

**Ontario Nurses’ Association to Meet with Premier Again Next Week to Discuss Nursing Retention**

***ONA President Cathryn Hoy says there are no commitments yet***

TORONTO, February 3, 2022 – Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA) President Cathryn Hoy, RN, says that at a meeting today with Premier Doug Ford, ONA received an invitation to a second meeting to discuss nursing retention in Ontario, and that while the Premier expressed interest in ONA’s solutions to fix the nursing shortage, he did not commit to repealing Bill 124.

“While I am deeply disappointed that the Premier did not commit to repealing Bill 124, I am hopeful that our meeting next week will be productive. We do agree with Premier Ford’s position that Canada’s federal health transfers should increase.

“While we have agreed to meet with government again next week, ONA and our members will not be strung along with endless meetings,” adds Hoy. Our front-line members who have been going above and beyond the call to care for Ontarians – not just during the pandemic, but every day – expect to see action. Their patients’ care depends on it.”

Hoy says that the Premier, Health Minister Christine Elliott and government officials met with ONA after a barrage of social media pressured him. “I am pleased to finally have had a meeting with Premier Ford,” says Hoy. “We need to have some real substance behind our future discussions with this government. The devil is in the details, and that’s what is lacking at this stage.”

Hoy says that Ontario has had the worst RN-to-population ratio in Canada for years. In fact, Ontario needs more than 22,000 RNs just to catch up to the national average. The pandemic and the actions of the Ford government and employers have worsened it considerably, including the passage of Bill 124, which emphasized the disrespect for nurses.

“Our 68,000 front-line nurses and health-care professionals are burned out and demoralized,” says Hoy. “We know this can be fixed, though it will take time to mend the system.”

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

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