

# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS



*Making Important Decisions for You!*

A summary of discussions and decisions from the ONA Board of Directors Meeting, December 3-5, 2024.

**THIS IS THE FINAL REPORT FOR 2024**, with the Board's next meeting set for March 2025. This report summarizes high level Board discussions and decisions from their meeting. Wishing all our members and front-line leaders a productive, safe and healthy New Year.

## **BOARD PORTFOLIOS**

The new and returning Board members assume their roles in January 2025, with some changes in portfolios. The following are the Board portfolios:

- ▶ President Erin Ariss, Communications, Government Relations, Student Liaison and Provincial Negotiations
- ▶ First Vice-President (TBD), Political Action (Local). Alan Warrington assumes the role of interim First Vice-President in January 2025.
- ▶ Region 1 Vice-President Monique Storozuk, Professional Issues
- ▶ Region 2 Vice-President Rachel Muir, Occupational Health and Safety
- ▶ Region 3 Vice-President Karen McKay-Eden, Human Rights and Equity
- ▶ Region 4 Vice-President Grace Pierias, Education and Events
- ▶ Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington, Labour Relations (Contract Administration)
- ▶ Treasurer Bernadette (Bernie) Robinson, (new in 2025)

For the Board's biographies and contact information to be updated in 2025, see [ONA Board of Directors](#).

## **FINANCE**

- ▶ The Board approved the Quarter 3 2024 Variance Report and the Annual Budget for 2025 provided by the Chief Financial Officer.

## **BOARD COMMITTEES**

### **QUALITY OF SERVICE TO MEMBERS COMMITTEE**

The Committee reviewed the following briefing notes:

- ▶ **Events Registration** – In consultation with this committee, Member Events and Information Technology will investigate whether improvements can be made to the events registration process within our existing process, platform and applications.

### **GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

- ▶ The Board approved the revised Guide to Leadership Accountabilities and Competences for leaders at the Bargaining Unit and Local levels.

### **ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

- ▶ ONA has engaged MASS LBP to develop a proposal to support ONA in development of a risk framework. We anticipate a proposal to come to the Board in January 2025.
- ▶ The waiver signed by members attending the Leadership Conference needs to be reviewed and amended to include language to mitigate the risk at ONA events.
- ▶ Policy 8.9 – Computer Equipment and Account Usage Guidelines – draft replacement policies.

### **POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

- ▶ PAC members held their second Regional PAC meetings in October. They are currently working together to see how they can get Bargaining Unit, Local and community members to sign a petition going out to regions. The petition will be undertaken in 2025 and presented and read in the Ontario legislature by supportive Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs).
- ▶ ONA will demonstrate the mounting support for staffing ratios by sharing video clips from the MPP presentations on ONA's social media. PAC and RPAC members will reach out to Locals to find opportunities to lead the discussion on the petition in 2025.

### **POLICY UPDATES**

The following policies or policy revisions were approved by the Board:

- ▶ 3.9 – ONA and CFNU Student Scholarships – revised to include eligibility for Master's degree programs.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?** The full minutes from the December 2024 Board of Directors meeting will be available at [ona.org](http://ona.org) once approved.

- ▶ 16.32 – Assistance Provided in Deaths of ONA Members – revised.
- ▶ 16.37 – Members Elected to Parliament (NEW). Members who are elected to federal or provincial parliament will not be permitted to hold an elected or appointed position with ONA.
- ▶ 26.22 Funding for Parades – ONA will provide funding for aspects of parades/events, including floats and t-shirts.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### REGION 1

- ▶ Ongoing member-to-member complaints, harassment and investigation meetings in the nursing home sector.
- ▶ Potential emergency room (ER) closures due to lack of physician support in rural ERs.
- ▶ Internationally Education Nurses (IEN) unsuccessful due to lack of employer support.
- ▶ Lack of adequate security and increased issues with unhoused individuals in small community hospitals.
- ▶ Employers seeking to add Nurse Practitioners (NP) to the Bargaining Unit (BU) but finding it difficult to recruit.
- ▶ Although some employers are trying to decrease agency use, it is still prevalent, particularly in some hospitals and nursing homes.
- ▶ Other health professional shortages causing significant issues for our members, i.e., EMS, physicians, HR, etc.

### REGION 2

- ▶ Agency use in some BUs is increasing.
- ▶ Increase in terminations of IENs in probationary period. Employers not focused on retention, only recruitment.
- ▶ Expansion of departments or new builds at some facilities and not hiring more staff to manage the size and increase in patients.
- ▶ ERs overflowing with patients.

### REGION 3

- ▶ ONA43, William Osler has had numerous IENs terminated before the end of their probationary period. This employer is now utilizing the Nursing Graduate Guarantee (NGG) initiative for the IENs, giving them a dedicated preceptor and more time to gain the competencies needed. The LC reports a decrease in the number of IENs being unsuccessful in their probationary period.
- ▶ Still reports of many terminations of IENs across the region related to practice issues, non-English-speaking, and expiring work permits all reported to CNO, which then impacts their resident status.

- ▶ Occupational health nurses being replaced with unregulated workers.
- ▶ RPN issues:
  - RPNs now triaging in pre-scheduled minor treatment areas (William Osler).
  - RPNs introduced to the ED (North York General).
  - Mount Sinai Hospital (MSH) plans to expand RPN program to psychiatry and general internal medical (GIM) units.

### REGION 4

- ▶ Multiple newer BUs in the homes sector. Also, multiple homes closing, amalgamating and merging.
- ▶ Many nursing homes are reporting the end of agency use.
- ▶ In the public health sector, ONA7 is reporting multiple health and safety concerns.
- ▶ Some hospitals are reporting a decrease or end to agency use in 2025 due to budget constraints.
- ▶ Slow to implement Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) or Minutes of Settlement (MOS) recommendations.
- ▶ IENs are being disciplined or terminated.
- ▶ At ONA75, RNs being replaced by RPN model of care changes being challenged and held back.
- ▶ Heavy workloads and high nurse-to-patient ratios being reported.
- ▶ HCCSSs report concerns re Return to Office policy requirements.
- ▶ Safety concerns caring for unpredictable patients in community setting.
- ▶ VON Brant: work is being contracted out.

### REGION 5

- ▶ Reduction of oncology services in Owen Sound (only two radiation oncologists available); significant referrals to Barrie, Hamilton, Windsor and London will now occur.
- ▶ Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) and Lambton Public Health saw significant improvements to the employers' "best" offers at the bargaining table because of the members taking collective action in numerous information pickets.
- ▶ New long-term care (LTC) builds (Chelsey Park, Maitland Manor, Country Terrace). Adding beds with no additional staff (Brouillette Manor).
- ▶ Several employers are rescinding/shelving their COVID vaccination policies.
- ▶ Four Counties: Endoscopy re-opening one day per week – scheduling for this is a nightmare.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

### COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ The redesign of the ONA website was launched in December. The final push included building unique and templated pages, confirming content updates with subject matter experts, mapping out redirects to mitigate broken links and coordinating the integration of our collective agreements and online forms.
- ▶ The rollout of redesigned Local websites continued throughout the early fall. Initial feedback has been positive and training sessions have begun with interested Local website administrators. By the end of the year nearly all existing Local sites will have launched in the new designed template.
- ▶ The final printed issue of ONA's membership magazine *Front Lines* was mailed in the fall, containing an announcement about our shift to a microsite and digital version in 2025. In preparation to fully digitalize *Front Lines*, communications staff continue to work closely with our branding agency on the concept, content planning and creation of a user-friendly microsite, based on our Board-approved publication plan.
- ▶ For members who continue to enjoy printed materials, the Board approved a plan in September for an annual mailing, which will contain our pocket monthly planner, other pertinent ONA information in the form of a fold-out brochure, and the Nursing Week gift. The mailing will arrive early in 2025.

### ONA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN: NURSES TALK TRUTH

- ▶ The message that ONA members brought to the public in a province-wide advertising campaign that launched on October 21, the day the Conservative government returned to the legislature, is that nurses will stand up for what they believe in. In fact, nurses from across Ontario are stepping up as advocates for their patients, residents and clients, and for their colleagues and profession.
- ▶ ONA members from all regions and sectors were interviewed for this campaign. The nurses and health-care professionals shared unscripted, stark realities of their work and the negative impacts of Ontario government policies.
- ▶ The ads ran in markets across the province for five weeks. This included video ads on TV, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, and print ads in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail*. Video ads include 12 different 15-second spots, and 12 30-second spots. ONA will also continue to advertise monthly in the *Hospital News* in 2025, with the prime placement of the full page inside the front cover.

### NURSING WEEK

- ▶ Nursing Week will take place in 2025 from Monday, May 12 to Sunday, May 18.
- ▶ ONA Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington is steering the committee as chair for his second consecutive year.
- ▶ The Board accepted the team's recommendation for the 2025 theme, which is: ***Raising our voices. Speaking the truth. / Faire entendre nos voix. Dire la vérité.***
- ▶ The Nursing Week planning guide and other materials, including the poster and social media shareables, as well as guest request form, will be available on the Nursing Week webpage in February.

### RETIREE NETWORK ADVISORY TEAM

- ▶ We hosted the first meeting of ONA's Retiree Network on October 18, 2024. RNAT played a key role in the preparations by making personal phone calls to retiree members in their regions to build connections and personally invite them to the launch.
- ▶ Approximately 60 retiree members from across the province participated in the launch meeting, including two past ONA Presidents and many former Local Coordinators and Local leaders. During the group discussion, retiree members were very enthusiastic and excited about this new network.
- ▶ Former ONA Board member Anne Clark, RNAT representative for Region 2, has accepted the Board's appointment to the OFL Retired Workers Committee. She will provide the team with updates on the work of this committee.

### GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- ▶ On the federal level, ONA Provincial President Erin Ariss, RN and ONA Chief Executive Officer Andrea Kay made a presentation to the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in support of Bill C-321, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code* (assaults against persons who provide health services and first responders).
- ▶ The federal *Pharmacare Act* was passed by the Senate in October 2024. This legislation provides for public coverage for a range of contraceptive and diabetes medications.
- ▶ ONA member Tyler Watt was recently nominated as the Ontario Liberal candidate for Nepean.

### MEMBER EDUCATION (ME) REPORT

- ▶ The ME Team has delivered another 40 workshops this past quarter (July to September), in addition to three full days of stream-specific education (novice, advanced and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [DEI]) at the Leadership

Summit, held in September 2024, which was hugely successful. There have been almost 200 workshops delivered to date in 2024.

- ▶ ONA will be launching a new eLearning platform in 2025. The current eLearning platform closed in December, and there will be a period of approximately three months with no access to eLearning. The new platform is anticipated to be launched in April 2025 and will be an exciting and dynamic way to learn online.

**MEMBER EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS TEAM (ME/E) REPORT**

- ▶ In conjunction with the Emergency Response planning, the ME/E Team continues to review our design processes for provincial events to ensure the safety of all participants and partners.
- ▶ The Health and Safety Precautions Statement, approved by the Board in April 2022, was updated in October 2024 to reflect a measles and monkey pox concern in the province.
- ▶ We will continue to utilize an all-participant waiver form for activities at events as part of the risk management protocols for the organization.

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

- ▶ Members and Bargaining Unit leaders are demonstrating strong engagement, knowledge and advocacy related to the professional responsibility workload process, as illustrated again this quarter by the overall increase in the number of files being supported by the Professional Practice Team.
- ▶ The professional practice specialists continue to meet with Bargaining Unit leaders every six to eight weeks for file reviews, to ensure communication and collaboration of priorities of files.
- ▶ A pattern remains of employers refusing to sign MOS, and in some cases not responding at all. Professional Practice continues to work closely with the Bargaining Unit leaders and Labour Relations Officers (LROs) to address these files and submit grievances.
- ▶ There are increased requests for additional Local education related to the professional practice process and for clarity on the evidence required on PRWFs to advance files.

**COLLEGE OF NURSES (CNO) UPDATES**

- ▶ The Quality Assurance Assessment Program has changed, and the new selection process has increased the number of nurses chosen to participate in the quality assurance program to approximately 5,000 CNO

members to date. Selection occurs twice a year, in spring and fall. Selection is done randomly, and the fall selected members received notification on September 23, 2024, with their deadline to complete their quality assurance requirements Part 1 or Part B, by November 1, 2024.

- ▶ Requests for extension are considered for such reasons as childbirth leaves, medical leaves, etc. By calling the CNO Quality Assurance line, or if you have questions about the Quality Assurance Assessment Program, you can reach out to CNO at QAassessment@CNOmail.org, 416-963-3922 or 1-800-387-5526 (ext. 3922).

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

**ASK A SPECIALIST (AAS)**

- ▶ Sessions are delivered on the second Tuesday of each month. Sessions that were held in the latter part of 2024 included:
  - October 8 – Ergonomic Hazards
  - December 10 – Critical Injuries.
- ▶ The session planned for November was deferred due to the HRE Caucus and PLM.

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY (HRE)**

- ▶ The Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Team assisted in designing and presenting the HRE Caucus. The focus for this year’s Caucus was our Francophone members equity deserving group and our Members Living with Disabilities equity deserving group. We welcomed 250 attendees which included members, leaders, guests, Board members and staff.
- ▶ The newly structured HRE Representative and Accommodation/RTW Representative Competencies and Accountabilities documents were shared.
- ▶ Participants heard from a peer panel about the challenges faced by members, leaders and staff when seeking accommodations. A second panel was conducted mostly in French. English speaking members used a translation application which allowed them to listen to the speakers in English, in real time.

**ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION (ARAO) TEAM**

- ▶ The ReconciliACTION Working Group (RWG), met with Rose LeMay, Reconciliation Consultant on September 20 and October 20 to discuss upcoming initiatives which included the Declaration: Truth and Reconciliation and communications for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Communications Team, a series of videos were launched highlighting members and staff stating what truth and reconciliation meant for them in

recognition of September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

- ▶ On September 30, 2024, ONA launched its Declaration: Truth and Reconciliation. This Declaration reflects ONA's core social justice values and establishes reconciliation as an organizational priority.
- ▶ During this year's fall Leadership Summit, the first ever that included a DEI stream, participants learned and demonstrated how to incorporate DEI, Human Rights and Equity, and ARAO approaches into advocacy at work. One hundred per cent of attendees found the stream helpful or very helpful.

**MEMBER ANTI-RACISM ADVISORY (ARA) TEAM**

- ▶ The ARA Team welcomed a new member who identifies as Racialized and is currently getting that member oriented.
- ▶ The ARA Team has provided feedback on documents such as the DEI and the communication strategy for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the upcoming 2025 Black History, Black Futures month and National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

**SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITES**

- ▶ In September, ONA teamed up with other unions that have members working in supervised consumption sites to support ONA and local community actions to pressure Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones to stop closure of the sites.
- ▶ In November, the group organized an ONA member briefing education and action session to build the base of ONA members who understand the toxic drug crisis, the Ford Conservatives plan to close these sites that are an evidence-based harm-reduction approach to preventing overdoses and providing health care, as well as the impact the closures will have on people who use drugs, communities and the health-care system.

**LABOUR RELATIONS**

**WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD (WSIB) APPEALS**

The WSIB Appeals Team has continued to receive some new ONA COVID-19 appeal files, but the trend has been slowing. Many of the newer appeal files are from members who continue to suffer from the long-term effects of COVID-19 or have developed psychological impairments due to their original COVID-19 occupational illness.

In addition, we are also now getting some new denials of initial entitlement under WSIB's new Communicable Illnesses policy, which applies to the adjudication of COVID-19 claims.

The team continues to monitor trends with respect to the WSIB's adjudication of COVID-19 claims.

**ASK A SPECIALIST SESSIONS**

The WSIB Appeals Team hosted monthly "Ask a Specialist" sessions throughout 2024. The recent session took place virtually on September 24, 2024, and focused on the topic of WSIB: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in First Responders and Other Designated Workers. Attendees learned about the purpose and criteria required for workplace injury claims to be accepted by WSIB for PTSD and the importance of reporting and submitting claims for psychological injuries.

**GRIEVANCES**

The Contract Administration Committee met on October 4, 2024. Various issues which impact membership and contract administration were discussed and included:

- ▶ Grievance Targets.
- ▶ A review of notable grievance wins achieved prior to Arbitration. These wins will be highlighted and captured in Key Messages.
- ▶ Final planning for the Fall launch of the Contact Administration Newsletter "Winning Together: Your Quarterly Contract Insights."

ONA has filed over 4,250 grievances in 2024. Achievement: 80 per cent of grievances filed not going to arbitration are resolved or withdrawn within six months of the grievance being filed, representing consecutive reporting periods this Target has been achieved.

Continued improvement towards provincial Target in 2024 for both the Accommodation/Return to Work and Termination/Discharge Targets.

**LEGAL EXPENSE ASSISTANCE PLAN (LEAP) REPORT**

The LEAP Manager has reported in the past about the team's expertise representing members who have experienced discrimination, including anti-Black racism, in the workplace. We have successfully argued at CNO's Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee (ICRC) that Black nurses often receive differential treatment from their employers for practice issues that would not result in discipline for non-Black nurses. Black nurses are also more likely to be subject to complaints by patients and families.

**PROVINCIAL BARGAINING ACTIONS**

**HOSPITAL PROVINCIAL BARGAINING CAMPAIGN 2024-2025**

Since the first Bargaining Action Team meeting in August 2024, Bargaining Unit Presidents and team contacts have

been identifying and recruiting leaders to join their teams. The goal is to communicate and activate their co-workers in structure tests to pressure hospital Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and the Ford government to concede to their demands.

The second action team meeting was held in September where the first structure test, “United to Win,” was launched. Bargaining Unit leaders and other leaders are getting ready for bargaining, increasing their power in numbers by participating in structure tests.

As a result of organizing by their hospital Bargaining Action Teams, almost 1,200 members registered for the voting meetings.

A second structure test “Have a Heart” was launched in November. Each member of each Bargaining Unit was asked to sign a heart. The hearts call for nursing ratios to be agreed to in bargaining. The hearts will be delivered to hospital CEOs on February 10.

The third structure test is a petition to be signed by at minimum 25 per cent of all members in each Bargaining Unit that will be delivered to the MPP in the riding where the hospital is located as a petition banner between February 24-28, 2025.

## LOCAL BARGAINING CAMPAIGNS

### LAKESHORE AREA MULTI-SERVICE PROJECT (LAMP): FAIR WAGES FAIR CONTRACT

On August 12, to keep the pressure on the LAMP CEO and Board of Directors, LAMP members launched their electronic email action. Each nurse asked five or more people they know in the service catchment who are not their clients or client’s family members, to sign the petition to support nurses in their fight for fair wages, to ensure the retention and recruitment of nurses to LAMP.

On October 30, LAMP members ratified their memorandum of agreement (MOA) and the employer did so on November 29.

### WINDSOR ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH UNIT: INFORMATION PICKET

On September 19, over 40 public health nurses, NPs and RPNs at Windsor Essex County Health Unit, an 80-member Bargaining Unit, held a lunch hour information picket to demand that their employer come to the table with a fair wage offer and language that protects their hours of work.

A second lunch hour information picket was held on October 9 with a focus on increased member turnout to demonstrate the power and resolve of our members to the employer.

Following conciliation on October 15, 2024 and the demonstrations of solidarity by ONA members, the parties were able to reach a negotiated settlement, which was ratified by a strong percentage of the membership on October 17, 2024

### LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH NEGOTIATIONS

An information picket was held at the Sarnia office of Lambton Public Health on October 16 over the lunch hour. Member mobilizers worked with the Bargaining Unit leadership to develop their plan and to add the skills to organize their coworkers to action.

High participation of members added to the success of the information picket. An emailer campaign that targeted members of the Board of Health resulted in more than 50 emails being sent by members of the community. An agreement was reached during conciliation on October 23, 2024. The agreement was ratified with overwhelming support of the membership on October 28, 2024.

**The next meeting for the Board of Directors will be held March 25-27, 2025. Following that is the Provincial Leadership Meeting being held April 15-16, 2025.**

**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 in 2024:** Erin Ariss, Provincial President, Communications and Government Relations/Student Liaison, Provincial Negotiations (#7755); (TBD), First Vice-President, Political Action (Local) (#7707); Monique Storozuk, Region 1, Professional Issues (#7706); Rachel Muir, Region 2, Occupational Health and Safety (#7756); Karen McKay-Eden, Region 3, Human Rights and Equity (#7704); Grace Pierias, Region 4, Education and Events (#7709); Alan Warrington, Region 5, Labour Relations (Contract Administration) (#7708). Bernadette (Bernie) Robinson (Treasurer). **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.

Provincial Office • 85 Grenville St. • Toronto ON M5S 3A2  
Tel: (416) 964-8833 • Toll-free: 1-800-387-5580 • Fax: (416) 964-8864 • Website: [ona.org](http://ona.org)

Copyright © 2024 Ontario Nurses’ Association