING****Grand River Community Health Centre – Fair Wages**

- ▶ On January 15, the members of ONA7, Grand River Community Health Centre, participated in a rally/information picket outside of MPP Will Bouma’s office in Brantford. Their demand was to close the wage gap for nurses and health-care professionals working in primary care.

**Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare – Safe Staffing and Retention Campaign**

- ▶ At the end of 2024, the action committee finished drafting a letter highlighting nurses’ issues and demands on safe staffing and retention to the hospital Board. Their letter was signed by the Region 4 Vice President, Grace Pierias.

**The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) Operating Room (OR) RNs Continue to Fight to Protect Patient Safety in Surgery with Retention Solutions**

- ▶ The action committee launched their structure test in the form of a story petition to be delivered to the hospital CEO. They are demanding increased RN staffing in each OR to levels that had previously been in place.

**NURSING STUDENTS****Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA) National Conference**

- ▶ The CNSA held their Annual National Conference in Halifax January 29 to February 1, 2025. First Vice-President Alan Warrington spoke on ONA’s behalf and was part of a panel with nursing union leaders from all provinces.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Advocacy in Action

- ▶ In December 2024, ONA's Campaigns Officer co-facilitated the Advocacy in Action workshop with the Member Education (ME) Team. Participants learned how to start action plans and to build a campaign in their Bargaining Units using real issues.

### Organizing for Power 2025

- ▶ The Organizing for Power Core Fundamentals program ran from February 13 to March 20. A small group of ONA members were trained in core organizing methods, leader identification, organizing conversations, structure tests and charting to build supermajority participation from members in order to have a successful campaign.

### Member Education

- ▶ The Education Brochure and Learning Pathways documents are available on ONA's website and can be used to guide workshop scheduling to meet Local and Bargaining Unit needs.

### Education for New Bargaining Unit Presidents

- ▶ On July 1, 2024, a new strategy to support and educate new Bargaining Unit Presidents (BUPs) was introduced. New BUPs can access new BUP workshops, approximately every three weeks, on an alternating schedule. All new BUPs are required to attend the following two half-day workshops:
  - New BUP.
  - Introduction to Technology for New BUPs.
- ▶ All new BUPs must attend prerequisite workshops prior to registering for the two-day Rocking Your Role as a BUP workshop. Overall, 85 new BUPs attended Rocking Your Role.

### eLearning

- ▶ Our refreshed eLearning platform was expected to launch in April 2025. eLearning will continue to be self-paced courses, available anytime, and can be completed in more than one session.

### Premiums and ONA Merch Shop

- ▶ ONA premiums inventory continues to be managed for both in-house premiums and for the ONA Merch Shop. Inventory is reviewed monthly. Just-in-time ordering and minimum quantities of items are purchased for the ONA Merch Shop.

- ▶ ONA has a rebate agreement with our vendor partner that gives us back five per cent on total sales each quarter. The rebate amount for the fourth quarter of 2024 was \$10,839.26.

### Professional Practice

- ▶ There has been an increase in the number of files supported by the Professional Practice (PP) Team. There were 950 active files, of which 211 are new files and 191 files have been closed.
- ▶ Under Minutes of Settlements and Achievements, 47,220 RN hours were achieved and 7,800 RPN hours with 5,460 for Personal Support Workers (PSWs).
- ▶ Education on the changes to the professional practice workload process has been delivered to approximately 66 Bargaining Unit leaders to date. Plans are in the works to expand this education to include an updated Bargaining Unit tracking tool for leaders.

## INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (IAC)

### Grand River Hospital – Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

- ▶ An IAC hearing for this unit was scheduled for March 24. On December 13, 2024, the hospital informed all staff in its Children's Program, which included the NICU, of several changes that will improve the working environment for the RNs. These improvements have resolved the concerns raised by the nurses. The members agreed to place the IAC on pause and will monitor the implementation of these employer initiatives.

### London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC)

- ▶ The NICU at LHSC considered initiating the IAC process. The process is now on pause due to a grievance regarding implementation of the previous MOS issued for this unit. This file will be closely monitored.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH)

- ▶ In November 2024, the MOH announced that the scope of practice for RNs and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) would be expanding. Effective July 1, the expansion includes the following key amendments:
  - Authorize NPs to order and perform more procedures, such as defibrillations and electrocoagulation.

- Remove conditions that currently limit an NPs' authority to complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Death, permitting them to do so in any circumstance.
  - Authorize RNs to complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Death in specified circumstances when death is expected.
- The MOH released a statement on January 10 outlining the new *Canadian Health Act Services Policy*, which confirms that if a service is considered medically necessary it should be covered by a patient's provincial or territorial health-care plan whether the service is provided by a physician or physician equivalent. These changes are due to come into effect on April 1, 2026.
- The statement also notes that this is a measure to protect our public health care and ensure patients have equitable access to medical care based on need and not the ability to pay. A great win for patients, NPs, midwives and our public health-care system.

## COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO (CNO)

### Single Classification for NPs

- The CNO has implemented a framework to move to a single classification for NPs.
- In 2025 and through to 2026, the CNO plans to develop a new national NP entry-level exam and implement changes to the NP registration process.

## CANADIAN FEDERATION OF NURSES UNION (CFNU)

- The CFNU Research and Professional Practice Network met at the end of November 2024 following the Nurse-Patient Ratios Summit, where national and international guests and panelists provided presentations and shared lived experiences on fighting for and implementing nurse-patient ratios. Findings will be published in a post-summit report.

### Nursing Agencies Research

- Work on this initiative began in the fall 2023. There were 472 agencies identified in the research. Agency usage was on the rise prior to the pandemic and ballooned during the pandemic. There was a six-fold increase in costs over the three-year period commencing 2020 and more than \$1.5 billion was spent in 2023-2024.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

### COVID-19 Grievance – Glen Rouge Community

- Staff working on a unit with a COVID-19 outbreak tested positive for COVID-19. However, the employer failed to report the occupational illnesses to the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), the trade union and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) as required under Section 52 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

### Health and Safety Caucus 2025

- This year's topic for the caucus is "First Principles: From Bad to Good Employers – Strengthening Foundational Approaches." This caucus is designed to provide nurses and health care providers with essential H&S knowledge, effective risk management strategies and actionable solutions to promote a safer work environment. By reviewing key concepts, we seek to reduce the workplace incidents, enhance the overall safety culture and ensure compliance with regulatory standards.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT (OHSA) APPEALS

### London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) – Surgical Plume

- In July 2024, incident reports were received regarding a surgical smoke plume within the OR because the smoke evacuator machine was not functioning properly. The health and safety specialist is working with the litigator, LRO and Bargaining Unit leadership team on making a case for an Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) complaint.

### Halton Healthcare – Physician Sexual Violence

- An OLRB Section 61 appeal was filed in 2018 regarding a physician who sexually assaulted a hospital employee, and who was subsequently found guilty of sexual assault in criminal court and lost his license to practice. Currently, there are outstanding issues related to the employer's violence and harassment policies.

## HEALTH & SAFETY GRIEVANCES

### Bluewater Health – Harassment/Violence

- After a hemodialysis patient exhibited harassing and violent behaviours, the MLITSD was called in to do an investigation. On October 24, 2024, the MLITSD ordered that training be done with staff on the use of the screamer device, and then, upon receiving numerous



reports of harassment, the inspector returned and ordered that the employer conduct a comprehensive harassment investigation by February 7. Four grievances have been filed including: policy, group harassment, individual harassment, union representation and reprisal.

#### **Providence Care – Workplace Violence**

- ▶ There continues to be ongoing concerns related to violence on the Parkside 2 Unit, a psychiatric geriatric unit. A complaint was filed with the MLITSD in late 2024 which resulted in an investigation. Deficiencies and violations of OHSAs as well as the regulations were noted in the narrative section of the report. However, no orders were issued. Due to the delay in receiving the report, ONA has been unable to file a s.61 OLRB appeal. The H&S specialist will be drafting a letter of complaint.

#### **Royal Victoria Hospital – Radiation**

- ▶ On December 18, 2024, the MLITSD investigated the x-ray safety program in Cath Lab 1 and 2, and the Cystoscopy room. While several recommendations were made, no orders were issued. On January 6, an ONA member reached out to ONA's WSIB intake regarding a potential cluster exposure and occupational illness. From the information the BUP provided, it appears the employer was taking steps to mitigate hazards.

#### **The Ottawa Hospital (TOH)**

- ▶ After ONA engaged the MLITSD with several orders issued by the inspector, the employer has now made non-violent crisis intervention training mandatory for any staff who work or float to high risk for violent areas.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY (HRE)**

- ▶ The Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team met on January 21. The structure of the newly created Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Board Committee was discussed.
- ▶ ONA has made significant investments to build our capacity to fight oppression, with a focus on anti-racism, through the development of ONA's membership Strategic Priority, "Everyone Included," and ONA's members Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Action Plan, and through the creation of the Anti-Racism Advisory (ARA) Team (for membership), the ARAO staff operations team and most recently, the creation of the ReconciliAction Working Group.

- ▶ These investments have been in addition to ONA's long-standing commitment to HR.
- ▶ The team reviewed the newly developed mandate, gave positive feedback, and looked forward to the next steps in this process.

#### **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Appeals**

- ▶ Starting in January 2025, the WSIB Appeals Team became part of ONA's Legal Department.
- ▶ This presents both opportunities and challenges to ensure adequate time for mentoring and building capacity for new staff to meet workload targets. In 2025, our goals are to stabilize the team, ensure all staff are working at full capacity, and begin addressing the team's longstanding backlog of file.

#### **Legal Expense Assistance Plan (LEAP) Report**

- ▶ In 2024, LEAP spent significantly less on external legal costs than in the previous three calendar years. The total spent on these fees in 2024 was \$1.359 million.
- ▶ CNO has increasingly been offering early resolution options, instead of investigations, in situations where the allegations are less serious and the parties are willing to participate. As a result, over the past few months, the expert nurses who work for LEAP's RN roster have been busier than ever.

#### **Nurses' Health Program**

- ▶ On February 11, ONA participated in an education session for health-care employers regarding the Nurses' Health Program (NHP). The event was promoted through ONA Communications and our partner organizations in NHP. Approximately 160 employers attended and there was significant interest from employers about how to work with NHP to ensure nurses with substance use and mental health disorders can practice safely.

### **PROVINCIAL BARGAINING**

#### **LONG-TERM CARE SECTOR**

##### **Participating Nursing Homes**

- ▶ Bargaining has concluded. Collective agreements are being prepared/signed off.
- ▶ Preparation for the next round is underway.
- ▶ Pay Equity: The Review Officer is reviewing the submission by ONA and the response from the participating nursing homes.

### Non-Participating Nursing Homes

- Negotiations for renewal collective agreements continue.

### Retirement Homes

- Bargaining continues in this sector and settlements are achieving percentage increases obtained in other sectors.

### Homes for the Aged

- Settlements have been achieved in some Bargaining Units giving parity with hospitals on wages, isolation pay and unlimited mental health. Arbitration decisions received are awarding hospital parity on wages, and isolation pay. Mental health benefits are being increased to \$2,000 per year.
- Pay Equity: There are several ongoing files.

## HOSPITAL SECTOR

### Provincial Hospital Bargaining 2025

- Bargaining and mediation took place in January 2025 and no settlement was achieved. Preparations for arbitration were made with the hearing held in April 2025.
- Pay Equity: The complaint at Review Services on the Job Information Questionnaire (JIQ) is ongoing.

### Non-Participating Hospitals

- There are 17 non-participating hospital Bargaining Units. Bargaining is ongoing with 10 settlements.

### Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act (HLDA)

- Six decisions have been received and five are pending.

### Ontario Health atHome (OH atHome)

- The PSLRTA process is underway. Mediation was held in January and the parties were unable to reach an agreement on Bargaining Unit configuration. Consultation at the OLRB is scheduled for July 25.

### Public Health

- Settlements continue to be achieved. There are currently four approved mergers of public health units across the province.
- Pay Equity: There are a number of ongoing files and good progress is being made.

## ORGANIZING

### Potential Campaigns

- There are nine groups that have reached out and initial meetings are being set up.

### First Collective Agreements

- There are 10 first collective agreements being negotiated across the province. An additional two are at the HLDA stage.

**The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held June 17-19, 2025. Before that is the Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) being held June 10-12, 2025. The PCM is being hosted by Region 3 in Markham, ON.**

**If you have any questions about this Board meeting, please contact ONA Provincial President Erin Ariss or your regional Vice-President (contact information below). Current and past Board meeting highlights are available in Access ONA.**

**Board members currently:** Erin Ariss, Provincial President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison/Provincial Negotiations (#7755); Alan Warrington, First Vice-President, Political Action and Interim Region 5 (#7708); Monique Storozuk, Region 1, Professional Issues (#7712); Rachel Muir, Region 2, Occupational Health and Safety (#7711); Karen McKay-Eden, Region 3, Human Rights and Equity (#7710); Grace Pierias, Region 4, Education and Events (#7709); Bernadette Robinson, Treasurer (#7756); Andrea Kay, Chief Executive Officer/Board Secretary. **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 their 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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