



Questions for Candidates

As an ONA member, you have an important and valuable perspective on the consequences of an under-funded public health-care system. We have prepared questions for you to ask your candidates that will hopefully shed light on how their party will prioritize our workplaces, health care and communities if they form government. If you are able, please speak about your own experience, and add local examples as you go.

1. Bill 124, Wage Suppression Legislation:

Ontario's nurses and health-care professionals are an invaluable asset to our health-care system and the pandemic has clearly demonstrated how much our communities rely on us. We have been called heroes but are repeatedly disrespected by the Ford government with pieces of legislation like Bill 124. Bill 124 is wage suppression legislation that caps our wages at 1% and impedes on our ability to collectively bargain. This legislation targets women-dominated professions and exempts male-dominated professions like municipal firefighters and police. My ask is simple: **Will you recognize the value of nurses and health-care professionals by repealing Bill 124?**

2. RN Shortage:

For over a decade now, Ontario has had the lowest RN-per-capita ratio in the entire country. Currently, we face a shortage of 22,000 nurses. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made the situation worse, resulting in unsafe working environments, huge backlogs and longer wait times for patients. **Does your party have a concrete plan to retain and recruit nurses to address this growing shortage?**

3. Public Health:

Public health nurses play a vital work in promoting and protecting our communities. During the pandemic, public health nurses played a crucial part in contact tracing, infection control, and the vaccination roll-out. Beyond COVID-19, public health nurses specialize in many areas and support programs about sexual health, family planning and care, the ongoing opioid crisis, and more. However, the Ford government's cuts to public health have weakened our ability to provide high-quality services. The pandemic has only heightened these issues by making us do more with less resources. **Will your party permanently restore provincial funding for public health units? How does your party plan to build capacity in public health?**

4. Long-Term Care

Over the course of the pandemic, over 4,000 residents and 13 health-care workers have died. More than 25,000 residents in long-term care and 11,500 health-care workers and staff have been infected with COVID-19. There is evidence that "for profit long-term care



Questions for Candidates

homes have had larger COVID-19 outbreaks and more deaths of residents from COVID-19 than non-profit and municipal homes” yet the Ford government plans allocate thousands of new beds in 30-year licenses to for-profit companies. Nurses know that today’s long-term care residents have more complex care needs. We recommend four hours of daily care per resident for every long-term care home. It must include the following skill mix to meet resident need: 20 percent RN care, 25 percent registered practical nurse (RPN) care, 55 percent care from personal support workers (PSWs) and 1 nurse practitioner (NP) for every 120 residents. This was reflected in recommendations of Ontario’s Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. **What is your party’s plan to phase-out for-profit long-term care? Will your party commit to supporting the minimum of 4-hours of care for residents, with the recommended skill mix above, in every long-term care home in Ontario?**

5. Hospital Funding

ONA recommends an increase of at least 5 per cent in hospital base operating funding to cover the costs of inflation, population growth and aging, plus increased demand for hospital services. This is to ensure our hospitals have the resources to properly maintain RN staffing for safe, quality patient care. In Ontario, we have the fewest hospital beds per person and the lowest RN to population in Canada. As a [nurse, social worker, respiratory therapist] I work with readmissions more than any other [nurse, social worker, RT] in Canada and the overcrowding in my own workplace means [long wait times, overcrowded emergency departments, hallway nursing, etc.]. **Will your party commit to increasing funding for public hospitals to protect services?**

6. Public Home and Community Care

Care Coordinators and direct service teams help patients navigate the health-care system, a role that requires many years of experience and extensive knowledge of local health care and support services. The Ford government’s proposed changes to home and community care opens the sector to even more privatization and a potential conflict of interest if care coordinator jobs are privatized. We could have a situation where Care Coordination work being given to Health Service Providers that are mostly for-profit. They will deliver the service *and* provide care coordination. This dual role creates a serious conflict of interest, especially when profit-making is involved. Further, transferring Care Coordinator jobs to for-profit home care corporations would mean lower pay and benefits and poorer working conditions for staff, while the profit-margins of the corporations prosper. Removing the independent oversight role of Care Coordinators in the public sector also puts patient and client care at risk. **Will your party commit to protecting the**



Questions for Candidates

jobs of Care Coordinators and direct service teams in the public sector? Will your party commit to the creation of a public nonprofit home care system to improve client services so that we are able to provide the care to meet needs?

7. Violence in the Workplace

Violence should never be “part of the job” but unfortunately, nurses and health-care workers are often subject to physical, verbal, and emotional violence. Over the last four years, violent incidents causing lost-time injuries increased by 27 per cent and we anticipate that this will increase. Real action needs to be taken to stop violence at work and adequate resources need to be implemented to support those of us who need to take time off. This year, the Ford government decided to take funds from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and give them back to employers instead of providing more support to injured workers. **What is your party’s plan to address violence in the workplace and ensure that WSIB helps those who actually need it?**