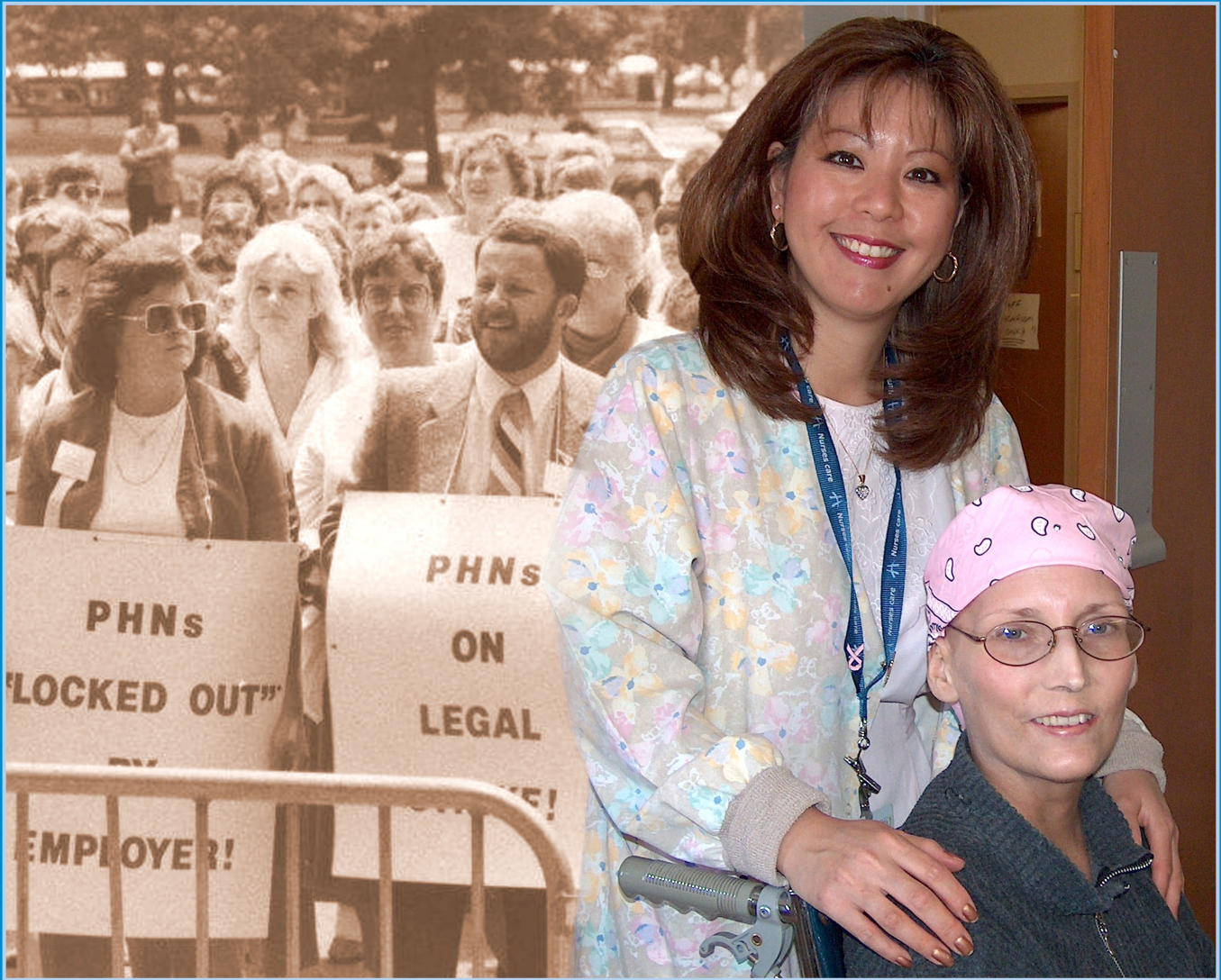


# ONA Milestones



## A Retrospective: 1973-2012



**FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**

# ONA Milestones

**A Retrospective 1973-2012**



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# Ontario Nurses' Association

Founding Members – October 13, 1973

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Judy Agar	Joan Dandy	Helen Johnston	Cathy McQuillen	Dorothy Smith
Jean Aitcheson	Suzanne Davies	Linda Johnston	Kathleen Menilo	Suzanne Smith
Judy Amey	Anita Deane	Elizabeth Kelly	Elizabeth Mercer	Janet Sparks
Christina Anderson	Brigette Dender	Annie Kennedy	Julie Merritt	Nancy Spence
Mary Angerson	Marjorie Denman	Dorothy King	Ruth Millar	Maureen Spencely
Molly Asselstine	Bev Deroot	Audrey Klein	Roy Miller	Vi Spooner
Rita Aubrey	Dorothy Dingwall	Heather Knechtel	Mary Montgomery	Jean Springer
Charlene Bain	Suzanne Drouin	Anne Kuran	Katherine Moore	Marianne Stachura
Greta Barazzutti	Moira Drummond	Pat Kurbi	Betty Morse	Adrienne Stone
Sheila Barker	Marilyn Dyck	Rene Lane	Vera Morton	Berndina Stuart
Donna Barrett	Harriet Edwards	Mary Leacock	Particia Mowat	Jan Sundridge
Pat Barry	Mary Egan	Shirley Leasa	Gene Muir	Nancy Switzer
Jan Bartkiewicz	Hilda Ellis	Ruth Leblanc	Honor Nicholson	Aileen Symington
Valerie Bassett	Kathlyn Esdaile	Frances Lehtinen	Katherine Nielson	Alice Taylor
Joanne Bearinger	Lois Fairley	Olwyn Lightle	Joyce Niznik	Frances Taylor
Catherine Beattey	Barbara Farrau	Barbara Liston	Norma Noche	John Thomas
Emma Bereza	Vivian Field	Cheryl Little	Fay Norman	Marion Thompson
Patricia Bethune	Joan Fletcher	Linda Little	Maureen O'Halloran	Sharon Thompson
Linda Bird	Florence Forrest	Cora Longo	Mildred Onley	Pauline Tomlin
Anne Birrell	Patricia Fortune	Linda Love	Betty Paisley	Leslie Townson
Sharon Blacktopp	Aldona Fournier	Jean Lowery	Nicole Parise	Loveday Tuck
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Hilda Blake	Sally Franz	Benita Lusic	Anne Payne	Elizabeth Vance
Carol Bossenberry	Linda Friel	Jean MacDonald	Dorothy Payson	Jeanette Van'd Hof
Martha Boyd	Lynda Galbraith	Julie MacDonald	Dolores Pennock	Betty Vanhoof
Heather Broadwell	Lucie Gamache	Marion MacDonald	Mary Pigeon	Linda Visser
Edith Brothers	Rita Gasslein	Barbara MacFarlane	Anne Platt	Audrey Wagner
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Jean Caulfield	Mary Heaton	Heather Martell	Lorraine Rea	Janet Weegar
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Louise Crossgrove	Hazel Jackson	Judith McLennan	Judith Sebastian	Eva Zurbrigg
Edith Currie	Ella Johnson	Mary McLynskey	Nicole Shank	

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# A Decade of Action

## Collective Bargaining and Ontario Nurses: 1963-72

**1963:** The College of Nurses (CNO) is established as the regulatory body of the nursing profession in Ontario.

**1964:** The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) passes a resolution at its annual meeting to achieve collective bargaining for nurses. The organization hires Lloyd Sharpe to develop a formal collective bargaining program. Work begins on a *Collective Bargaining Act* for nurses, with compulsory arbitration, RNAO as the bargaining agent and multiple bargaining units.

**1965:** The RNAO expands employee relations with two employment relations officers: **Kathleen (Kay) Lewis**, who joins the RNAO staff in 1963 and **Anne Gribben, RN** who joins the RNAO staff as an employment relations officer August 1.

**February:** The proposed *Nurses' Collective Bargaining Act* is presented to **Health Minister Dr. Matthew Dymond**.

**April 29:** **Health Minister Dr. Matthew Dymond** tells the RNAO annual meeting that he can't say, "whether anything will be done about collective bargaining legislation" in the current legislative session. The Minister says the RNAO's brief and proposed legislation is still "under study." About 1,260 members of RNAO leave the annual meeting to march on Queen's Park in support of the *Nurses' Collective Bargaining Act* and binding arbitration for nurses. When the provincial government refuses to introduce the *Act*, RNAO staff organizes. The Labour Relations Board indicates that the RNAO cannot be certified as a bargaining agent because both management and non-management nurses sit on the board. The decision is taken to form individual, autonomous trade unions in health agencies. RNAO members authorize employment relations officers to assist new bargaining units to deal with employers on collective basis.

**September:** Halton County public health nurses meet with RNAO representatives and vote unanimously to ask their employer to set aside the *Labour Relations Act* and bargain collectively with the Nurses' Association of Halton County Public Health Unit. They were denied certification by the municipality on the basis of a last-minute by-law invoking Section 89 of the *Labour Relations Act* which allows a municipality to exclude

its employees from collective bargaining.

Nurses' Association Ontario County Health Unit nurses resign en masse when the president is fired by the Medical Officer of Health. A contract is signed by mutual agreement on May 3, 1966.

**1966: Labour Minister Thomas Eberlee** meets with the RNAO to discuss province-wide collective bargaining for nurses.

The RNAO organizes 34 local nurses' associations in two years.

The January-February issue of *RNAO News* announces that nurses at Riverview Hospital in Windsor have been certified, the first nurses' bargaining unit in Ontario.

**May:** Peel County public health nurses have been certified, Brant County public health nurses will soon appear before the Labour Relations Board.

**August:** Twenty-two Halton County public health nurses and 12 in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry give one month's notice that they will quit if their employers don't negotiate a contract with the RNAO.

**September:** Twenty-three Halton public health nurses resign, after five years of trying to discuss a salary schedule with the Board of Health, as do public health nurses in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. RNAO grey-lists both employers.

**October 19:** Thirteen nurses' associations send telegrams to the Premier, the Health Minister and chairs of the county health units in support of public health nurses in Halton County and United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry after the employer votes to attempt to hire "replacement workers."

**November 1:** Halton County public health nurses vote to return to work November 7 and to meet with a special County Council committee the same day to discuss their contract request. Three weeks later, a special committee of Halton County Council backtracks and tells the nurses they must get certification under the OLRB before Council will negotiate.

**1967:** Some 225 nurses support a Nurses' Central Security Fund under the RNAO. A first organizing

meeting is held, at which a pro-tem chairperson, secretary and committee are elected and a constitution adopted.

**May:** Bargaining unit nurses at St. Joseph's General Hospital in Peterborough sign their first contract on National Hospital Day.

**1968:** Brockville General Hospital nurses go to the arbitration board for a decision on a first collective agreement. The board initiates a salary system based on seniority, not merit. The hospital is ordered to place nurses at the proper level.

The first education workshop sponsored by the RNAO and Canadian Nurses' Association is held to teach nurses about collective bargaining.

A total of 48 local nurses' associations are organized to participate in collective bargaining through the RNAO.

RNAO supports the right to strike by those covered under the provision of the *Labour Relations Act* and where the arbitration process is not available.

The Nurses' Central Security Fund Committee is formed to administer funds for collective bargaining.

**November:** The first grievance arbitration is settled in November in the nurses' favor.

**December:** Anne Gribben becomes RNAO's Director of Employment Relations.

**1969:** A Public Health Negotiations Committee is set up with five members from Locals and two RNAO representatives, with a mandate to negotiate with Departments of Health on behalf of public health nurses.

**February:** Nurses at the Hamilton and Wentworth County Health Board ratify a one-year contract.

**March:** Hamilton and District School of Nursing strikes after trying to negotiate a first contract since February 1968, the first nursing strike in Ontario history. RNAO grey-lists the employer. In the third week, the conciliator calls both sides back and a settlement is reached with major gains in salary, expenses, overtime compensation, and benefits.

**April 18:** Grey-Owen Sound public health nurses go on strike, returning to work June 2 under a new contract ratified by their nurses' association and approved by the Board of Health.

**July:** Nurses' Association of St. Joseph's General, Peterborough, wins an Ontario Supreme Court case regarding an arbitration board interpretation that the retroactivity clause in their contract only applies to

nurses employed at the hospital at the time it is signed. The Court of Appeals upholds the arbitration decision.

**September:** St. Joseph's Hospital, Guelph, arbitration award results in the highest salaries paid in any public hospital.

**1970:** The Minister of Labour announces that nurses will be covered by *Unemployment Insurance Act* as of July 1, 1971.

**April:** Muskoka-Parry Sound District Health Unit nurses vote unanimously to take strike action and the strike begins May 19.

**May:** Nurses' Association Peel County Health Unit votes to take strike action at the first legal opportunity. A settlement is reached in the summer, and no strike action is taken.

**August:** The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) Master Committee approaches the RNAO requesting an opportunity to bargain provincially for 1971 salaries, but the RNAO is not the legal bargaining agent for the 77 existing associations. A series of meetings between representatives of the OHA and RNAO ensues on how province-wide bargaining might be accomplished.

**October:** Public health nurses working for the Scarborough Health Department go on strike; the employer is grey-listed by the RNAO.

**December:** By year-end, there are 22 collective agreements covering hospital nurses' associations, 15 reached by negotiation and seven through arbitration. Fourteen additional associations are either organizing, being examined by the Labour Relations Board or are in the process of negotiating their first agreement.

**1971:** Sixteen first agreements are signed with hospitals, 37 contracts in total, of which only three go to binding arbitration.

The RNAO Employment Relations Department issues a monthly newsletter to all nurses' associations.

**October:** For 15 months, representatives of local nurses' associations on the Special Committee-Joint Bargaining for Nurses have been meeting with the hospitals' Master Committee-Joint Bargaining for Nurses. Representatives from the OHA and RNAO now join the discussions to plan for meetings with the ministers of labour and health to discuss government plans for collective bargaining coming up in November.

**November 29:** At a major meeting with the ministers of health and labour on collective bargaining, the Health Minister suggests this is the time to look for

solutions. The government is looking at new legislation on the nature and government of health disciplines and that should include employment relations. The labour minister proposes that the RNAO and OHA each establish a subcommittee of three members to meet separately with the Department of Labour to work through issues around province-wide collective bargaining.

**December:** The RNAO collective bargaining program continues to grow with about 7,000 full- and part-time nurses involved in the collective bargaining program, about 80 per cent of public health nurses and 22 per cent of eligible hospital nurses. There are 78

autonomous nurses' associations in the program, 38 in hospitals, 33 in public health units, four schools of nursing and one each in an occupational health unit, a home for the aged and a medical clinic.

**1972:** Early in the year, 90 management nurses attend an RNAO workshop on the role of administrator nurses when staff is organized for collective bargaining.

By mid-year, nurses are organized in 38 hospitals, 33 public health units, four regional schools and one health unit in an industry setting. Five new organizations, including two in homes for the aged, are being formed, and another six groups are in contact with RNAO about the possibility of developing associations.

## ONA Milestones: A Retrospective 1973-2012

### 1973

#### **Jean Lowery, RN, becomes ONA's first President**

Nurses' associations across Ontario are bargaining as individual units, each association negotiating separately. Nurses want standard wages and working conditions across Ontario and request that the RNAO form a central union. At its annual meeting, the RNAO passes motion to establish an independent central body to bargain for nurses. The Nurses Central Security Fund holds collective bargaining workshop for more than 90 delegates.

**October 13:** The Ontario Nurses' Association is founded during an all-day meeting at Toronto's Westbury Hotel. Founding members decide on the name and adopt a constitution. The RNAO issues a media release that announces that, "A province-wide union was formed on October 13, 1973 for the purpose of collective bargaining for nurses by nurses. Over 300 representatives of 85 independent nurses' associations certified as bargaining agents for nurses employed in institutions providing health care, public health units, visiting nurses organizations and industry nurses adopted a Constitution establishing the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA)."

The founding members of ONA elect a Board of Directors, with **Jean Lowery** as founding ONA President and **Sharon Thompson** as ONA's first Secretary-Treasurer. Among the founding members

are not only President Jean Lowery, but future ONA Presidents **Berenice Hicks**, **Lois Fairley**, **Sharon Thompson** and **Sandra McAllister**.

The motion creating ONA states that 10,000 nurses have organized for collective bargaining purposes in the province, and that "existing legislation does not allow the RNAO, as presently structured, to be certified as the bargaining agent for nurses." Therefore, RNAO supports the establishment of a central vehicle for collective bargaining for nurses by nurses, and will, on a contractual basis, provide the necessary services to enable effective collective bargaining. RNAO will also continue to maintain its employment relations department.

**October 18-19:** Print media across the province carry stories of ONA's founding and an interview with **Anne Gribben**, Director of Employment Relations for RNAO. She tells the media there are 35,000-40,000 working nurses in the province, including part-time nurses, and applications for membership are coming in as fast as they can be handled. "We feel nurses will feel less threatened if they can join an overall union, if they don't have to form their own independent union," says Gribben. The groundwork for the union was laid over seven years of work by the RNAO, Gribben explains, predicting it will be a while before all negotiations can be handled centrally, as hospitals and the governments are not prepared.

**November 16:** ONA's Board of Directors directs that after ONA has been recognized as a union by the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB), nurses'

associations should submit requests to merge by February 28, 1974, to be dealt with at the March 1, 1974 ONA Board of Directors meeting. The Board directs that the first 101 numbers be reserved for existing nurses' associations.

# 1974

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## Jean Lowery, RN is President

**January 14:** ONA makes application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to be admitted to union status and to take over the bargaining rights of the Nurses' Association Halton County Health Unit.

**January 21:** ONA announces that the OLRB has approved the status of ONA as a trade union as of January 15 and has declared that ONA has acquired the bargaining rights for Nurses' Association Halton County Health Unit. Halton County Health Unit is chartered as Local 1 of the Ontario Nurses' Association.

**January 28:** K.R. Lewis, Acting Secretary of ONA's Board of Directors notifies the presidents and secretaries of all Nurses' Associations of the OLRB decision and sends the nurses' associations a package of materials that instructs them on how to adopt the resolutions required to merge with ONA. She encourages them to do so by February 28, so the mergers can go before the ONA Board of Directors meeting on March 1.

**April:** One hundred and thirty RNs at Sarnia General Hospital apply for certification as an ONA Bargaining Unit. The OLRB grants certification April 22 and in May, part-time and graduate nurses vote unanimously to form additional Bargaining Units at the hospital.

**May:** The OLRB certifies ONA as the bargaining agent for nurses at Lake of the Woods General Hospital in Kenora without requiring a vote.

**June:** ONA summons representatives of 42 nurses' associations to a meeting in a first attempt at central negotiations for hospital nurses. After five days of negotiations, central negotiations are at a standstill and nurses take a strike vote. On June 27, nurses announce that midnight, July 22 is the strike deadline if no central settlement is reached. Nurses from around the province demonstrate, carrying placards reading, "Honk if you support nurses." During the deadlock, the arbitrator in the Ottawa Civic Hospital arbitration releases the award, setting the standard for awards if hospitals will not come to a negotiated central agreement. ONA nurses' negotiating team bases further negotiations

on the Ottawa award. **Kay Lewis**, assistant director of employment relations for the RNAO, says that ONA representatives "felt their demands were justified by the Ottawa arbitration award" and that they "were finally being taken seriously."

**July:** ONA and the Hospitals' Master Bargaining Committee, representing 41 hospital administrations, settle on the first central agreement on July 16. The 18-month agreement covers 10,000 registered nurses in those hospitals and brings a starting salary increase to \$850 from \$640 per month, while maximum salaries increase by 50 per cent.

Ministry of Health accepts rates of pay established in the agreement between ONA and hospitals as province-wide standards for RNs. Other hospitals match pay salary increases. ONA asks the Ministry to provide funding to give public health nurses wage parity with hospital nurses. Some health units do give parity.

**September 12-13:** **Anne Gribben** is appointed ONA's first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the September meeting of ONA's Board of Directors. Gribben has served as Director of Employment Relations for the RNAO since December 1968. She begins work for ONA on October 1, 1974. At the same meeting, the Board endorses a position paper on collective bargaining, and approves the expansion of staff by the new CEO in order to serve a continually increasing membership. ONA is advertising to recruit staff for London, Hamilton and Toronto and for new offices to open in Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Ottawa. A finance committee is appointed to prepare a budget for approval at the upcoming Annual Meeting.

**September 19:** ONA sends a letter of request to all Boards of Health Units and Departments of Health with organized nurses' associations asking them to meet October 19 at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto. The meeting is to discuss implementation of the recent ONA settlement affecting province-wide salaries for nurses.

**October:** ONA CEO **Anne Gribben** and **Kay Lewis** form a Mediation Committee with two representatives of the hospital Master Committee to resolve problems interpreting some clauses in the central agreement. Some interpretations are agreed upon by the committee, others remain to be sorted out by the Locals.

**November:** The first issue of the *ONA Newsletter* is released with coverage of the hospital settlement, news from the Board of Directors and education announcements. The newsletter also gives a full list of 119 nurses' associations that have merged in to ONA Locals 1-99 and 104-123 inclusive. Newsletters are sent to Locals for distribution to the membership.



**December 14:** ONA holds its **first Annual Meeting**, at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Delegates vote in **Jean Lowery** as President for a second term.

The Nurses Central Security Committee disbands and funds transfer to ONA.

**Also in 1974:**

ONA holds a logo design contest for members. The winner is Barbara Sider.

ONA submits a brief to the Hospital Inquiry Commission expressing concern about the drawbacks of the compulsory arbitration process, while strongly supporting province-wide bargaining.

# 1975

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## Jean Lowery, RN is President

**January:** One hundred and fifty nurses representing 72 ONA hospital Locals meet January 30 at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto to elect a negotiating committee for upcoming central hospital negotiations. **CEO Anne Gribben** is chief negotiator, and there are seven representatives of ONA Locals across the province on the negotiating team.

The RNAO transfers employment relations department staff to ONA. Seven new staff members are hired by March and two regional offices open in Thunder Bay and Ottawa.

**February:** Muskoka-Parry Sound Public Health Unit nurses vote to strike and release a statement saying they will stop work on February 17. The Local has been in negotiations since November, 1974. On January 27, conciliation fails. Nurses request that salaries be brought in line with the levels established in the ONA central agreement of July 1974. The strike lasts five weeks and is one of many public health nurse strikes to achieve parity with hospital nurses and gain the right to arbitration.

The first meetings of the negotiating teams for the ONA and OHA take place to discuss the mechanics of central hospital negotiations. Further meeting dates are set for March 11-13.

**March:** Striking Muskoka-Parry Sound Public Health Unit nurses picket Queen's Park on March 13. The ONA Board grey-lists the employer.

ONA has offices in Toronto, Thunder Bay, London, Ottawa and Hamilton.

Six public health units have reached settlements to date in 1976.

ONA pins with logos are designed and available for members.

ONA's Board meets and sets a strike pay policy to cover nurses in a legal strike position at \$75 per week (pro-rated for part-time) starting in the third week of the strike. Mergers of four remaining Locals are approved, and ONA Locals 100-104 come into being. The Board also approves new charters for Locals 132-148. The Board endorses the Hospital Inquiry Commission Report recommendation for province-wide bargaining. The Board also approves reimbursing members of the hospital negotiating team for loss of salary, living expenses, hotel accommodations and transportation.

**March 11-13:** ONA and the OHA hospital negotiating teams meet and agree on which items will be negotiated centrally and which locally. Twenty-eight dates in May and June are set for central negotiations at the Holiday Inn in Toronto.

**March 24:** Muskoka-Parry Sound Public Health Unit nurses return to work after a mediation achieves a settlement. ONA lifts grey-listing.

**May:** International Women's Year Conference on Women in the Work Force takes place at Humber College, co-sponsored by Humber College and the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto. BC MLA Rosemary Brown gives the keynote address: "Have Trade Unions Let Women Down?"

**June:** The first week in June is declared Nursing Week.

One hundred ONA members attend the Employment Relations Summer School at Glendon Campus.

ONA members succeed in a campaign to prevent the term "dental nurse" from appearing in regulations under the *Health Disciplines Act*.

**July:** After nine weeks of negotiations, the hospital negotiating committee recommends a central settlement. On July 19, representatives of 98 of 104 hospital Locals attend the ONA caucus at the Royal York Hotel and vote to accept the Memorandum of Settlement.

**September:** Representatives of 33 ONA public health Locals meet to set bargaining goals. Thirty-one contracts will expire December 31.

Seven new Locals are chartered by the Board, Locals 167-173.

ONA staff complement reaches 17.

**October:** The *Anti-Inflation Act* is introduced by the federal government of Pierre Trudeau. Unions have argued prices are notoriously hard to control and the imposition will come entirely on wages. All provinces sign on. Collectively bargained agreements become subject to review and rollback by the Anti-Inflation Board. Controls stay in place until 1978.

**October 17-18:** ONA's second Annual Meeting takes place at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto. ONA has 172 chartered Locals: 112 hospitals, 37 public health, three occupational health units or clinics, two Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), 11 nursing homes and seven homes for the aged. **Berenice Hicks** becomes President, **Lois Fairley**, President-Elect and **Sharon Thompson**, Secretary-Treasurer.

**November:** ONA Board charts Locals 173-178. Founding President **Jean Lowery** joins ONA staff at the Toronto office as an employment relations officer.

**ONA President Berenice Hicks** criticizes the government for cutting costs "at the patient level."

Public health nurses representing 30 Locals meet at the Skyline Hotel in Toronto to discuss Government Guidelines on Wage and Price Controls and their effect on upcoming public health negotiations and strategy for negotiations.

**Also in 1975:**

Dues increase from \$5.50 to \$9.00 per month.

The ONA Board recommends province-wide bargaining for community health nurses.

# 1976

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## Berenice Hicks, RN, is President

**January:** ONA's monthly newsletter features a discussion of the *Health Disciplines Act, 1974* and its relevance for nurses.

**February:** At an ONA media conference, **President Berenice Hicks** and **CEO Anne Gribben** present a brief, replying to the *Report of the Special Program Review* with ONA input on how to find economies in the health-care system without wholesale reduction in staffing. The brief receives wide media coverage.

ONA joins the OFL, OPSEU, SEIU, CUPE and numerous community groups in a communiqué to Premier Bill Davis opposing the government's program of cutbacks in health care and social services.

**February 20:** Peterborough County-City Health Unit locks out 22 public health nurses, despite nurses' expressed desire for binding arbitration. Public health nurses are asking for parity with hospital nurses.

**May:** The Board of Health of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit locks out public health nurses. ONA Local 106's collective agreement expired December 21, 1975, and they are asking for parity with hospital nurses.

**May 17:** Public health and hospital nurses in the Sudbury area are joined by representatives of Local 39, Niagara Regional Health Unit, Local 1, Halton County Health Unit and delegates to the summer seminar in Sudbury in a protest drawing attention to public health nurses' campaign for arbitration.

**June:** About 1,100 public health nurses across Ontario begin a five-day strike to back demands for compulsory arbitration of contract disputes. Wages for public health nurses are falling behind hospital nurses since the implementation of central bargaining for hospital nurses. Nine Locals are locked out following the strike: Local 29, Borough of Etobicoke and Local 1, Halton County Health Unit for one week; Locals 18, 39, 40, 50, 61, 76 and 106 are locked out indefinitely.

ONA's Board of Directors charts Locals 181-184, Walter P. Hogarth Memorial Hospital in Thunder Bay; Clinton Public Hospital; Trenton Memorial Hospital and Rideaucrest Home for the Aged in Kingston, respectively.

**June 20:** Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit nurses receive an arbitration award after the parties agree to voluntary arbitration.

**June 16:** Striking public health nurses demonstrate at Queen's Park.

**June 22:** ONA lays unfair labour practice charges against nine boards of health for bargaining in bad faith; three other charges were laid against boards of health. Nurses who participated in the protest are locked out in nine units.

**July 6:** Local 18 public health nurses picket Kingston City Hall after rejecting amended contract proposals presented by the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Units, which included increased work hours.

**July 7:** Seventy-five public health nurses in the ONA Local 50 Hamilton-Wentworth region return to work after the local board of health agrees to lift the lockout. In return, ONA agrees to withdraw charges of bargaining in bad faith.

**July 8:** Locked-out nurses in the Peel Board of Health Unit offer to give up their right to strike and settle for arbitration to go back to work.

**August:** ONA announces fall workshops for new executive members, nurse reps and members to learn more about ONA and how it operates.

**October:** Following a speech to a student audience at the University of Western Ontario, provincial **Health**

**Minister Frank Miller** states that graduates, including nurses, who are willing to work for less than the prevailing rates in order to stay in Ontario, should have the right to do so. Miller says “market forces should operate” and open more jobs to graduating nurses. ONA responds with an opinion editorial in the *London Free Press* by **President Berenice Hicks** and a media release from **CEO Anne Gribben**, who points out that the provincial government sets the quota on entry to nursing and does not permit market forces to operate.

**November:** ONA charters seven new Locals: Locals 185 to 191 inclusive.

**November 12-13: Lois Fairley** becomes President at the ONA Annual Meeting at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto. Incoming **President-Elect Sharon Thompson** gives members a motivational speech on the long road of organizing. The membership amends the constitution with regard to the Board of Directors and their meetings, creates a Constitution and Resolutions Review Committee, and amends the by-law on Local elections. Organizational resolutions initiate a review of creating salaried executive positions at ONA, and a one-year Local dues increase of \$2.00 per member per month to go to a central security fund. Policy resolutions call for a strong stand against the provincial health budget cuts and federal government wage controls.

**December:** Two new ONA Locals are chartered: Local 178 St. Jean de Brebeuf Hospital in Sturgeon Falls and Local 192, Glen Stor Dun Lodge, Cornwall.

ONA head office moves to 415 Yonge Street from 33 Price Street.

ONA runs a public letter to Premier Bill Davis on his circumvention of ONA leadership as an advertisement in the *Toronto Star*. ONA is angry that Premier Davis has written directly to ONA Locals with “sham” promises of funding for settlements and is still refusing arbitration for public health nurses.

# 1977

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**Lois Fairley, RN, is President**

**January: President Lois Fairley** addresses a nurses’ rally in Windsor.

ONA and the OHA agree that province-wide bargaining for hospital nurses is desirable and that the Ministry of Labour should be approached for assistance with developing a structure for central hospital negotiations.

Peel Health Unit nurses are awarded exact parity

with RNs in arbitration, the fifth Board of Arbitration to award parity.

Borough of York public health settles through mediation.

**Health Minister Dr. Bette Stephenson** addresses the Association of Ontario Boards of Health and indicates that she expects political pressure to continue on the issue of bargaining for public health nurses.

**February: Stop Waffling Act Now** is an ONA brief to the Ontario government on collective bargaining for nurses that sums up 12 years of government inactivity. ONA targets are province-wide collective bargaining for nurses and access to the provisions of the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act* for public health nurses. ONA criticizes the government for failing to resolve the ineffectual collective bargaining process for hospital nurses and public health nurses.

**March: Joyce Campbell, President of Local 49** Renfrew County and District Health Unit, writes to **Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** after the Peel Regional Health Board removes immunization programming from its responsibilities and jurisdiction and recommends family doctors provide it.

**March 30: Let Us Take Care!** – an ONA Health Review – is released, outlining the abuses and mismanagement of Ontario healthcare system. *Let Us Take Care!* receives wide media coverage with front-page headlines around the province in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa and Toronto. The public and media respond with calls for more money for mental health programs, a halt to the decline in health care and an end to abuse in hospitals. ONA provides substantial evidence for allegations; 120,000 copies of *Let Us Take Care!* are quickly distributed and a second print run is ordered.

**President Lois Fairley**, board members and **Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** tape a segment for **June Callwood’s** CBC-TV show, *In Touch*.

**April 4:** A Wellesley Hospital arbitration award establishes salary rate for hospitals.

**May:** Summer seminars run in May and June in London, Toronto, and Ottawa, offering courses in Local Administration and Contract Interpretation.

The ONA Board charters Local 193 Hawkesbury General Hospital.

**May 27:** Three public health nurses challenge **Premier Bill Davis** at a campaign appearance in Petawawa on outstanding contracts for public health nurses and on arbitration. Davis promises resolution by June 30, 1977, after the election. On June 9, Premier Davis wins re-election with a minority government and four days

later, **Diane Moll** sends the premier a letter on behalf of ONA's public health nurses, challenging him to keep his election promise. On June 27, ONA **President Lois Fairley** follows with a telegram to Davis demanding action for public health nurses.

**June 29:** Two hundred and twenty-three delegates meet at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto to look at the past, present and future of ONA.

**July:** Fall workshops are announced, running from September to December and covering how ONA operates and *How to Live with Your Contract*.

ONA public health representatives meet with representatives of the Labour and Health Ministries and the Association of Boards of Health to resolve outstanding disputes. The meeting is called by **Minister of Labour Dr. Bette Stephenson** and both sides present their positions. The Association of Boards of Health will give a new position to the Minister of Labour after a general meeting.

**August:** Six new Locals are chartered: Local 121 and Locals 194-198.

The Association of Boards of Health again refuses to agree to one-time arbitration of outstanding disputes. ONA's Board advises Locals to return individually to the bargaining table, ending this era of the public health nurses' campaign for wage parity with hospital nurses.

**August 12:** Thorough documentation of workload by nurses at **Mount Sinai Hospital** allows arbitration to provide the **first professional responsibility clause** in a hospital contract. The clause provides for an independent committee of nursing experts to investigate and assess workload problems in a health agency, and recognizes the rights and responsibility of nurses to be involved in assessing quality and quantity of patient care within that agency.

**September:** Six settlements are reached in public health units; salaries fall well below those in hospitals.

**October:** ONA Sudbury and District Health Unit Local 87 goes on legal strike October 20. Mediation is set for November 10.

**November 16-18:** ONA's Annual Meeting held at the Constellation Hotel sees **Sharon Thompson** become **President, Sandra McAllister, President-Elect and Frances Lehtinen, Secretary-Treasurer**. ONA has 198 chartered Locals, 187 represented at the meeting. The one-year Local dues increase of \$2.00 per member per month to go to a Central Security Fund is extended; honorariums are approved for the President and executive members. A committee is set up to draw up guidelines on how to spend the Central Security Fund.

# 1978

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**Sharon Thompson, RN, is President**

**January:** The Ontario Nurses' Association opens an office in Sudbury.

**February:** Major unions involved in public-sector bargaining across Canada meet in Ottawa to plan for bargaining in view of Finance Minister Jean Chretien's comments that federal civil servants could expect no raises.

ONA's Public Health Sector meets and creates two committees: the Public Health Nursing Definition Committee to establish a definition of public health nursing, and the Public Health Nursing Public Relations Committee.

Joint ONA/RNAO hospital job evaluation project, started in 1975, grinds to a halt because of insufficient field test sites and unsupportive hospitals.

**April:** The phasing out of wage and price controls begins. Collective agreements beginning on or after April 14 are not subjected to mandatory controls. Nursing homes and public health units have been hardest hit by the Anti-Inflation Board.

The Hospital Sector meets and votes to continue bargaining at the Local level.

More than 100 delegates attend the Role of the Nurse Conference and discuss professionalism, negligence and competence.

**May:** After 20 months with no agreement, ONA members at Scarborough Centenary Hospital demonstrate against management delays when the OHA reneges on an agreement to use the arbitration award as the basis for a settlement.

ONA requests a judicial review of a Mount Sinai Hospital grievance award upholding suspension of three nurses who believed that caring for more patients would add to their already unsafe workload, and would endanger all patients in their care.

**June:** ONA newsletters are sent directly to members' homes.

St. Joseph's Hospital in Thunder Bay becomes the third Ontario hospital to be awarded a professional responsibility clause, following Mount Sinai and Ottawa General. This is the first such award made by arbitrator Howard Brown, following two by Kevin Burkett.

ONA Joint Sector meeting in Toronto is attended by 142 ONA Local representatives.

**July:** Three new Locals are chartered, Local 199

Kincardine and District Hospital, Local 200 Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital and Local 201 Kennedy Lodge Nursing Home in Scarborough.

**August:** ONA submits a brief to the government on *Bill 70*, the *Act concerning Occupational Health and Occupational Safety of Workers*, stating employer should minimize nurses' personal risk by providing protective and preventative measures.

**September:** ONA responds to the *Review of the Two-Year Diploma Nursing Program in College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario* and supports the extension of the program, more clinical experience and the opportunity to redesign the curriculum.

St. Catharines General Hospital nurses demonstrate to protest the hospital's unwillingness to sign a new collective agreement.

Two more hospitals receive professional responsibility clauses in awards.

Individual mailings of the newsletter reach 17,500.

**October:** ONA's newsletter circulates resolutions and amendments to the constitution submitted for presentation at the 1978 ONA Annual Meeting to membership.

Public Health Nurses Definitions Committee reports with job descriptions to a one-day meeting of public health nurses.

Stratford General Hospital nurses demonstrate to protest their employer's refusal to implement salary increases awarded at arbitration.

**October 13:** Members celebrate the fifth anniversary of ONA's founding.

**November:** ONA's Board passes a policy stating that ONA will not insist on reinstatement of a discharged nurse found by the College of Nurses of Ontario to be incompetent and whose registration has been revoked.

**November 15-17:** The highlight of the ONA Annual Meeting at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto is the Fifth Anniversary Dinner on November 16. ONA members are entertained by Nancy Ward and dance the conga in a long night of revelry. **Sandra McAllister** becomes President and **Heather Dolan**, President-Elect. Resolutions passed include referring to Locals by numbers only; the dues structure is maintained and security fund provisions stay in place. ONA membership reaches 26,244: 18,200 full-time and 8,044 part-time.

#### **Also in 1978:**

ONA staff forms a union and receives voluntary recognition.

A malpractice insurance policy made available to members.

# 1979

## **Sandra McAllister, RN, is President**

**January:** The *ONA Newsletter* gets a new design.

**February:** The professional responsibility clause is invoked at St. Catharines General Hospital, triggering the first independent assessment review committee to act.

**March:** ONA Board members take a two-day media training workshop.

**April:** ONA encourages members to join Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees in their workplaces after passage of the *Occupational Health and Occupational Safety of Workers Act*.

A Divisional Court judgment in the Mount Sinai grievance case on professional judgment of nurses denies the grievances of the nurses against letters of discipline placed in their files following their refusal to accept an additional patient in the ICU because it would endanger patients already in their care.

**May:** **ONA President Sandra McAllister** sends a blistering letter to **Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** slamming a government announcement that the number of active hospital beds in the province will be reduced to 3.5 per thousand residents. **CEO Anne Gribben** asks Locals to report on implementation; 52 Locals respond, showing that all but two or three hospitals are complying. Almost 400 beds have been closed.

A new ONA pamphlet, *So That's What a PHN Does*, explaining the role of a public health or community health nurse, is released to the public.

**Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** announces a new set of standards for public health in Ontario in a speech to the Ontario Association for Boards of Health. The government will standardize funding for public health, grant voluntary accreditation of public health programs, equalize access to basic health care and provide a \$1-million fund for research and development of public health issues.

ONA hosts a collective bargaining conference.

**June:** Through a special issue of the newsletter, ONA's **Health and Welfare Benefits Committee**, appointed in April of 1977, presents two position papers on options for benefit plans to the membership. Position papers cover health and welfare benefits, illness and disability income protection and retirement income.

**June 13:** The Kingston General Hospital 1978-80 arbitration award gives full retroactivity on “all monetary issues including not only salaries but such items as shift premiums and lieu payments for part-time.” ONA views this as very important for future hospital negotiations.

**July:** *Bill 25*, expediting grievance arbitrations, putting a ceiling on arbitrators’ fees and providing third-party intervention, passes in the legislature.

An arbitrator awards a **professional responsibility clause** to **Toronto General Hospital** without having to prove a demonstrated need, and says all ONA contracts should have it. The clause is now obtainable at more than 120 hospitals.

Grey-Owen Sound public health nurses are locked out illegally for four weeks. The OLRB orders the employer to cease and desist and comply with arbitration as ONA invokes a clause in the previous contract.

ONA and the staff union sign a first collective agreement.

**September 24-29:** Members successfully promote their role and contribution to the community during Nursing Week

**October:** The *Occupational Health and Occupational Safety of Workers Act* takes effect.

One hundred and thirty-five ONA members attend as ONA holds its first Public Relations Conference with journalists on panels and former Ontario NDP leader **Stephen Lewis** as guest speaker. Lewis advises ONA nurses to “end their passivity” and make a concerted effort to have their voices heard, asking, “Who knows better than nurses what resources are needed in the medical field?”

ONA circulates a questionnaire on the newsletter to members.

**Kay Lewis**, Associate Executive Officer, who tirelessly devoted nearly 25 years of her life to the social and economic advancement of nurses, retires.

**November:** At the **ONA** Annual Meeting, **Heather Dolan** assumes the presidency, **Debra Cooper-Burger** becomes President-Elect and **Carole Ann Priddle** is elected Secretary-Treasurer. There are 205 chartered Locals and 237 certified Bargaining Units covering 26,902 nurses. Part-time nurses make up 32.3 per cent of the membership. The membership votes for a new dues structure which automatically includes coverage for malpractice insurance and coverage under the Legal Expense Assistance Plan. Amendments to the constitution affect the governance of Locals; major resolutions cover ONA seeking pension coverage and security for members. The ONA President is encouraged to seek leave during her term.

ONA announces staff structural changes and

appointments. **Jean Lowery** becomes ONA’s first Director of Administration.

**December:** ONA joins the Ontario Federation of Labour *Coalition on Medicare* to present a brief to Health Commission looking into Ontario’s health-care system. The brief expresses concern about Medicare’s weaknesses, including bed cutbacks and inaccessibility to medical services.

**Also in 1979:**

ONA’s Security Fund is established.

ONA protests the government’s daily fee for chronic patients in hospitals.

# 1980

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**Heather Dolan, RN, becomes ONA’s first full-time President**

**January:** Breakthrough! Bonnechere Manor, the Corporation of the County of Renfrew, is the first ONA member nursing home to be awarded the professional responsibility clause. The Board adopted the reasoning of the Toronto General Hospital Award.

Legislative committee hearings commence on *Bill 3, Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, an act to amend the Employment Standards Act*. The private member’s bill marks the beginning of the legislative struggle in Ontario for pay equity. **CEO Anne Gribben** presents ONA’s brief to the committee.

ONA’s recommendations to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities Committee on Clinical Education for Diploma in Nursing are accepted. Recommendations include increased emphasis on geriatrics, clinical experience in health-care agencies, student nurses to work closely with staff nurses, the student selection procedure to be improved and adequate orientation to be provided.

ONA’s Legal Expenses Assistance Plan (LEAP) to assist members with legal costs for charges under the *Health Disciplines Act* comes into effect. Members are reimbursed to a maximum of \$75 per hour and 85 per cent of expenses for appeals at Divisional Court.

**March: Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** announces the health budget with an increase to hospitals about equal to inflation.

*ONA Newsletter* explains the details of the Legal Expense Assistance Plan to membership.

**April:** A new feature, ‘President’s Corner,’ is introduced in the *ONA Newsletter*.

ONA joins with other Ontario organizations to

present a brief on Canada's Medicare system to the Hall Commission headed by Justice Emmet Hall.

**May 9:** ONA and the OHA sign a memorandum of conditions for joint bargaining. Ninety per cent (133) of OHA hospitals participate in this round of bargaining. Employment Relations Officers negotiate Local issues at the local level. Central bargaining dates are set for July, August and September.

**June:** ONA holds a media conference following St. Catharines General Hospital's failure to implement the Nursing Assessment Committee recommendations regarding the safety of patient care.

**August:** Nurses from ONA Local 82, Mount Sinai Hospital, picket to protest their employer's continued failure to pay retroactive monies owed since June 24.

**October:** ONA comments on the College of Nurses *Statement Three: Policy on Special Procedures for RNs, Nursing and Technical Personnel - June 1980* and *Added Nursing Skills and Sanctioned Medical Acts - July 1980*.

**November:** At the ONA Annual Meeting, **Debra Cooper-Burger** becomes the President, **Ethyllynn Phillips** becomes President-Elect and **Carole Ann Priddle** returns as Secretary-Treasurer. Membership reaches 29,000 covering nurses in 251 agencies. Amendments to the constitution enhance the powers of the Board of Directors and amend rules of succession. ONA's goals are also revised. The full-time salary for the president is approved and set as equal to the maximum salary for the staff Senior Executive Officer-Operations, with the addition of the \$2000 formerly paid as an honourarium. Expenses arising out of the execution of duties as President will also be covered.

*ONA Newsletter* covers sexual harassment for the first time, noting that no collective agreement in Canada contains a clause prohibiting sexual harassment.

ONA issues a media release in support of the Professional Residents and Interns of Ontario (PAIRO), in their strike for permanent independent arbitration as a means for resolving issues in collective bargaining. ONA continues to press to have public health nurses covered under the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act (HLDA)*.

#### Also in 1980:

ONA expresses concern about new Unemployment Insurance Commission regulations on how minimum insurable hours will affect part-time nurses.

Members vote to lobby government to accept a Charter of Rights Clause proposed by the Status of Women's Advisory Council.

Members approve lump-sum payments to assist chartered Locals in attaining financial viability.

# 1981

## Debra Cooper-Burger, RN, is President

**January:** Central hospital negotiations broke down in December. In January, J.D. O'Shea is appointed as arbitrator. Outstanding issues go to the Board of Arbitration. ONA and the OHA present a brief regarding items in dispute.

**Kay Lewis** is named ONA's first honorary member.

An ONA design contest is announced for pins for Past Presidents.

ONA reps attend the founding meeting of National Federation of Nurses Unions, but decide not to join at that time.

CUPE hospital unions strike illegally. ONA instructs its members to abide by collective agreements and issues a media release supporting CUPE's concerns and criticizing the OHA for refusal to bargain.

**February:** ONA President **Debra Cooper-Burger** attends a conference on Women and the Constitution in Ottawa, where more than 1,000 women are working to ensure the protection of women's rights is included in the *Charter*.

**March:** Arbitration hearings are held to finalize the Hospital Central Collective Agreement from March 16-21. ONA issues a media release in advance, saying that if the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act (HLDA)* is "a valid alternative to strike action, it needs to prove itself now."

**Health Minister Dennis Timbrell** announces accreditation for public health units. ONA questions the validity of the government accreditation program.

ONA writes to the health minister expressing concern about air and ambulance travel.

**April:** ONA submits a public health position paper regarding "Proposed *Health Protection Act*" to the provincial government.

The **National Federation of Nurses' Unions** holds its founding convention. ONA attends but does not join. Delegates to ONA's annual meeting will vote on a final decision.

**May:** ONA's Health Disciplines Committee responds to the College of Nurses' "Blueprint for Nurses," questioning whether it reflects membership desires.

*ONA Newsletter* covers narcotics handling as grievances on this issue rise.

**May 4-9:** Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton helps launch ONA's second annual, but first full-out, Nursing Week.

The theme is “Discover Nursing” and displays and events are held across the province. ONA produces posters for distribution and give-aways for the public.

**July:** The OLRB rules that employers found by the Board to have violated labour laws must post a notice to that effect in the place of employment.

**August:** ONA member **Barbara Sider**, winner of the contest to design the ONA logo in 1974, is also winner of the Past Presidents Pin design contest.

**September:** *ONA Newsletter* carries the constitution of the National Federation of Nurses’ Unions for members’ information in advance of the vote on joining. The newsletter also carries ONA Annual Financial Statements for the first time.

**October:** ONA stages an information picket to protest the lengthy delay in awarding of central hospital collective agreement.

**October 26: ONA President Debra Cooper-Burger** announces the central award is being handed down: salary increases reflected a 31-per-cent raise at the starting level and 29.2 per cent at the maximum or seven-year level; the per cent in lieu was standardized at 12 per cent for all part-time nurses; restructuring of the grievance procedure imposed strict time limits.

**November 18-20:** More than 700 nurses attend the eighth ONA Annual Meeting where **Ethyllynn Phillips** becomes President, **Joy Leacock** becomes President-Elect and **E. Laura McCartney** becomes Secretary-Treasurer. Members vote to join the RNAO as a block, and reject membership in the newly formed National Federation of Nurses’ Unions. They also vote to increase dues to \$20.50 per month full-time. Membership climbs to 31,239 with five new chartered Locals, and 282 agencies covered.

The Board of Directors recommends their terms be expanded to two years, and that this be presented to the 1982 Annual Meeting.

**December:** ONA conducts a media campaign to increase public awareness through newspaper advertisements called **Where Have All The Nurses Gone?**

ONA’s Board of Directors condemns the health minister’s announcement that hospitals may keep surpluses earned through profit-making ventures such as private and semi-private room fees.

**Also in 1981:**

Boards of Health are found to be legally bound to establish joint Health and Safety Committees.

# 1982

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## Ethyllynn Phillips, RN, is President

**January:** ONA issues a media release expressing concern that bargaining in health has deteriorated to the point where doctors are considering strike action.

The December-January issue of the *ONA Newsletter* includes the first index to all 1981 newsletter articles.

**March:** An ONA media release declares, “The end is in sight for nurses” with regard to achieving a first central collective agreement with hospitals. Hospitals have repeatedly refused to sign the collective agreement based on the arbitration award handed down in late-October 1981 and instead have asked chair J.D. O’Shea to convene hearings to clarify “ambiguities.” O’Shea’s supplementary award agrees with ONA’s position that the arbitrator cannot interpret the award. Individual hospital contracts expired September 30, 1980.

**Larry Grossman** becomes the new **Minister of Health** for Ontario in the majority government of **Premier Bill Davis**, returned in the March 19 election.

An ONA media release supports the OLRB decision upholding the right of Local union officer Cathryn Mancini of St. Catharines General Hospital to speak publicly about her employer’s activities.

More than 500 notices to arbitrate have been filed since the hospital award was handed down.

**March 29:** The Joint Sector meeting of more than 400 participants reviews options for the future of collective bargaining for ONA, calling for “intense lobbying.”

**April:** ONA clarifies rumours that ONA and the RNAO will merge because of block membership. **President Ethyllynn Phillips** calls it “sheer fantasy.” Legally, ONA cannot merge with the RNAO and remain a bargaining agent.

**May:** Niagara Regional Health Unit Local 39 begins a strike that will last four months and end with the imposition of wage restraints.

Porcupine Health Unit is ordered to set up a Joint Health and Safety Committee after ONA Local 10 forces a hearing.

**May 10-15:** ONA celebrates Nursing Week with events organized by Locals across the province.

**June:** Nurses’ Week is permanently scheduled as the first full week in May.

RNAO members vote to accept ONA for block membership.



# 1983

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## Joy Leacock, RN, is President

**July:** Niagara Regional Health Unit Local 39 marches on Queen's Park.

Negotiations between ONA and its staff union – Ontario Nurses' Association Staff Union (ONASU) break down. ONASU strikes. After eight weeks, a settlement brings a 14.25-per-cent salary increase.

**August:** Lemmex Associates is hired to clarify the roles and responsibilities of ONA staff and the Board; two task forces review internal staff functions and the role of the Board of Directors.

**September:** ONA lobbies to get part-time nurses on equal footing with full-time nurses by making a presentation at the federal Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work.

The Ontario government introduces wage and price controls and ONA protests. The *Inflation Restraint Act* halts negotiations and suspends arbitration. Hospital nurses are locked into mandatory wage restraints for the maximum period of time; financial progress of the majority of the Association's hospital, public health and nursing home nurses is severely affected. ONA accuses the government of singling out the public sector as scapegoats.

**October:** ONA's Central Negotiating Team meets with the OHA to present contract issues to an Arbitration Board. Given the imposition of the *Inflation Restraint Act*, parties set aside monetary issues and agree to proceed to arbitration for non-monetary issues. Once the legislation is proclaimed, the Arbitration Board loses jurisdiction to deal with any issues and no award is made.

**November 16-19:** ONA's Annual Meeting sees the installation of **Joy Leacock** as President; **Mary Anne Fish** is voted President-Elect and **Barbara Walchuk**, Secretary-Treasurer. Membership is 33,044 nurses in 291 agencies. Thirty-eight per cent of the members are part-time nurses. ONA's constitution is amended to give members of the Board of Directors two-year terms on a staggered rotation. Members vote to use funds in the ONA Security Fund to purchase property for a new building.

### Also in 1982:

ONA presents a brief to the Select Committee of Legislature on Pensions. Highlights include the expansion of CPP, coverage of part-time employees and expansion of old-age security. The Committee's final recommendations are a great disappointment to ONA.

ONA accuses the government of allowing a two-tier system by encouraging opting out of OHIP.

Dues increase for full-time members to \$30 per month or \$360 annually and part-timers to \$22.70 per month or \$272.40 annually.

**January:** ONA and the OHA settle a Central Hospital Collective Agreement covering 141 hospitals after the Board of Arbitration rules it is without jurisdiction due to wage-restraint legislation. The wage increase in October 1982 is 9 per cent and in October 1983, 5 per cent, as per the *Inflation Restraint Act*. Nurses have been without a contract since September 30, 1982.

The *ONA Newsletter* is reduced to six issues per year and expanded to 24 pages in each issue.

**February:** ONA's Education Department releases a how-to videotape, *Grievance Procedure*, to assist Local executives and nurse representatives in handling grievances.

**March:** ONA reinstates its grey-listing policy for agencies that handle employee relations inappropriately.

ONA responds positively to the provincial government finally taking action to improve air ambulance transfer services. The safety of nurses on trips is the hospitals' responsibility.

**April:** An *ONA Goals* booklet is distributed to members in the *ONA Newsletter*.

**May:** ONA redesigns its objective-setting process for bargaining as directed by the membership.

**ONA President Joy Leacock** writes to Ontario Treasurer Frank Miller warning against the introduction of user fees in health care.

ONA spearheads the establishment of the **Community Health Nurses Steering Committee** to promote community health nursing achievements, facilitate pilot projects and continue to encourage ongoing communication between community health nursing groups.

**May 1:** ONA group membership in the **RNAO** takes effect.

**May 2-7:** ONA celebrates Nursing Week under the theme 'Nurses Care' at events around the province.

**May 19:** Kingston and area nurses picket the College of Nurses to protest registration fees increase for construction of a new building.

**August:** ONA makes recommendations to the College of Nurses on its *Report on the Role of the RNA* after overwhelming reaction by the ONA membership.

ONA, the RNAO and the College of Nurses plan a joint response to the health ministry's proposed changes to the *Health Disciplines Act*.

As ONA plans for the new building, ONA and the RNAO sponsor a study on the feasibility of sharing a new building space.

ONA supports the Canadian Nurses' Association position on drafting of the *Canada Health Act*. ONA urges membership support of the *Act* via letters and telegrams to government.

**September:** The Supreme Court of Canada upholds an ONA appeal regarding the right of an Interest Board of Arbitration to reimpose interest arbitration as a substitute for a strike or lockout. The provision was originally awarded by Arbitration Boards dealing with disputes at the Haldimand Norfolk Regional and Perth District Health Units.

Two ONA representatives are appointed to the RNAO Foundation Board.

**October 7:** ONA issues a media release condemning Brantwood Manor in Burlington for giving RNs on staff a choice of either lay-off or termination after they refuse to waive a legislated increase and postpone a retroactive pay settlement.

**October 13:** Members celebrate the tenth anniversary of ONA's founding. A celebration is planned for the annual meeting.

**November 10:** ONA delivers petitions protesting wage control legislation that are signed by more than 7,000 members to the provincial treasurer.

**November 15-17:** ONA's Annual Meeting at Toronto's Constellation Hotel installs **Mary Anne Fish** as President. **Rose Briscoe** is voted President-Elect and **Barbara Blank**, Secretary-Treasurer. On Wednesday, November 16, ONA celebrates a decade of working for nurses at the Tenth Anniversary Banquet. ONA membership is 36,844 covering 298 agencies. Part-time nurses make up 39 per cent.

ONA produces *Memories of Our Nursing Days*, a special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the newsletter with a chronology of the history of the struggle for collective bargaining and milestones in the first 10 years of the union.

**December:** The incoming ONA Board sets up a Strategic Planning Task Force at its first meeting to begin a Strategic Planning Process.

ONA submits a brief to the Ministry of Health Review Team which is reviewing the *Health Disciplines Review Act* that regulates RNs and RNAs in Ontario.

**Also in 1983:**

The Provincial Standing Committee on Social

Development agrees to include a definition of public health nurses in *Bill 138*, the proposed new *Health Protection Act*. ONA is granted standing before the committee during clause-by-clause analysis of the bill, an unusual event at this stage.

ONA and RNAO reps meet with the Ministry of Health to develop strategies for better health care for the elderly.

ONA warns the health ministry that understaffing in hospitals is now the norm as a result of budget restraints.

The Inflation Restraint Board shows total disdain for nurses by rolling back compensation increases negotiated by employers and ONA. **Premier Bill Davis** refuses to become involved in IRB decisions.

# 1984

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## Mary Anne Fish, RN, is President

**January:** *The Status Report on Bargaining* and *Central Rights Award Updates* become regular features of the *ONA Newsletter*.

**February:** ONA joins a coalition of public-sector unions to fight the provincial government's restrictive wage-restraint program. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that previous wage restraint legislation, *Bill 179*, unconstitutional. The coalition is issuing a writ against the new wage restraint legislation, *Bill 111*.

**March:** ONA submits a brief to the government on *Bill 141*, amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*, on behalf of its 98 per cent female membership, demanding equal pay legislation.

ONA's Board votes to support midwifery with basic registered nursing preparation and advanced preparation in midwifery. ONA also sets up an Ad Hoc Committee on Specialization, which recommends that ONA support specialization and credentialing as long as RN training and education are basic requirements.

ONA's Education Department releases the videotape *ONA – More Than Meets the Eye* that gives a history of collective bargaining for nurses in Ontario, history of the formation of the ONA and of ONA's relationship with the RNAO and College of Nurses.

**April:** A third Coroner's Jury recommends abolishing 12-hour shifts for nurses.

Under new Board policy, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is now required to be a nurse, as are employment relations officers (ERO).

Negotiations are completed to purchase a parcel of land for ONA's new office building in downtown Toronto,

at Elizabeth and Grenville Streets, adjacent to Toronto's hospital district and a five-minute march from Queen's Park. The RNAO declines to share the new building.

**April 28:** The Canadian Labour Congress declares the first annual national Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured, or made ill in the workplace.

**May 6-12:** Nursing Week is celebrated, again under the theme 'Nurses Care'.

**June:** ONA submits a second brief to the Health Professions Legislation Review addressing midwifery, registered nursing assistants (ONA advocates the CNO continue to define RNA practice) and patients' rights.

The Board approves a construction project manager for the new building and discusses hepatitis B screening, a new pressure for nurses.

ONA meets with the Labour Minister about changes to the interest arbitration system and is assured they are forthcoming. ONA continues to lobby to have public health nurses designated as essential-service providers so that they can use the arbitration process.

ONA writes to **Labour Minister Ramsay** to press for accredited bargaining agent status on behalf of hospitals.

**July:** ONA appoints its first Research Officer in Occupational Health and Safety.

ONA releases a public health nurse poster, *Nursing in the community...we care!*

The *Health Promotion and Protection Act* replaces the 100-year-old *Public Health Act*. New guidelines under the *Act* will be phased in over five years.

**August:** ONA's Central Hospital Negotiating Team exchanges proposals with the OHA.

**September:** An earlier arbitration award is upheld, giving nurses shift differential payable in the final hours of an extended-tour day shift and achieving final determination on the issue.

ONA's Board approves additional funding for Project Turnabout, a pilot project support service for nurses dealing with addictions.

**October:** The OHA and Minister of Health report a surplus of nurses with a provincial vacancy rate of 0.36 per cent.

Mediation concludes in hospital central bargaining without a final settlement, but having moved the parties closer on a number of issues.

**October 11:** Public health nurses at the Bruce County health unit are locked out after unsuccessful mediation talks. The nurses are the lowest-paid public health nurses in Canada.

**November:** ONA's Annual Meeting installs **Rose Briscoe** as President and votes in **Donna Alexander** President-Elect and **Gloria Lynn** as Secretary-Treasurer. Membership reaches 39,964, with 40 per cent part-time nurses. There are 214 chartered Locals. A three-year Strategic Plan for ONA is presented. Resolutions change the language for chartered Locals to certified units. Members renew block membership in the RNAO, but vote down the proposed dues increase.

**December:** Incoming **President Rose Briscoe** writes about Brantwood Manor Nursing Home to the Minister of Health and the Toronto Regional Supervisor after testimony at the OLRB that the Director of Nursing is not responsible for the organization and direction of nursing care in violation of the *Nursing Homes Act*.

**Also in 1984:**

ONA joins forces with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and other women's groups to discuss pensions.

**Project Turnabout** begins as a one-year pilot project to provide support and treatment for nurses dealing with drug and alcohol abuse problems. By year-end, it has the support of ONA, the RNAO, the Ontario Association of Registered Nursing Assistants and the Addiction Research Foundation.

# 1985

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**Rose Briscoe, RN, is President**

**February:** ONA's Board of Directors establishes a new Political Action Committee to educate nurses in the political process. The Board also approves a study looking into the impact of 12-hour extended tours. ONA stays neutral on extended tours until the study is completed, but draws up standard provisions for inclusion in the collective agreement. Concerned that the increasing use of health educators threatens the job security of public health nurses, the Board adopts the position that all health educators be RNs with additional preparation as required.

A Search Committee is established to find a CEO to replace the retiring **Anne Gribben**.

ONA and the College of Nurses of Ontario begin a formal liaison process.

**March:** Tenders are due for contractors bidding on construction of ONA's new building.

**March 15:** The Hospital nurses' award is released by the Board of Arbitration with a five-per-cent across the board pay raise. **President Rose Briscoe** says, "The

salary award is in line with increases granted to hospital services workers and does not compare unfavourably with the average wage increases in Canada,” adding that “new rates continue to under-compensate nurses.”

**April:** Members are invited to enroll in an ONA-sponsored voluntary benefits package for those not covered under collective agreements, as well as a program for retiring members.

**Oxford County Health Unit Nurses, ONA Local 40,** are locked out after a breakdown in contract negotiations. **President Rose Briscoe** joins Local 40 members at a picket of a Conservative Party breakfast.

**April 18: President Rose Briscoe** and **CEO Anne Gribben** grab shovels at the sod-turning ceremony for ONA's new head office. Construction begins.

**May:** Public health nurses at the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit take strike action after a breakdown in mediation.

**May 5-11:** Nurses in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, PEI and New Brunswick join Ontario nurses marking Nursing Week under the theme, ‘Nurses Care.’

Conservatives win the most seats in the provincial election but not enough to form a government. NDP Leader Bob Rae signs an accord with Liberal leader **David Peterson** that makes Peterson the next Premier of Ontario, ending 40 consecutive years of Conservative government.

**June:** Nurses from all sectors rally on the front steps at Queen's Park to fight the wage disparity between public health nurses and hospital nurses. A Public Health Committee is established to plan future bargaining strategies for public health nurses.

Locked-out Oxford County public health nurses ratify a contract.

The Liberal government of **Premier David Peterson** is sworn in.

**July:** ONA expresses concern with the recommendations of the College of Nurses task force on certificate competence. ONA advertises for a new CEO.

**October:** A province-wide advertising campaign kicks off with a quarter-page ad in 13 major daily newspapers indicating ONA's support for proposed legislation to ban extra billing by doctors. Along with the ad, ONA produces a position paper based on a Goldfarb poll indicating that 70 per cent of Ontario residents oppose extra billing. The ad and position paper are the first in a series of eight that will run through 1986 on such issues as preventive health care, workplace safety and care for the elderly. A ninth ad, run in 1988, addresses the nursing shortage.

**November:** ONA's Annual Meeting installs **Donna Alexander** as President for 1986, **Gloria Lynn** is voted President-Elect and **Noelle Andrews**, Secretary-Treasurer. ONA membership is 41,827 covering 313 agencies and with just fewer than 42 per cent part-time. ONA banquet “roasts” outgoing **CEO Anne Gribben**. Resolutions passed include one setting the President's salary as double the maximum salary rate of an RN at a staff nurse level in the hospital sector.

*ONA Newsletter* outlines precautions for the care of AIDS patients.

**December:** ONA releases a poll showing 75 per cent of consumers want more money spent on health education programs. Outgoing **ONA President Rose Briscoe** calls for “100 per cent funding for community health services.”

**Also in 1985:**

Rising costs due to increased demand for services and budget cutbacks force hospitals to consolidate services. An ONA committee of staff members studies the effect on employees.

The Grievance Review Committee meets with OHA representatives to discuss alternatives to the grievance arbitration system, which would facilitate processing of grievances and reduce the long time delay.

A *Financial Post* survey of Canada's 30 largest unions indicates ONA is the fastest-growing union in the country, with a growth of nearly 29 per cent between 1981 and 1984.

# 1986

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**Donna Alexander, RN, is President**

**January:** New **President Donna Alexander** joins locked-out Kent-Chatham public health nurses on the picket line in early January. A settlement is reached January 17 and nurses return to work before the end of the month.

The Ontario government introduces legislation to ban extra billing by doctors.

**ONA President Donna Alexander** and other executive members meet with **Minister of Health Murray Elston** to hear that midwifery will be recognized as a self-regulating profession in Ontario.

ONA continues its ad campaign based on polling.

Central bargaining begins between ONA and the OHA covering 150 hospitals.

The *ONA Newsletter* continues as monthly publication, which it reverted to in November 1985.

**February:** **Glenna Cole Slattery, RN, MPA,** is

appointed successor to the retiring **Anne Gribben** as CEO and begins her orientation. Ms Cole Slattery has extensive background in labour relations and political lobbying, and holds a nursing diploma, B.Sc. and Masters in Public Administration.

**March:** **ONA President Donna Alexander** reiterates ONA's position against extra billing at legislative hearings on *Bill 94, The Health Care Accessibility Act*.

**ONA President Donna Alexander** addresses a public hearing of the panel on the government's *Green Paper on Pay Equity*.

**April:** **ONA President Donna Alexander** calls for a Bill of Rights for patients, a notion supported by 82 per cent of consumers; it is the seventh health-care issue in ONA's ongoing campaign.

**May:** **Anne Gribben**, ONA's CEO since 1974 and RNAO Director of Employment Relations from 1968-1974, retires. The *ONA Newsletter* features photos of her historic role in the Association.

Nursing Week festivities occur across the province and in other provinces as well. ONA creates a poster and table-top exhibit.

**June:** The cornerstone is laid for ONA's head office on Grenville Street.

Ontario doctors stage a 25-day strike leading up to the June 20 passage of *Bill 94, The Health Care Accessibility Act* in a rare all-night session. ONA lobbies staunchly in favor of the legislation with briefs, position paper, media interviews and a letter-writing campaign. Durham Region community health nurse Liz Calvin tells the CBC that the doctors' strike has created a "crisis situation" in her district and that nurses have had to fill the void.

ONA moves to grey-list Ottawa Civic Hospital on the extended tours issue. Kitchener's St. Mary's General Hospital is the 12th of 13 hospitals to settle a dispute with ONA over extended tours. ONA files Section 89 – unfair labour practice – complaints when the hospitals discontinue the 11.25-hour shifts in a dispute over the holiday pay rate. At Ottawa Civic Hospital, ONA also files for a declaration of illegal lockout and cease-and-desist order but is turned down by the Labour Board. ONA grey-lists the Civic as the dispute continues.

The Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit ends a 36-day lockout after a settlement.

**July:** ONA moves into its new head-office building at 85 Grenville.

**August:** ONA reacts swiftly and strongly to the College of Nurses' proposals for nursing practice requirements, including a stipulation that nurses have at least 1,125 hours of practice in the preceding five years to be

placed on the practice register. ONA will not support any proposal that threatens the job security or professional status of its members.

ONA tells the Ministry of Labour Task Force on Overtime that employers use overtime as a way to cut costs and avoid hiring new staff, putting additional workload on existing staff and jeopardizing patient care. ONA recommends that statutory maximum work hours be reduced to 40 per week from 48, that nurses not be required to work overtime and that all overtime be made strictly voluntary.

**September:** ONA stages a gala event and tour to officially launch its new headquarters. **Jean Lowery**, founding president and current Director of Human Resources, shares ribbon-cutting ceremony with **President Donna Alexander**.

The ONA Board adopts a Professional Committee recommendation to conduct a membership poll on continuing competency and a questionnaire is enclosed in the September *ONA Newsletter* after the Health Professions Legislation Review team announces new legislation will incorporate continuing competency programs. This will have significant impact on ONA members: an RN who does not meet program requirements could lose her licence.

Lawyer Maureen McTeer urges 200 ONA members to become more vocal on health-care issues during an ONA workshop on legal issues in nursing.

The College of Nurses' proposals for the revised standards of nursing practice are released in a *Communiqué*. ONA says it will not support the proposals until a number of key concerns are addressed, including a clearer definition of levels, and circulates a questionnaire to members.

The *ONA Newsletter* runs an article on the legal implications of AIDS.

**October:** ONA raises concerns about health care for the elderly in a meeting with the Minister for Senior Citizens' Affairs, addressing funding, standards, co-ordination of services, education and residents' rights.

**November:** ONA's Annual Meeting installs **Gloria Lynn** as President, and votes **Monica Leslie** in as President-Elect. **Noelle Andrew** is re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Membership is over 45,000, with 346 Bargaining Units in 227 Locals. Part-time nurses comprise 44 per cent of the membership. The meeting adopts a new voting structure, with voting geared to the number of members in each Local, and a new professional liability plan to be operated solely by ONA. Members also vote to withdraw block membership from RNAO, citing philosophical differences.

VONs in Sudbury and Espanola vote to strike in a dispute over terms of their first collective agreement.

ONA staunchly condemns a proposed amendment to

the federal *Bankruptcy Act* that would allow companies to alter or cancel existing collective agreements in the event of corporate insolvency.

ONA receives a two-year arbitration award in the hospital sector from arbitrator Gordon Simmons with a 4-per-cent increase effective April 1, 1986 and 4.25-per-cent effective April 1, 1987.

**December:** ONA lifts grey-listing of Ottawa Civic Hospital.

ONA reaches a settlement with the Sudbury branch of VON.

The Ontario government introduces amendments to the *Nursing Homes Act* including a patients' Bill of Rights.

**Also in 1986:**

The Scott arbitration award puts casual part-time nurses on the same salary grid as regular part-time nurses with one increment level for every 200 tours of seniority.

After three years of discussion, federal and provincial governments agree to implement the national Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), which calls for the evaluation and identification of potentially hazardous materials and worker education programs.

After a report from the Workload Committee, the ONA Board approves hiring of three more EROs and creating satellite offices in Kingston and Windsor.

# 1987

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**Gloria Lynn, RN, is President**

**January:** The redesigned *ONA Newsletter* becomes *ONA News*.

Members of Local 97 at Toronto General Hospital blitz the provincial government with letters complaining about **Gordon Simmons'** arbitration award for hospital nurses in 1986. The nurses are angry that the award addresses just 20 of the roughly 150 issues tabled by ONA's central negotiating team.

**February:** ONA circulates a summary of the Health Professions Legislation Review proposals for legal and procedural issues governing nursing and all other health professions, including holding public disciplinary hearings to the membership. ONA wants the hearings to remain closed.

ONA members are asked to participate in a waste anesthetic gases study being conducted by a University of Toronto research team investigating abnormal pregnancy outcomes for nurses exposed to

waste gases in the workplace.

**ONA President Gloria Lynn** presents a brief to the Standing Committee on Social Development regarding *Bill 176, The Nursing Homes Amendment Act*. ONA recommends the bill of rights and a monitoring system that would include employees and union reps. ONA also lobbies the government for standards for rest homes and other issues such as pensions, privatization, occupational health and safety, health-care accessibility, vocational rehabilitation, unemployment insurance, first-contract legislation and allocation of provincial funding.

ONA's Board decides against supporting the Canadian Nurses' Association's entry to practice position which would make a bachelor's degree the minimum requirement by the year 2000. ONA calls for ratification of the decision by the membership and receives overwhelming approval by way of a ballot circulated in the *ONA News*.

ONA appears before the Standing Committee on the Administration of Justice to speak to *Bill 154, An Act to Provide for Pay Equity in Broader Public and Private Sectors* and request that no classes of employees be excluded.

**March:** ONA officers and regional presidents gather for a political think-tank and listen to keynote speaker **Nancy Riche, Executive Vice-President of the CLC**.

ONA asks **Health Minister Murray Elston** to appoint a public inspector to investigate reports on the quality of care at the Port Colborne General Hospital after nurses go public with a professional responsibility complaint. The hospital fails to implement the 23 recommendations made by a Nursing Assessment Committee.

**May:** Federal MP **Sheila Copps** quotes **CEO Glenna Cole Slattery** on the nursing shortage in the House of Commons, saying "the bottom line is that women do not have to come into nursing anymore - the poor working conditions, pay scales that don't recognize grueling shift work and special skills, and apathy in government and among administrators are driving people to quit." The Ministry of Health reports as many as 3,000 nursing jobs in Ontario may be unfilled, many in Metro Toronto. The nursing shortage, especially in critical care areas, becomes one of the big news events of the year in Ontario, just three years after a reported surplus. The shortage is the strongest indicator to date that nurses are unhappy, with a litany of complaints that includes inflexible shifts and hours, lack of recognition for skills and knowledge, poor working relations with doctors and management and inadequate compensation.

**May 10-16:** Nursing Week is a national event for the first time. ONA Locals run events across the province, from a birthday cake for Florence Nightingale (born

May 12) to raising \$7,000 for education workshops with a raffle.

**June:** *ONA News* carries a fact sheet on AIDS for the health-care professional.

**August:** Nurses at the Lambton Health Unit in Sarnia are locked out for 47 days until a settlement is reached at mediation. The 50 nurses who run blood-donor clinics in Metro Toronto also receive a strike mandate, but reach a settlement before taking job action.

**September:** Parties meet to exchange proposals in central hospital bargaining.

The ONA Board adopts a policy on AIDS including opposition to mandatory testing of patients, nurses and other workers. The Board says universal precautions and education are the best methods of protecting the worker.

ONA asks that regulations on first-aid requirements in the workplace be amended to provide for enforcement "with suitable penalties for non-compliance" and asks that a review of first-aid equipment and facilities be included on health and safety tours conducted by Ministry of Labour inspectors.

**September 10:** The Liberal government of Premier David Peterson is re-elected with a large majority.

**October: Heather Dolan,** ONA president 1979-80, is named Chief Operating Officer.

In response to a membership poll on continuing competency indicating that the most acceptable program is mandatory continuing education, as long as it is conducted on employer time and is readily available and accessible, ONA lobbies for an increase in government funding to universities and colleges to expand nursing education programs.

The province of Ontario opens an AIDS toll-free hotline.

**November: Glenna Rowsell,** a pioneer in the organizing of nursing trade unions in Canada, dies on November 27 after a lengthy illness.

ONA founding President **Jean Lowery,** is named to the Ontario Health Coalition's Board of Directors. The broad-based consumer advocacy group lobbies government on health-care policies.

The Big Mac, the Macintosh II Desktop Publishing System, makes its debut in the ONA Communications Department. The *ONA News*, with a monthly circulation of more than 41,000, is designed and produced entirely on the computer. Computerization is beginning to have a significant impact on nurse practitioners and implementation is on the agenda for the annual meeting. The Board devises a policy and checklist to assist members prior to implementation of computers,

including items like workload, training and continuing competency.

In the Throne Speech, **Premier Peterson** unveils a new health strategy emphasizing promotion, prevention, community-based services and alternatives to institutional care. The Premier's Council on Health Strategy is launched and ONA sharply criticizes the government for failing to include staff nurses on Ministry of Health committees and task forces.

Over 250 members of Local 94 at Toronto's Wellesley Hospital sign a letter to the Health Minister expressing displeasure over working conditions for nurses in Ontario. Ms Caplan replies, "The Ministry of Health has no direct involvement in the bargaining process... May I suggest you and your colleagues take steps which ensure that your Association as well as your hospital are clear on the issues you wish to have negotiated at the bargaining table this year."

Metro Toronto hospitals are reaching capacity for treating patients with AIDS or HIV. Toronto General has stopped accepting new patients.

**November 17-19:** The ONA Annual Meeting takes place at the Skyline Hotel in Toronto, and installs **Monica Leslie** as President. **Pat Bethune** is voted President-Elect and **Mary Jane Christiansen** Secretary-Treasurer. **Health Minister Elinor Caplan** kicks off proceedings and tells members she will continue to seek ONA's opinions on key health issues. ONA's membership adopts motions for universally accessible 24-hour daycare, group RRSPs, and to pay for full benefit coverage for striking nurses eligible for strike pay. Over 750 nurses sign a petition taking issue with the College of Nurses' proposed revised standards of nursing practice. The CEO reports that membership is finally stabilizing and part-time membership now accounts for 45.9 per cent.

**December:** Job action on the community health front has been busy all year as about 10 Locals are actively involved in negotiations. One hundred nurses in Durham Region and 60 nurses in Etobicoke have ratified new agreements, but close to 90 nurses in the Sudbury area are in the throes of a bitter five and a half-month strike, and about 60 nurses in Windsor-Essex are embattled as well.

ONA seeks a meeting with Health Minister **Elinor Caplan** to discuss a report of the Task Force on the Implementation of Midwifery which contains 70 recommendations, including that midwifery be a self-regulating, direct-entry profession with its own independent regulatory body. ONA wants basic nursing preparation with advanced preparation in midwifery as entry to practice.

The ONA Research Department receives \$67,000 grant from Labour Canada to study the impact of technology on working conditions for nurses.

**December 14:** ONA and the 167 participating hospitals reach a negotiated settlement. Members vote in the new contract in the New Year.

**Also in 1987:**

ONA calls proposed legislation to amend the federal *Patent Act* provisions on prescription drugs regressive. The legislation would extend the patent on new drugs to 10 years and delay the manufacture of generic drugs.

Improvements to the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) are announced, including better early retirement benefits. OHA then announces it will take a pension contribution holiday because of a surplus in the fund, saving an estimated \$80 million.

**Project Turnabout** completes three years of supporting nurses dealing with drug and alcohol problems.

# 1988

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**Monica Leslie, RN, is President**

**January:** *ONA News* adds a column on pay equity.

**Health Minister Elinor Caplan** refuses to legislate in-service education for nurses. Instead, she advocates “creative approaches” such as nursing rounds and the use of clinical nurse instructors.

**January 29:** ONA members ratify a new three-year agreement for roughly 38,000 nurses at 167 participating hospitals for the first freely negotiated central settlement achieved between ONA and the OHA. Highlights include an eighth step on the salary grid and a wage increase of about 16 per cent.

**February:** ONA’s Executive Committee approves a \$10,000 line of credit for the 11,400 striking Alberta nurses, who settle on February 12 after 19 days on the picket line and incur heavy fines for the illegal strike.

Former Secretary-Treasurer **Noelle Andrews** becomes Assistant Director for Government Relations as ONA continues to expand lobbying and submissions. Pay equity is a central focus of government relations through 1988.

ONA meets with members of the federal Atomic Energy Control Board to discuss hospital radiation safety after a spill of radioactive dust in the nuclear medicine department at York-Finch General Hospital. AECB prepares guidelines for the handling of radioisotopes.

**March:** **ONA President Monica Leslie** releases a media statement criticizing the College of Nurses for reportedly turning ONA members away from information sessions being conducted across the

province to discuss proposed changes to the standards of nursing practice.

**Premier David Peterson** writes, in response to ONA complaints, that the Premier’s Council on Health Strategy and other government committees do not contain staff nurse representation. The Premier says members “were chosen because of their breadth of experience and perspective, and not as representatives of particular interest groups or associations” and assures that ONA “will be consulted on issues of importance to staff nurses.”

Nurses at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit end a three and a half-month strike, ratifying a new collective agreement in a unanimous vote.

**April:** ONA releases guidelines for members required to work overtime or double shifts, after reports that nurses are being disciplined or threatened for refusing to work overtime.

ONA launches *An Industry in Crisis* position paper and results of a Goldfarb poll on the nursing shortage in Ontario. ONA’s ninth position paper is backed by an ad campaign in 13 major daily newspapers across the province. The District 11 executive of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) sends ONA a letter in support of the position paper and says it will ask the OMA Board to issue a statement also supporting the paper.

**April 11:** Nurses at the Sudbury and District Health Unit ratify a new collective agreement, ending a bitter five and a half-month strike. Three main issues – wage parity with hospital nurses, contracting out and hours of work – are resolved.

**May:** Local 62 Algoma Health Care Bargaining Unit ends an eight-week strike over wages after ratifying a settlement. The salary increase leaves them among the lowest paid in the province, but negotiating chair Sue Robinson, says, “It was the very best we could achieve in order to get members back to work.”

ONA announces that **Health Minister Elinor Caplan** has written to **President Monica Leslie** stating the government won’t support establishing the baccalaureate as the minimum educational requirement for entry into nursing practice. Ms Caplan says “high-quality nursing services are being provided by nurses prepared in community college programs” and commits the ministry to making every effort to ensure staff nurses are included on government committees relating to health care.

**May 8-14:** For the first time, ONA uses province-wide advertising for Nursing Week. A three-column ad appears in 12 Saturday newspapers around the province. The week’s theme is ‘Nursing: A Tradition of Caring.’ Other promotions include 4,000 posters and bookmarks with the ‘Nurses Care’ slogan.



Under a new hospital policy, which may be the first of its kind in Canada, staff at the newly amalgamated Toronto General and Toronto Western Hospitals, including nurses, are required to tell the employer if they are HIV positive.

**June:** The Health Professions Legislation Review recommends that the governing body of each health profession establish a committee to develop and administer continuing competency programs. The College of Nurses sets up a committee to design a program to be presented to the Council. ONA collects 4,000 signatures on a petition protesting the College of Nurses' revised proposals for nursing practice standards.

About 100 nurses in the Regional Municipality of York give a solid strike mandate when negotiations reach an impasse. Wages are a prime issue.

Nurses at Norfolk General Hospital hold a media conference to publicize the hospital's failure to remedy serious workload problems on two units that prevent nurses from providing proper patient care.

**July:** Members of ONA Local 3 join an information picket with CUPE to protest service cutbacks and layoffs at Peterborough's St. Joseph's Hospital.

**Don Hersey**, QC and RNAO and ONA counsel instrumental in RNAO and ONA organizing from 1965-75, dies of cancer at 52.

**August:** Ninety-six hospitals or almost half of Ontario's 222 public hospitals project deficits this year. The province maintains its policy not to cover hospitals for budget shortfalls.

**September:** The community health sector meets and reviews results of negotiations. Sector representatives vote to continue negotiations on a coordinated basis with individual actions at the Local level where necessary.

The Ministry of Health launches a review of the Windsor-Essex health unit, still plagued with internal problems and poor management-nurse relations.

An ONA brief to the provincial task force on the provision and use of medical services supports the government's plan to redirect services toward promotion and prevention and to seek more cost-effective ways of providing health services. The brief emphasizes that quality of care as well as quantity of care should be a key consideration in any plans to streamline the system. ONA also stresses it wants to be consulted on any matters that impact on nursing.

The OHA releases an information package on AIDS and HIV for hospitals recommending that HIV-positive health-care workers continue to work as long as performance standards are met. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has reinstated a nurse fired for being HIV-positive with full back pay, benefits, legal fees and a clean employment record.

**October:** ONA's group RRSP opens for members.

**ONA President-Elect Pat Bethune** and Chief Operating Officer (COO) **Heather Dolan** participate on a Ministry of Health committee set up to review 23 hospitals with chronic financial problems and strongly support the recommendation that changes in hospital programs and services be made only after consultation with staff and the health ministry.

WHMIS – *Workplace Hazardous Material Information Systems* legislation – comes into effect at the end of the month.

**October 13:** ONA turns 15 and will celebrate at the Annual Meeting dinner.

**November:** ONA's Board adopts a Occupational Health and Safety Committee recommendation that ONA's AIDS policy be updated to bring it in line with the most current infection control measures. The revised policy states that nurses and other workers who test positive for HIV/AIDS have the right to work as long as they are physically and mentally able to do so.

**November 15-17:** ONA's Annual Meeting takes place at Toronto's Skyline Hotel and installs **Pat Bethune** as President. **Lesley Bell** is voted President-Elect and **Mary Jane Christiansen** continues as Secretary-Treasurer. **Labour Minister Greg Sorbara** addresses the meeting. Membership increases 6.3 per cent over the previous year to 48,912 members. Part-time nurses comprise 47.8 per cent of ONA membership. ONA celebrates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a dinner and Monte Carlo night on November 16.

**Also in 1988:**

Negotiations are slow but ongoing between the OHA and labour groups to implement pay equity for hospital workers. ONA opposes the OHA's "provincial approach" and proceeds with negotiations at the Local level.

The College of Nurses and labour arbitration boards determine that nurses are accountable and legally liable for the care provided by students.

# 1989

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**Pat Bethune, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA issues a media release condemning the Pay Equity Commission's failure to act on implementing pay adjustments in the nursing profession. **President Pat Bethune** says this will aggravate the current shortage of nurses.

**January 25:** About 400 nurses march on Queen's Park

in freezing temperatures to protest the nursing shortage and poor working conditions for hospital nurses. The nursing shortage makes headlines throughout the year and reaches critical proportions; the crunch is felt in particular in the Metropolitan Toronto area.

**February:** Health Minister **Elinor Caplan** announces changes to regulations under the *Public Hospitals Act* to require hospital administrators to include staff nurses and nurse managers on major committees, giving nurses direct access to hospital administrative, financial, operational and planning decisions.

ONA censures Sudbury and District Health Unit, Local 87.

**March:** ONA appears before the Standing Committee on Resources Development to urge the provincial government to abandon *Bill 162*, legislation to amend the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and draft a new bill that would create a fair system of workers' compensation. Despite intensive lobbying efforts by labour and the injured workers' movement, *Bill 162* receives royal assent July 26.

ONA censures Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Local 33.

**April:** **Anne Gribben**, ONA's first CEO, is awarded the Order of Ontario for her contribution to health care and the nursing profession.

ONA censures Toronto General Hospital, Local 97, for failure to comply with key elements in the collective agreement.

**May:** ONA's occupational health and safety poster is distributed to Locals.

**May 7-13:** Nursing Week runs the most sophisticated program to date with internal and external programs including television commercials – repackaged from the Nurses' Union of New Brunswick – on eight stations. Promotional vehicles also include Public Service Announcements, print advertisements in 13 dailies, and a kit for Locals with buttons, post-it notes, balloons, posters and a ready-to-use local display ad.

**May 11:** Several hundred nurses picket Toronto General Hospital as part of the censure campaign. Many wear sweatshirts bearing the message 'Nurses care – but it's not in the budget.'

**June:** The federal government refuses to implement mandatory AIDS testing; Toronto City Council votes to set up clinics for anonymous testing.

**July:** A Local issues award covering 75 participating hospital Locals is released.

Nurses from Local 88 at Sunnybrook Hospital stage

a lunchtime boycott of the hospital's cafeteria to protest administrative policy changes that close the cafeteria to staff members on the night shift from midnight to 3 a.m. and reduce hours during the evening.

**August 25:** Local 230 at Toronto's Princess Margaret Hospital sets up an information picket on to protest their lack of a contract. Negotiations for a first collective agreement for about 250 nurses have been ongoing since June 10, 1987.

**September:** Quebec nurses walk off the job for a week, incurring serious penalties. ONA pitches in, approving a \$100,000 donation and \$500,000 loan from the security fund to support the Quebec nurses, who face contempt of court.

ONA delivers a brief on the need for Employment Equity legislation to the Minister of Citizenship.

**September 22:** A Supreme Court of Ontario ruling guarantees staff nurses undisputed direct access to Ontario hospital board of governors and trustees as full members of key fiscal committees. The decision by **Justice J. McKeowan** clarifies the new regulations – which include Fiscal Advisory Regulations – under the *Public Hospitals Act* requiring hospitals to involve nurses in administrative, financial, operational and planning decisions. ONA launches a court action on behalf of Locals 155 and 97, who challenged the Toronto Hospital's election process for staff nurses to its Budget Committee.

**October:** **CEO Glenna Cole Slattery** is named to the Premier's Council on Health Strategy. **Ina Caissey**, Region 11 rep on the ONA Board of Directors, is named to the provincial Interim Regulatory Council on Midwifery. **Wayne Smith**, Region 13 rep, is appointed to the Northern Ontario Health Advisory Committee.

ONA Local 87 president **Betty Rheume** goes to the Supreme Court of Ontario, on the constitutionality of an Ontario law that requires municipal employees to quit their jobs if they win election to municipal councils. A public health nurse, Ms Rheume came within 175 votes of winning the mayoralty race in Rayside-Balfour in the Municipality of Sudbury in the 1988 municipal elections.

ONA member **Melda Okoye**, Local 155, is named to the provincial Pay Equity Tribunal.

**November 14-16:** ONA's Annual Meeting takes place at Toronto's Skyline Hotel and installs **Lesley Bell** as President. **Eileen Davidson** is voted President-Elect and **Ina Caissey** is elected Secretary-Treasurer. Membership tops 50,000 for the first time, reaching 52,149. Part-time nurses comprise 48.2 per cent of ONA membership. **CEO Glenna Cole Slattery** announces to an ecstatic assembly that outgoing

**President Pat Bethune** has been named provincial nursing coordinator, a new position designed to address the problems of recruitment and retention of nurses in the face of a critical nursing shortage. Pat Bethune receives a loud and lengthy standing ovation. All recommendations from the Ad Hoc Francophone Committee to address the needs of ONA's French-speaking membership are carried, including the provision of a number of ONA publications in French and English, such as the grievance form. ONA will continue to provide French and English versions of the hospital central agreement.

**November 24:** In a precedent-setting, unanimous decision that could be of benefit to thousands of working women and many ONA nurses, the Supreme Court of Ontario upholds a Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal ruling allowing the comparison of jobs of Haldimand-Norfolk public health and nursing homes nurses to regional police jobs. Workers previously excluded from provincial pay-equity legislation can now look outside their own workplaces for male job classes to compare themselves in negotiating pay-equity adjustments. Haldimand-Norfolk appeals the decision, with the backing of **Attorney-General Ian Scott**.

**December:** ONA Local 94 wins a court challenge of Wellesley Hospital's election process for electing staff nurses to planning and advisory committees under the *Public Hospitals Act* Regulation 83/89. The Supreme Court of Ontario finds the Wellesley elections invalid because the hospital fails to enact a number of by-laws required under the *Act* prior to conducting the elections.

Federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson announces the goods and services tax – GST – will come into effect January 1, 1991.

**Also in 1989:**

Part-time nurses are deemed eligible to join the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan by order of the Ontario Superintendent of Pensions. More than 18,000 nurses are affected at 300 hospitals.

# 1990

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**Lesley Bell, RN, is President**

**January:** Prompted by the continuing censure of Toronto General Hospital and failure to implement Regulation 83/89 under the *Public Hospitals Act*, ONA's Executive Committee votes to oppose the proposed merger of Women's College Hospital and the Toronto Hospital Corporation, as requested by **Shelley**

**O'Neill**, President of Local 80 at Women's College. A strong lobby of Women's College staff, six directors and community members succeeds in blocking the merger. When 15 pro-merger members resign from the hospital's board, ONA gains two seats, **Cynthia Crawford**, Region 6 rep and former President **Rose Briscoe**.

The OHA proposes a four-per-cent reduction in the percentage-in-lieu of benefits for part-time workers. ONA vigorously opposes the move and makes plans to take the issue to the bargaining table.

Hospitals are slow to implement the order of the Ontario Superintendent of Pensions from the previous year that more than 18,000 part-time nurses are eligible to voluntarily participate in the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP). The Superintendent agrees that the OHA has been in violation of the *Pension Benefits Act* since January 1, 1988 by denying part-time nurses access to the plan.

**February:** An agreement between the government and OPSEU brings 32,500 provincial civil servants, mostly women, \$83.8 million in pay-equity increases over two years, retroactive to January 1, 1990. The payments equal 2.7 per cent of the provincial payroll and cover more than 100 job classifications. Government still needs to address the issue of the roughly 700,000 other female workers, like hospital nurses, excluded from the legislation because it requires male-dominated jobs for comparison. Nursing is hugely female dominated.

A coroner's jury looking into the death of an 11-year-old boy denied admission to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children for two weeks because of bed closures recommends introducing scholastic bursary programs to reduce the critical nursing shortage. The jury recommends that nurses who train while receiving financial assistance should be required to work in the field for a mandatory period after graduation. The nursing shortage is deemed responsible for severe hardship on patients and parents at the hospital. Sick Kids' later implements a cash bonus plan for nurses to stem the tide of departures.

**April:** The Toronto Hospital Corporation, an amalgamation of Toronto Western and Toronto General hospitals, threatens to lay off 30 staff and close 76 beds to avoid a budget deficit of about \$14 million, after hospitals receive a directive from the Ministry of Health to balance their budgets by the end of the fiscal year. Hospital President **Vickey Stoughton** says no nursing jobs are affected, but not all who are leaving will be replaced.

**April 28:** ONA endorses the Day of Mourning for workers killed, disabled or injured on the job. Members are encouraged to wear a black ribbon.

**May 7-13:** Nursing's activist stance really shows up during Nursing Week. A number of Local members wear black ribbons to "mourn" for those nurses who have left the profession. Many members participate in interviews with local television, radio and newspapers, discussing why nurses are unhappy with their profession and why so many are leaving. T-shirts say, 'Nurses Care but it's not in the budget' and buttons feature a broken heart.

**June:** The *Health Professions Regulation Act (HPRA), Bill 178*, intended to replace the *Health Disciplines Act* receives first reading. *Bill 178* will govern all health professions including nursing, and establish legal and procedural mechanisms to determine whether nurses reported to the College are incompetent, guilty of professional misconduct or incapacitated. It requires Councils of each profession to establish a quality assurance mechanism.

ONA censures the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk because of the agency's continued violation of the collective agreement and harassment of nurses in Local 78 for union activity.

Following a meeting in May, the ONA Legislative Committee endorses 26 candidates for the provincial election, including the Premier, the Ministers of Health, Labour, Community and Social Services among 14 Liberals, four Conservatives and eight NDPers.

**August:** Ontario revs up for a provincial election after **Premier David Peterson** makes the call just three years after his landslide win in 1987. ONA members are urged to bombard candidates with questions about nursing issues.

More nurses are elected to hospital Boards of Governors. At McKellar General in Thunder Bay, three of the four ONA candidates on a slate of eight were elected, including **Harold Spears, Marg MacLeod** and **Doreen Bruce**. At Thunder Bay's Hogarth-Westmount Hospital, **Margaret Dyck** is elected. Two nurses were previously elected to the Board at Soldier's Memorial in Orillia.

**September:** Ontario hospitals are still dragging their heels on enrolling part-time nurses in the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan, although OHA President **Gordon Cunningham** circulates a memo making it clear they are obligated to sign up part-timers who meet the minimum enrolment requirements of the *Pension Benefits Act*. The Superintendent of Pensions in Ontario indicates that he is prepared to issue a compliance order against lagging hospital employers.

Pay equity continues to tax the resources of ONA's Government Relations Department. ONA has 228 files with the Pay Equity Tribunal Review Services, 48 files at the Tribunal and 11 proceeding to the Tribunal.

Now that Nursing Week is nationally established as the week of May 12 in honour of Florence Nightingales'

birthday, ONA's Nursing Week Committee is disbanded and the Communications Department takes responsibility.

Nurses at Local 186, Chappleau General Hospital, stage an information picket to show their dissatisfaction over working conditions. Overtime is at an all-time high for nurses in northern Ontario as a result of the nursing shortage.

**September 6:** Ontario residents elect an NDP majority government with 74 MPPs, shocking the Liberals and surprising NDP **Premier-elect Bob Rae**, who had been vocal in his support of nurses as Opposition leader.

**September 19:** The Ontario government announces it will not intervene in ONA's pay equity case against the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk at the Ontario Court of Appeal on September 24. In his first act as Ontario Premier-elect, **Bob Rae** drops government opposition to the Pay Equity Hearings. The Tribunal decides that public health and homes for the aged nurses in the region share the same employer as the regional police and could use the police as potential male comparators in pay equity negotiations. Former **Attorney General Ian Scott** withdraws from the case at the request of Mr. Rae. On September 27, the Ontario Court of Appeal upholds the decision supporting ONA's contention.

**October:** ONA censures the Regional Municipality of Peel because of violations of the collective agreement and harassment of nurses for union activity at Local 62, Sheridan Villa and Peel Manor.

**October 1:** A record 11 women are named to **Premier Bob Rae's** cabinet. **Evelyn Gigantes**, the new Health Minister, will later resign and **Frances Lankin**, a former provincial negotiator for OPSEU, will take the health portfolio.

**November 14:** ONA's Annual Meeting begins at Toronto's Skyline Hotel and installs **Eileen Davidson** as President. **Mary Jane Christianson** is voted President-Elect and **Ina Caissey** continues as Secretary-Treasurer. **Bob Rae** becomes the first Ontario premier to address ONA members at an annual meeting and tells delegates that nurses are the "heart and soul" of the health-care system.

Membership tops 55,000 for the first-time, reaching 55,428 and covering 420 Bargaining Units. Members approve a dues increase.

**December:** ONA is pleased with announced provincial proxy pay-equity initiatives that will help ensure 420,000 more Ontario women are covered by pay-equity legislation. ONA awaits a discussion paper on specific initiatives.

# 1991

**Eileen Davidson, RN, is President**

**February:** ONA comes to a tentative agreement with the OHA in central hospital negotiations. At a hospital sector meeting in early March, details of the contract are presented to Local presidents and contacts for them to take to members for discussion and a ratification vote.

Local 33 lifts the censure of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

**March 22:** ONA's 43,000 hospital nurses ratify the new two-year collective agreement with 176 hospitals in an 87-per-cent vote. The contract boosts nurses' salaries by up to 29.3 per cent, bringing senior RNs' salaries to \$52,000 at \$26.67 an hour, as of April 1, 1992. The contract also increases the span between minimum and maximum wage levels, and contains improvements in shift premiums, weekend premiums and responsibility pay. It is the second consecutive contract fully negotiated by ONA prior to expiration of the existing collective agreement, without resorting to binding arbitration.

ONA bids a fond farewell to **Jean Lowery**, founding member and inaugural President, who retires.

**April:** The OHA's 176 hospitals ratify the new central collective agreement, but begin making ominous threats of nurse layoffs, blaming the big wage increase. The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa threatens to cut 40 positions, with nurses' jobs comprising half of them.

The federal government announces changes to the *Unemployment Insurance Act* that limit access to regular benefits. The provincial government announces improvements to family leave provisions of the *Employment Standards Act*.

**April 2:** *The Regulated Health Professions Act*, now *Bill 43*, receives first reading.

**May:** The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses ends a strike of 6,000 nurses.

Nursing Week sees the Communications Department distribute public service announcement sound clips to all radio stations in the province. **Premier Bob Rae**, **City of York Mayor Fergy Brown** and **Environment Minister Ruth Grier** attend events.

ONA unveils its new Disputes Resolution II program at the Guelph Labour School as the first step in a plan to offer three-tier education to ONA members.

**May 29:** A landmark decision of the Pay Equity Tribunal

upholds all major grounds in ONA's 1989 complaint against the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk, finding the region violated the *Pay Equity Act* by bargaining in bad faith. The Tribunal finds that the job evaluation system used to determine pay-equity adjustments failed to identify and rectify systemic discrimination in compensating ONA members in health units and two homes for the aged.

ONA calls for the regulation of all facilities housing vulnerable adults in a submission to the Ontario Commission of Inquiry into Unregulated Residential Accommodation.

ONA urges members to voice their concerns regarding the proposed *Regulated Health Professions Act*, which receives second reading on May 29.

**June 26:** The Pension Commission of Ontario releases a decision determining that HOOPP is a multi-employer pension plan created pursuant to a trust agreement. As a result, the *Pension Benefits Act* requires HOOPP to be administered by a Board of Trustees, of whom at least one-half must be representatives of the members of the plan. The OHA appeals the decision.

**August 7:** **ONA President Eileen Davidson** tells a provincial legislative committee that the proposed *Regulated Health Professions Act* fails to recognize nurses as autonomous members of the health-care team and will drive even more nurses out of the profession. Davidson says the legislation will make it more difficult to recruit and retain talented young people for the profession.

**October:** **ONA President Eileen Davidson** says in a media release that proposed amendments to the *Regulated Health Professions Act* will jeopardize quality care and patient safety if they pass into law without important changes. ONA's chief concerns are that no amendments were tabled to ensure the accountability of nursing administrators for their practice and that, under the new legislation, nurses will be required to follow the direction of midwives and chiropodists, as well as doctors and dentists.

The non-union Kitchener-Waterloo General Hospital is found to have violated the *Labour Relations Act* by discriminating against over 100 unionized nurses from displaced obstetric and pediatric units at St. Mary's Hospital, Local 55. Local 55 members were displaced following a realignment of hospital services. The OLRB decision arrives after two years of hearings.

**November:** ONA comes to terms with the Ontario Nursing Homes Association on a first historic agreement for nurses in nursing homes that is negotiated centrally with 46 nursing homes. A ratification vote is slated for later in the month.

The Toronto Hospital Corporation says it may lay off

up to 350 staffers and close beds in Toronto General and Toronto Western because of a budget deficit. St. Michael's Hospital reports a crushing \$63-million deficit, the biggest of any hospital in Ontario. The problem is reflected across the province. The OHA says it needs an 8.6-per-cent increase or \$630.7 million next year. **Dennis Timbrell**, now OHA President, says that every one-per-cent in increased funding the hospitals don't receive will mean 1,700 fewer jobs and 475 to 500 fewer beds.

Nurses at the Toronto Hospital Corporation stage an information picket to protest the hospital's inefficient expenditures at the expense of staff.

Nurses at Huronia District Hospital also stage an information picket to protest an announced closure of 14 beds and the layoff of staff, including seven RNs.

**November 8:** ONA wins an unfair labour practice complaint against the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk after 44 days of hearings at the OLRB. ONA claimed that the region, its personnel department and home-care management conspired to break the Local by interfering in its business and threatening union activities. **Local President Erika Jambor** was fired for alleged wrongdoing. The precedent-setting settlement reinstates Jambor with full compensation for the 18 months it took to resolve and compensates home-care union steward **Carol Cairns** for time lost for stress. Cairns had been called in for weekly meetings to dissuade her from participating in union activities.

**November 26-28:** ONA's Annual Meeting at the Royal York in Toronto installs **Mary Jane Christianson** as President. **Ina Caissey** is acclaimed President-Elect and **Wayne Smith** is acclaimed as Secretary-Treasurer.

For the first time in ONA history, membership decreases, slipping slightly to 54,483, reflecting cuts to hospital funding and lay-offs. Part-time nurses make up 49 per cent.

**Assistant Deputy Minister of Labour Vic Pathé** gives the keynote address.

Voting delegates pass a constitutional amendment replacing the President-Elect position with Vice-President and approve an amendment that allows the President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer to run again for office for a maximum of two consecutive terms. A two-thirds' vote opens the door to ONA membership for allied personnel.

Long-time Education Director **Ioma Robinson** is made an honorary member of ONA, honouring 16 years of commitment to ONA continuing education and her crucial role in the history of ONA.

# 1992

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## Mary Jane Christianson, RN, is President

**January:** ONA pioneers a new group policy for AIDS coverage for its 55,000 members. The policy, reportedly the only one of its kind in North America, becomes effective on February 1 and draws tremendous media attention.

Nurses face major layoffs for the first time as hospitals face budget cuts in the provincial recession. ONA's decrease in membership causes a decrease in revenue, a direct result of layoffs.

**February:** Queen's Park announces a special fund to help laid off or displaced hospital workers. The Labour Adjustment Program will fund retraining workers for other tasks within the health-care system and pay for early retirement options in hospitals facing layoffs. The plan is established to counter reports of widespread layoffs and bed closures as hospitals across the province strive to stay within their budgets following a one-per-cent funding increase. In April, **Health Minister Lankin** commits \$30 million to the program, to be overseen by the Hospital Training and Adjustment Panel, which includes ONA COO **Heather Dolan**.

**March:** *ONA News* features a round-up on hospital budget crunches. As reports of layoffs flood in, ONA's Labour Relations Department goes on alert to ensure hospitals follow layoff and bumping procedures set out in the central collective agreement. Grievances are widespread as hospitals fail to comply.

**April:** An Ontario Women's Directorate survey says 59 per cent of nurses report having been assaulted during their careers and 35 per cent in the last 12 months. "Nurses must become assertive in demanding our right to a safe work environment," says **ONA President Mary Jane Christianson**. In May, **Health Minister Frances Lankin** considers setting up a task force.

The College of Nurses holds workshops for RNs for development of regulations governing nursing practice, pursuant to the new *Regulated Health Professionals Act*. ONA encourages members to attend.

ONA censures Kincardine General, Local 199.

**May 11-17:** Nursing Week recognizes the year-round contribution of staff nurses and distributes four public service announcements to radio stations across the province.

**June:** ONA Local 209 censures York County Hospital in Newmarket.

An Ontario Pension Commission ruling confirms that the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) is a multi-employer pension plan and must be jointly administered by a Board of Trustees, comprised equally of employer and employee representatives. In June, the province's Superintendent of Pensions orders the OHA to implement the joint-governance directive. The OHA Pension Committee establishes a sub-committee to investigate joint-governance models.

The Board of Directors approves the release of \$1 million from the Security Fund to continue ONA's ongoing battle for pay equity.

Nurses in Sarnia launch a spirited campaign to block the reinstatement of hospital privileges for a pediatrician convicted of sexual assaults on staff and patients' mothers at two Sarnia hospitals. Nurses at Local 234, St. Joseph's, and Local 234, Sarnia General, set up ongoing information pickets, wear pink ribbons, issue statements to local media and amass a petition of 2,600 signatures. That fall, both hospitals turn down the pediatrician's application for reinstatement of his hospital privileges and staff nurses are elated at the success of their campaign against workplace harassment.

**June 9-10:** Critical issues highlight discussions at the Joint Bargaining Objective Setting Meeting at Toronto's Regal Constellation Hotel for representatives from the hospital, community health and homes sectors.

**July 6:** ONA reissues the censuring, initiated in 1990, of the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk, Local 78 and it brings the number of agencies currently censured by ONA to six.

**July 27: Glenna Cole Slattery,** ONA's CEO since February, 1986, announces her resignation. In six years at ONA, Slattery piloted the union through two consecutive negotiated hospital collective agreements and established ONA as a strong political voice and lobbyist. A committee is struck to find a new CEO.

**August:** In another precedent-setting pay-equity victory for ONA, a Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal finds that Women's College Hospital, Sunnybrook Health Centre and North York General Hospital plan to use a job comparison system (SKEW) that fails to meet the standards of gender neutrality as required by the *Pay Equity Act*.

Arbitrator **Paula Knopf** maintains the status quo on language concerning the layoff issue in ONA's central hospital collective agreement. In her arbitration decision, Knopf says she is convinced there is a need to amend the language; however she advises the parties to design "mutually acceptable" language in the collective agreement. ONA stands by its interpretation "until such time as amended."

**November:** The College of Nurses' latest draft regulations on controlled acts and delegation under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* are regressive and ignore the concerns of registrants, says **President Mary Jane Christianson** commenting on amendments to the initial consultation document.

The bipartite Board of Directors at the Workplace Health and Safety Agency approves the hours of training for the core certification program for occupational health and safety representatives. ONA members are asked to take advantage of the training and ensure a labour-based approach is maintained.

**Ontario Treasurer Floyd Laughren** delivers bad news on transfer payments: hospitals will get a one-time two-per-cent funding increase of \$149 million in 1993-94, but because of an anticipated \$4.2-billion revenue shortfall, base operating budgets will be capped at 1992-93 levels for two years.

Members of **ONA Local 22** at the Peterborough County-City Health Unit say the partnership between public health nurses and the Peterborough community is in jeopardy. Nurses tell MOH officials that a reduction in public health nurse positions at the health unit restricts delivery of some programs and eliminates others. Nurses recommend securing the public health nurse role in health promotion, protecting public health nurse jobs and enabling public health nurses to participate on fiscal decision-making committees in public health units.

**November 18:** At the 19th ONA Annual Meeting in Toronto **Ina Caissey** becomes President, **Jane Cornelius**, Vice-President and **Connie Phelan**, Secretary-Treasurer. For the second time in ONA history, membership decreases, slipping to 53,506, reflecting hospital lay-offs. Part-time nurses make up 49.9 per cent. **Health Minister Frances Lankin** tells the membership that the input of nurses is necessary for the government to make the right decisions about health care. Delegates amend the constitution to allow, when necessary, allied health personnel to be organized and included in its Bargaining Units. This landmark decision means that health-care workers other than nurses can be included in ONA. President **Mary Jane Christianson** says, "This amendment allows the union to be in a very advantageous position to proactively respond to the inevitable shift in the health-care delivery system from hospital-based to community-based care." Delegates direct the Board to investigate the feasibility of joining the National Federation of Nurses' Unions. The meeting directs ONA to begin a pro-active organizing campaign.

**December:** A flyer decrying service and job cuts, distributed by members of Local 22 at the Peterborough County-City Health Unit, draws the ire of the employer and prompts an angry exchange of letters. The Board

of Health demands a public apology from ONA. **President Mary Jane Christianson** denies the flyer is misleading and refuses to apologize.

Region 3 Representative **Barb Wahl** spearheads a Kitchener-Waterloo campaign on the public health crisis as regional councilors prepare to chop 14 per cent from the community health budget of the unit, which is 39th out of 42 health units in per-capita funding for cost-shared programs. Wahl's article in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* highlights the devastating impact of budget cuts on community health services and argues that maintaining public health programs saves money in the long run. **ONA President Mary Jane Christianson** writes to the Health Minister saying the region proposes to eliminate 33.5 staff jobs and balance the budget on the backs of nurses.

**December 11:** The censure of the Sudbury and District Public Health Unit is lifted at the request of Local 87.

# 1993

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**Ina Caissey, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA censures St. Mary's General Hospital, Local 126, in Timmins.

**April:** ONA says a package of bills on advocacy – the *Advocacy Act*, the *Substitute Decisions Act*, the *Consent to Treatment Act* and the *Consent and Capacity Statute Law Amendment Act* – will protect vulnerable patients' guardians, health practitioners and advocates but not nurses. "We are far better able to help our clients when we are functioning in a secure and positive environment as it relates to our professional autonomy," says ONA.

ONA releases a document highlighting concerns that RNs will be required to carry out orders written or directed by midwives after the establishment of midwifery as a separate discipline under the new *RHPA*. ONA's Legislative Committee directs a strong lobbying effort at the College of Nurses to ensure the future of graduate nurses under the *RHPA*, arguing that controlled acts should be delegated to these nurses through regulation.

Elgin County council passes a resolution expressing displeasure at an arbitration decision awarding retro-active pay to nurses in Local 76. The agreement gives the nurses parity with area hospital RNs.

A survey of 1,800 female workers at the Toronto Hospital finds that many have experienced sexual harassment on the job. Two per cent of respondents report having been sexually assaulted and about 70 per cent say they've experienced some form of sexual harassment while on the job.

The College of Nurses' third draft on regulations covering controlled acts and delegation shows substantial improvement, but ONA still has concerns that the RPNs' base of knowledge is not adequate to perform some procedures that may be allowed under the *RHPA*.

Struggling with a fiscal crisis, the NDP provincial government proposes a "Social Contract" process, geared to shaving \$2 billion from the provincial payroll. ONA meets with public-sector and broader public-sector unions to discuss strategy. Unions say broad principles such as free collective bargaining, protection of pension plan rights and negotiation processes, no unilateral cuts to jobs and no reduction of pay-equity obligations, must be protected, and oppose rollbacks of public-sector wages and benefits. The government sets up six sectoral tables, including health and municipal.

**April 19:** **ONA President Ina Caissey** and **Dan Anderson** attend as the broader public-sector union coalition meets with the provincial government negotiating team. The government commits to freeze broader public-sector layoffs during Social Contract talks.

**April 27:** ONA's Board of Directors mandates ONA's participation in Social Contract negotiations. ONA joins the broader public-sector union coalition as a full participating partner.

**May:** ONA kicks off a marketing campaign with the *RN – Registered Nurse* lapel pin for clear visual identity in the workplace. A monthly newspaper column featuring ONA-sponsored health tips is picked up by weekly community newspapers across the country. The goal is to maximize the visibility of nurses and stake out a clear position in restructuring health care.

**May 9-15:** Nursing Week 1993 sees the launch of a media relations program focused at the community level. More than 130 radio stations in Ontario receive a series of six public service announcements for airing throughout Nursing Week, featuring nurses in different work settings.

**May 17:** ONA attends the health sectoral table as a full participant at Social Contract negotiations and places observers at municipal and social services tables.

**May 29:** **ONA President Ina Caissey** and **Vice-President Jane Cornelius** attend a rally at Queen's Park to deliver the message that the Social Contract could jeopardize important services delivered by public-sector workers. In newspaper and television interviews, Caissey expresses ONA's outrage at the Social Contract proposals.



**June 2:** Unions receive the government's final *Social Contract Framework Agreement*. While it contains language for job security and redeployment, it does not provide job guarantees for ONA members and contains an unacceptable clause mandating employers to unilaterally strip contracts to meet savings targets and removes incentives for employers to work with labour to find non-compensation cost savings.

**June 3:** Based on the final framework agreement and disturbed by the government's tight deadline for signing, the public-service union coalition withdraws from Social Contract negotiations, an action advocated by ONA.

ONA tells a standing government committee that pay-equity amendments proposed in *Bill 102, The Pay Equity Amendment Act* will erode any possibility of achieving pay equity for RNs. The government is using hard economic times to justify removing established rights to retroactive pay-equity adjustments and obligations to maintain pay equity. ONA insists the government is breaking a pledge to working women by moving the deadline for full pay equity to 1998.

**June:** Acting on direction from the 1992 Annual Meeting, ONA launches its first-ever proactive organizing drive, targeting remaining registered nurses in Ontario eligible for ONA membership and working at non-unionized agencies. Education Officers **Donna Hicks** and **Jim Fraser** begin organizing at a major suburban hospital in the Greater Toronto area.

**July:** ONA members overwhelmingly ratify a negotiated pay-equity agreement (97.4 per cent) reached with the OHA, capping six years of negotiations. The settlement affects 198 ONA Bargaining Units representing 45,370 registered nurses and brings RNs a lump-sum retroactive payment of \$4,100. A phased-in adjustment brings the maximum yearly salary from \$52,000 to \$54,210 by January 1, 1996. Pay-equity adjustments are exempt from wage-freeze legislation or Social Contract cutbacks. With the agreement ratified by the OHA, implementation begins at 171 participating hospitals. Further discussions ensue for institutions not covered in the agreement.

**July 15:** ONA signs a tentative Health Sector Framework Agreement with the provincial government and the coalition of five other unions representing broader public-sector health-care workers: SEIU, OPSEU, AAHP:0, ICTU and PAIRO. ONA members ratify by a resounding 96.2 per cent, but the OHA never signs and the agreement never comes into force.

**August:** ONA hires **Lesley Bell, RN, BScN**, former ONA President and Associate Director of Government Relations, as CEO.

Local 118, Toronto's Doctor's Hospital, achieves an equal voice in the redevelopment and future vision of their agency, slated to build a new facility when the Health Minister asks for union representation on a steering committee for the project. Hospital administration begins discussions without RN representation. Local 118 organizes letters of protest and **President Linda Ratushniak** contacts the Metro Toronto District Health Council. Within hours, Ratushniak is invited to sit on the committee, along with two union reps.

ONA calls for tougher health and safety legislation to end violence in the workplace. In a submission to the Ministry of Health on verbal and physical abuse of nurses and other health-care workers, ONA demands regulations to ensure that workers can refuse unsafe work and are protected from violent patients. ONA also calls for stronger criteria for granting authority for work stoppages under Section 46 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

ONA applauds the College of Nurses' final draft regulations for the self-initiation and delegation of controlled acts under the *RHPA*. ONA is strongly supportive of many of the items contained in the final version of draft regulations.

ONA announces a cooperative partnership with Group Mortgage Specialists to manage a Group Mortgage Benefit Plan for members that will help them arrange the mortgage financing at the lowest possible rates.

**August 10:** Efforts to reach a Social Contract Local agreement for all hospitals end as the OHA walks away from the health-sector table and the government's signing deadline elapses. Still, many other Local agreements are signed by the deadline, including nursing homes, homes for the aged and community health. Agencies that fail to reach Local agreements fall under the *Social Contract Act*, with higher savings targets and harsher cost-cutting measures.

**September 15:** ONA unveils its new Training and Conference Centre on the second floor at head office with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring **President Ina Caissey** and new **CEO Lesley Bell**.

**September 20:** A national lobbying effort is launched to make health care a priority issue in the federal election. ONA is front and centre getting the message out that the federal government must stop slashing health-care funding to the provinces. *Stop all Cuts to Medicare* is the theme, and National Medicare Day, October 14, is chief lobbying day. ONA kicks off the campaign with a media conference at its Toronto office, featuring a panel of representatives from the six unions involved: ONA, SEIU, OPSEU, AAHP:0, CUPE and ICTU.

A College of Nurses survey that reports a high incidence of patient abuse by nurses should be

interpreted cautiously, **ONA President Ina Caissey** tells the media. The well-publicized survey says that nearly half of the 1,600 Ontario nurses interviewed say they have witnessed some form of physical or verbal abuse of patients by other nurses.

**October 13:** ONA celebrates the 20th anniversary of its founding with a birthday cake. More celebrations follow at the 20th Annual Meeting.

**Jeannette Douglas, RN**, founding president and member of Local 105, wins a seat on the Port Hope Hospital Board of Trustees.

Information pickets by ONA members abound, as members go public with concerns about hospital rationalization and layoffs. Sympathetic media coverage generates public support and sparks the reversal of an unpopular administrative decision to close the surgical ward at Timmins District Hospital, Local 206.

**Elizabeth Clinton**, a staff RN at the York County Hospital, Local 209, wins a human rights bid to allow same-sex spouses to receive benefits.

**November 5:** ONA kicks off a province-wide media campaign with **President Ina Caissey** telling a media conference that for too long people have assumed more money means better health care. "We want Ontario residents to recognize they are not getting the care they deserve and to make them aware that the health-care system is deteriorating," she says. A 12-page full-colour publication entitled *Rethinking Health Care – the Ontario Nurses' Association Report on the State of Health Care in Ontario* is inserted into the *Toronto Star* and distributed to 800,000 households across Ontario.

**November 16-18:** At the 20th anniversary Annual Meeting at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, **Ina Caissey** is acclaimed as President, as are **Jane Cornelius** as Vice-President and **Connie Phelan** as Secretary-Treasurer. Ontario's new Nursing Co-ordinator, **Dr. Dorothy Hall** gives the keynote speech and says nurses must take ownership of their discipline and present a unified front to the rest of the world. **President Ina Caissey** comments that 1993 has been the most trying year in ONA's 20-year history. The membership raises dues by \$2.25 and members are told the Board has cut \$1.5 million in spending from the projected 1993 budget through increased conference calls, streamlining services, combining of departments and layoffs. A constitutional amendment establishes a retired membership classification and a resolution directs ONA to formulate a clear anti-racist, anti-discriminatory policy. ONA members take a break from the Annual Meeting to march on Queen's Park protesting cutbacks in health spending and the decreasing quality of health services. About 1,000 annual meeting attendees take part in an event covered

by all major media, with live reports on three major networks. Health Minister Ruth Grier holds up ONA's *Rethinking Health Care* for cameras and **President Ina Caissey** demands government action to cheers from the crowd.

**December 9:** Ontario becomes the first province to enact employment equity legislation requiring employers to hire and promote women, visible minorities, Aboriginals and people with disabilities. Draft regulations and guidelines are developed to help more than 17,000 employers comply with the legislation that covers 75 per cent of all Ontario workplaces.

# 1994

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## Ina Caissey, RN, is President

**January:** The Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) becomes a jointly trustee plan, administered equally by five union and five employer representatives. ONA representatives on the HOOPP Board include Chief Operating Officer **Heather Dolan** and Labour Relations Director **Dan Anderson**. The Board is co-chaired by a union representative. Employer and employee contributions to HOOPP rise the same day, the first increase in 20 years for plan members, but the second in less than a year for employers.

ONA joins with nursing unions across the country to fight the threat to Canada's health programs and develop a common nursing vision of health-care reform. Presidents and senior staff from every nursing union in the country meet at ONA's head office to discuss issues and concerns regarding Canada's health-care system. **ONA President Ina Caissey** tells the media, "Nursing union leaders are calling on the government of Canada to recommit to the principles of medicare."

The Hospital Training and Adjustment Panel is reborn as the Health Sector Training and Adjustment Program (HSTAP), as per the Social Contract. Two ONA staff members are named as union representatives on the Board, COO **Heather Dolan** and Labour Relations Director **Dan Anderson**.

**February:** ONA's Ad Hoc Organizational Structure Review Committee meets to begin discussions on ONA's organizational structure. The committee is to review ONA's current Local structure as outlined in the constitution and policy manual and make recommendations relating to membership, certifications, mergers, amalgamations, regions, Locals, voting and financial implications.

**February 11:** Health Minister Ruth Grier unveils

a plan to reinstitute the province's nurse practitioner program that will allow RNs with advanced preparation to work independently or as part of the health-care team, usually as the first point of contact for patients. ONA applauds the initiative. Grier commits to working with nursing organizations, colleges and universities to launch the plan within the year.

The Council of the College of Nurses of Ontario votes to maintain one regulatory college for RNs and RPNs which ONA strongly favored preserving.

**March:** A provincial Labour Ministry review suggests that the approximately 100 Workers' Compensation Board claims filed annually by Ontario nurses for injuries related to violence on the job are likely only the tip of the iceberg. The numbers may be much higher, due to lack of estimates for denied claims and claims with no lost time, uncertainty about psychological illnesses and the likelihood that many assaults go unreported.

Quality of care is suffering as demands on a decreasing workforce escalate in the homes sector, says an ONA 1993 survey of members working at provincial nursing homes and homes for the aged. The quality of patient care largely depends on the number and calibre of staff available and in many cases, the pool of workers isn't expanding to meet increasing demands on services.

**March 23:** Strong lobbying pays off as **Ontario Treasurer Floyd Laughren** announces that the province will hold the line on transfer payments to hospitals, schools and municipalities, ending weeks of speculation that transfer payments would be reduced. "It's heartening to see that we are being heard and that our lobbying efforts are not in vain," said **ONA President Ina Caissey**.

ONA criticizes the Ministry of Health's Joint Policy and Planning Committee (JPPC) for failing to solicit labour input before releasing its discussion document on the restructuring of Ontario's hospital system. Only one labour representative has a seat within the JPPC structure, on the Restructuring Sub-committee, one of 10 sub-committees of the Hospital Management Committee.

**April:** ONA's Board agrees to incorporate a group of social workers into a new Bargaining Unit at the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia, following an OLRB order, though the percentage of RNs is borderline. Board policy requires at least 80 per cent of a new certification to be RNs, but an interim policy change moves that down to 75 per cent. The Board allocates up to \$500,000 from the security fund to deal with the rationalization of health services and with the *Employment Equity Act* now inevitable, rescinds the position that members not participate on agency Employment Equity Committees.

Following an incident in which a nurse is stabbed with a hypodermic by a violent, HIV-positive patient, **ONA President Ina Caissey** calls for regulated protection from workplace violence for nurses and other health-care providers.

ONA receives \$500,000 from the Toronto Hospital, settling a 1985 grievance over extended tours filed on behalf of Local 97 nurses.

**May:** The first comprehensive study of Ontario's \$17.2-billion health-care system uncovers widely varying surgical rates at hospitals across the province. The \$2.5-million, 325-page *Practice Atlas, Patterns of Health Care in Ontario* developed by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Ontario (ICES) provides comprehensive information on Ontario health-care practices.

In an historic first, the leaders of every nurses' union in Canada deliver a united message in person to federal **Health Minister Diane Marleau** about the future of health care. Thirteen nursing leaders, including **ONA President Ina Caissey**, say the purpose of health reform should be to improve delivery of services at a reasonable cost.

An arbitration award reinstates 17 RNs at Bonnechere Manor Home for the Aged, Local 174, in Renfrew. More than three-quarters of RN staff had been laid off and replaced by RNAs the previous year in a cost-cutting measure. Arbitrator **Phillip Chodos** finds Bonnechere violated the RNs' collective agreement in "contracting out" their work to the less-qualified RNAs.

ONA refuses to commit any further resources to the Joint Provincial Policy Committee's Restructuring Sub-Committee because labour representation in the restructuring process is token. Many initiatives recommended by ONA and other unions have been dismissed out of hand, while government representatives continue to support employers and medical communities.

**May 9:** **Health Minister Ruth Grier** kicks off Nursing Week by announcing a permanent Ministry of Health (MOH) nursing unit and a Joint Provincial Nursing Committee. The initiatives are among six recommendations to come out of the final report of the MOH's Nursing Roundtable. **ONA President Ina Caissey** says, "We are delighted that an opportunity has been created to give nurses a greater voice in the way health care will be structured."

**May 11:** In a landmark human rights settlement, Toronto's Northwestern General Hospital agrees to pay seven black nurses a total of \$320,000 and to take steps to ensure a racism-free workplace. The mediated agreement ends a bitter four-year battle for the nurses, who took their case to the Ontario Human Rights Commission after they were fired, forced to quit or continually subjected to racial discrimination

at the acute-care facility. "This landmark settlement paves the way for removal of systemic discrimination from workplaces within the health-care system and ensures the rights of all workers who experience discrimination in their jobs," says **ONA Vice-President Jane Cornelius**.

**June:** The ONA Board reaffirms the union's stance against discrimination on any basis, supports the concept of an Equity Committee and allocates up to \$1 million from the Security Fund to develop short- and long-term strategies to deal with equity and human rights issues impacting on ONA. The Board censures Golden Manor Home for the Aged (Local 10), Timmins; the Regional Municipality of York (Local 16), and La Verendrye Hospital (Local 195). With a censure in effect, an interim pay-equity agreement is reached at Golden Manor.

ONA's Professional Committee issues midwifery guidelines to prepare RNs for the introduction of midwives into hospital practices. Members are urged to take a proactive role in developing agency-specific policies to ensure nursing's scope of practice is protected.

**July:** Ontario's air ambulance system gets a passing grade but must address serious organizational and staffing flaws says the provincial Air Ambulance Review Committee, chaired by University of Toronto nursing professor **Gail Donner**.

ONA member **Lisa Lytle** launches a new support and information group for health-care workers who suffer latex allergies.

**September:** To facilitate compliance with Ontario's employment-equity legislation which goes into effect on September 1, and promote zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination in the workplace, ONA's Board announces equity initiatives; these include a constitutional amendment for the 1994 Annual Meeting with a Human Rights Committee to be established in 1995 to develop plans and recommendations for the Board. ONA will host five equity caucus sessions at the annual meeting for members of designated groups to share ideas and strategy on human rights and discrimination in the workplace.

The ONA Board adopts a revised statement on entry to practice with the same basic position and wording amended for a more positive framework. ONA still maintains that for a BScN ever to be accepted as the entry to practice, the diploma nurse and her job must be protected.

**September 15-16:** ONA members get a comprehensive introduction to Ontario's new employment-equity law during a large-scale workshop at Toronto's Royal York Hotel. The multi-media workshop includes

presentations, panel discussions, videos, group activities and discussions on racism, discrimination and employment equity. Participants are educated on the roles and responsibilities with respect to workplace implementation of the legislation. Featured speakers are **Minister of Citizenship Elaine Ziemba** and **Employment Equity Commissioner Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré**.

ONA asks **Health Minister Ruth Grier** to convene a meeting of involved parties to look into allegations of human rights abuses and racial discrimination in the hospital sector. ONA indicates that the current arbitration system renders findings of discrimination in workplaces in the health-care system almost impossible and the Ontario Human Rights Commission refuses to investigate complaints from unionized nurses on the presumption that the union will represent them in complaints.

The ONA Board issues a censure of the City of Windsor as the employer for Huron Lodge Home for the Aged, Local 53.

ONA is granted leave to appeal an Ontario Divisional Court decision quashing two rulings of the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal regarding Glengarry Memorial Hospital.

ONA, the CNO, the RAO and the RPNAO collaborate on a joint submission to the Attorney General's Interim Advisory Committee Substitute Decisions Implementation Task Force. Their primary message is that nurses are the most qualified people to do mental capacity assessments.

**November:** ONA members from Local 198, Smith Falls Community Hospital, picket the board's decision to grant a \$30,000 raise to the hospital administrator.

**November 11:** Arbitrator Thorne releases the hospital sector central bargaining arbitration award covering nurses in 185 hospitals. It deals extensively with layoff and recall rights and the hospital rationalization process, and incorporates a number of human rights and other legislative issues into the hospital collective agreement. The award forms the basis for a three-year agreement, expiring March 31, 1996.

**November 15-17:** At ONA's 21st Annual Meeting in Toronto, **Jane Cornelius** becomes President, **Connie Phelan** becomes Vice-President and **Barb Conlon** is the new Secretary-Treasurer. For the first time in a number of years, all but one seat on the Board is contested in the election. Members vote 89-percent in favor of deleting a constitutional article which severely limits allied health membership in ONA and strongly support a new article defining allied personnel and expanding the criteria for their acceptance as members. An amendment to ONA's Constitution and Statement of Beliefs enshrining ONA's commitment to

zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination in the workplace is unanimously carried. One hundred and twenty members participate in the five equity caucus groups. A resolution to join the National Federation of Nurses' Unions is defeated, but a motion to increase dues carries.

Toronto artist **Gillian Fishman** is the winner of the competition organized by ONA's senior management and the staff union to commission a work of art commemorating ONA's 20th anniversary. Her water-colour painting, "The Negotiator" will hang in the lunchroom at ONA head office.

# 1995

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## Jane Cornelius, RN, is President

**January:** Eighteen RNs from Local 51, Glazier Medical Centre in Oshawa, brave the bitter cold in a 20-day strike. The RNs, who await first-contract arbitration, are without benefits and fighting a 10-per-cent reduction in the nurses' work hours.

ONA and other major provincial unions meet with **Health Minister Ruth Grier** to reinforce the need for an employment security agreement for the health-care sector. The unions tell Grier that there should be mandatory hiring from the Health Sector Adjustment Panel registry in the redeployment of workers affected by restructuring. "This is the most equitable method of addressing redeployment issues for those negatively affected by the reform and restructuring activities occurring in Ontario," says ONA President **Jane Cornelius, RN**.

Regulations that give one health profession authority over the scope of practice of another are absolutely wrong, ONA tells the Ministry of Health's Professional Relations Branch, which has been soliciting input from the health professions as it develops regulations for the new *Nursing Act*.

**February:** ONA makes a submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs Pre-Budget Consultations.

A planned redesign of St. Joseph's Health Centre in London to an American-style system has nurses of Local 45 fearing for their jobs and the quality of health care. ONA says the redesign would allow unregulated workers to replace nurses and have a negative impact on patient care. Layoffs are expected as the hospital tries to trim \$10 million from its operating budget. Nurses make up almost one-third of hospital employees and will see the bulk of the layoffs.

Statistics Canada reports that in 1993, there was one Canadian registered nurse working in the

profession for every 122 residents, up from one RN for every 143 residents in 1983. The majority of nurses continue to work in hospitals (67 per cent), followed by nursing homes (11 per cent) and community health (6 per cent).

A report by a **Metro Toronto District Health Council** committee calls for sweeping closures of beds and services at the city's 44 hospitals by 2000, even though demand for services is expected to increase 11 per cent. The report recommends closing acute and continuing care beds while increasing rehabilitation beds by 38 per cent.

Several hundred nurses from ONA **Local 113 Scarborough Centennial Centre** protest job cuts at the facility. The hospital says it will lay off 96 RNs, and replace them with less-educated generic unit assistants in an effort to cut costs.

ONA's Board of Directors censures **Hamilton Regional Cancer Centre** for continued poor labour practices. It has taken five years to implement legislated pay-equity adjustments.

ONA initiates a membership-driven Cultural Research Project to determine the concerns and priorities of nurses in Ontario and where members believe resources and efforts should be focused.

The Ontario government freezes transfer payments to hospitals, municipalities, universities and schools for the fiscal year beginning in April, and possibly the year after. Funding to the province's 221 hospitals would hold at \$7.28 billion per year. Funding for service agencies will also remain at the current \$2.1 billion for fiscal 1995-96 and social assistance rates will remain the same.

**February 3:** Hospital workers at the Ajax and Pickering Hospital, including **ONA Local 24**, hold an information picket to alert the public that proposed cuts in service will compromise patient care. The cuts are the result of the Minister of Health's refusal to cover an expected deficit of \$800,000 at the hospital. The shortfall results from the rapid growth rates in the Ajax and Pickering populations.

Without a reallocation of resources and better use of its highly skilled human resources, Ontario's health-care system may soon become unaffordable, **ONA President Jane Cornelius** tells the Ministry of Finance's 1995 Pre-Budget Round Table. Among ONA's recommendations: only the most effective and least-costly treatments should be used; the emphasis should be shifted from institutional to community care and better self-care resources are needed.

ONA calls on the provincial government to evaluate the impact of rationalization and restructuring on patient services, and to be cautious in its approach to change. **President Jane Cornelius** tells the Finance and Economic Affairs Standing Committee, "We have seen an enormous shift in the way we provide health

services; however, we know of no evaluation to show how patient care has been affected.”

**March:** ONA submits a response to the Report of the Training Resource Group established to develop new training programs for workers to be trained in personal support.

ONA members at **Local 163 Port Arthur General Hospital** in Thunder Bay, stage an information picket to protest planned layoffs of about 30 registered nurses. Hospital officials say the RNs will be replaced with RPNs.

The VON, Brant-Norfolk-Haldimand Branch, gives layoff notices to six RNs, members of **ONA Local 233**, working out of its Brantford office. VON says the layoffs are necessary due to changing referral patterns by the Brant and Haldimand-Norfolk Home Care Program. This is the third layoff in two years for RNs working with the VON.

ONA asks federal **Health Minister Diane Marleau** to reconsider a plan to eliminate Health and Welfare Canada's Principal Nursing Officer (PNO). The PNO has provided valuable advice and input into significant health and social policy positions since the 1950s. ONA feels this expertise must continue at the federal level to advise the government on industry reforms and to facilitate its efforts through the provincial front-line nursing bodies.

**April:** A new provincial government regulation allows for the implementation of awarded increases under *HLDA* where hearings were held after June 13, 1993 and the existing agreement expired prior to December 31, 1992.

**May:** ONA makes a submission to the Workers' Compensation Royal Commission Study.

ONA's Legislative Committee sends an election booklet with background information on campaign issues and questions for candidates to Bargaining Unit Presidents.

Central bargaining commences in the nursing homes sector with a Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining reached on May 31.

**June 5:** The Progressive Conservative Party, under leader **Mike Harris**, wins the Ontario election with a majority of seats in the legislature.

**June 8:** ONA receives a letter from the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council advising that the introduction of nurse practitioners based on the use of exemption regulations under the *RHPA* does not serve the public interest.

**June 26:** Agreement is reached in central pay equity negotiations in central nursing homes bargaining, resolving all monetary matters for the contract period ending December 31, 1995.

**July:** Hearings commence on whether there should be a separate governing college for registered practical nurses (RPNs); RNs and ONA strongly oppose the proposal.

**August:** The Divisional Court releases a judgment saying that Regulation 454/95, permitting arbitrators to award compensation increases up to June 14, 1993 in cases where the previous agreement had expired on or before December 31, 1992, is constitutional. The Court of Appeal later upholds the decision.

**October:** ONA conducts Shared Reality/Shared Vision Workshops in all 14 regions to obtain a region-by-region analysis of Local circumstances.

**October 26:** ONA begins a media campaign with **Medicare can be Saved** ads in 43 daily newspapers. The public is encouraged to call a toll-free number to receive a copy of ONA's *Rethinking Health Care*.

**November:** The Deputy Minister of Health announces that the provincial government will provide \$1 million for the **Province Wide Nursing Project**, providing nurses in 14 sites with the opportunity to test the latest nursing therapies and move research more quickly into the field.

**November 21-23:** At the ONA Annual Meeting at the Royal York **Jane Cornelius** is returned as President, **Barb Wahl** defeats the incumbent to become Vice-President and **Barb Conlon** returns as Secretary-Treasurer. In her keynote speech, Dr. Judith Shindul-Rothschild, urges ONA to unite with other nursing organizations to fight for Medicare. Members approve a dues increase, a motion to open Board meetings to members and a motion to have regional representatives elected at fall regional meetings in appropriate years.

**December:** The Progressive Conservative government introduces *Bill 26, The Savings and Restructuring Act*, intended to provide the provincial cabinet with sweeping powers in health care. The government creates the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

ONA's Cultural Research report – to provide information and membership direction for ONA leaders in decision-making and strategic planning – is presented to the Board of Directors. The report examines the overall values and priorities held by the membership.

# 1996

**Jane Cornelius, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA's government relations officers develop a response to *Bill 26, The Savings and Restructuring Act*. ONA and the RNAO hold a joint media conference to speak against the provincial government's controversial omnibus legislation.

Health Minister Jim Wilson unveils reforms to long-term care, including the "streamlining" of 74 home care and placement coordination programs in 43 Community Care Access Centres, the first of which are to open in October.

**January 22-23:** Cultural Research presents survey results for bargaining objectives to the Joint Bargaining Objective Setting Meeting at the Royal York in Toronto. Overall bargaining objectives for 1996 central and Local bargaining are, in priority order, job security, wages, retirement package and leave issues, and benefits.

**February:** ONA's Board of Directors approves a proactive organizing budget.

**March 7:** The Jolliffe award resolving central issues in homes sector negotiations for 93 nursing homes is issued.

**March 8:** Bargaining proposals for Central Hospital Negotiations are tabled with the Ontario Hospital Association in advance of April bargaining dates.

**March 25:** The Joint Provincial Nursing Committee meeting receives a report on Nursing Education from the Ministry of Education. Four nursing programs have closed permanently or suspended intake in the previous year; 2,519 RN diploma students and 1,293 RPN students are expected to graduate in 1996. Figures show only 45 per cent of 1994 graduates, whether RNs or RPNs, were able to find employment in 1994, down from 82 per cent in 1989.

**March 31:** The *Social Contract Act* expires; remaining inequities caused by the *Act* must be addressed at the bargaining table. Impact on bargaining is reduced.

**April 1:** The passage of *Bill 26* establishes the Health Services Restructuring Commission with a mandate to direct the restructuring of hospitals and advise the minister of health on all matters related to the health-care system and restructuring of health-care services. Schedule "J" of *Bill 26* on Pay Equity affects the contents and implementation of the pay-equity

deal reached on June 25, 1995. Most nursing home members will only receive the first-year adjustment of the multi-year agreement.

The Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining for Central Hospital Negotiations is finalized, binding 173 hospitals to the round of central bargaining. Just under 95 per cent of the 183 hospitals in which ONA has bargaining rights are part of the process.

**April 24:** President Jane Cornelius reacts angrily when the OHA tables contract proposals for a 20-per-cent cut in wages in Central Hospital bargaining.

**May 2:** Key findings of the Cultural Research study are released at a Queen's Park media conference. ONA member research reveals that 81 per cent say that patients are now at risk because of the way in which restructuring is being done; 95 per cent of members say that the system needs to be restructured and reformed; and 95 per cent of members say that nurses had the knowledge to make the system more productive and efficient.

The May newsletter is an extensive look at Cultural Research, entitled *Dialogue on Health Reform*, with feedback from 20,000 RNs. The newsletter is distributed to all ONA members, thousands of decision-makers and opinion leaders in the health-care system including MPPs, editorial boards, CEOs of hospitals and other health-care agencies and provincial associations. Findings form the basis of a successful radio ad campaign launched during Nursing Week alerting the public to RNs' concerns that patients are currently at risk in the health-care system.

**May 6-12:** This year's Nursing Week theme is 'Ask a Nurse,' as determined by the Canadian Nurses Association.

**May 10:** The Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining in the homes sector is signed and central proposals exchanged.

**June:** ONA conducts a Stakeholder Conference attended by 40 senior decision-makers from government, the Ontario Medical Association, the OHA, health professionals associations, hospital CEOs, District Health Councils and consumer advocacy groups.

ONA's Board of Directors changes the name of the Legislative Committee to the Advocacy and Lobbying Committee.

ONA censures Scarborough Centenary Health Centre, Local 113.

Bargaining commences in the homes sector, moving to conciliation on June 19.

Between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996 ONA organizes and certifies 12 Bargaining Units covering 248 employees in total.

**August:** ONA unveils its *Vision of an Integrated Health Delivery System* in a summer *Dialogue* magazine, sent to thousands of key decision makers and opinion leaders in health care.

**September:** ONA begins a province-wide community dialogue on the survival of Medicare, holding town hall meetings in 28 communities across Ontario and promoting the Integrated Health Delivery System.

**October:** ONA files for an injunction to prevent the layoffs of 387 RNs – about 15 per cent of the hospital's nursing staff – at the Toronto Hospital.

More than 500 Local leaders are organizing to mobilize in the **Save Medicare** campaign. ONA releases an **Open Letter to Premier Mike Harris** requesting meeting to dialogue on health-care reform.

**November:** ONA's injunction bid for Toronto Hospital nurses fails, and ONA Locals 97 and 155 hold a candlelight vigil to protest.

Mediation in Central Hospital Negotiations fails to find a resolution despite working with mediator **Victor Pathé**.

**November 19-21:** The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting installs **Jane Cornelius** as President, **Barb Wahl** as Vice-President and **Barb Conlon** as Secretary-Treasurer, all by acclamation.

In his keynote address, **Dr. Duncan Sinclair**, Chair of the Provincial Health Services Restructuring Committee, tells delegates that failure to change the status quo is the greatest threat to Medicare. On the opening day, more than 1,000 RNs and supporters rally at Queen's Park and demand a meeting with Premier Mike Harris. After difficult discussions, members endorse the proposed Organizational Transformation as the process to redesign the organization to better meet changing organizational needs. The incoming Board is directed to look at strike pay with a view to increasing it.

# 1997

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## Barb Wahl, RN, is President

**January:** Two months of regional workshops on Organizational Transformation begin.

ONA's Board of Directors unanimously elects **Barb Wahl** as 1997 President after the resignation of Jane Cornelius. Board member **Enid Mitchell** becomes Vice-President.

**February 14:** As part of the local mobilization for the

survival of Medicare, Region 5 RNs release a report card showing the Harris Government is failing at health-care reform. RNs tell numerous stories of cases where patients are being compromised unnecessarily because of uncoordinated health-care reform.

**April:** Eight project teams are named in the **Organizational Transformation Project**.

An ONA-commissioned Pollara public opinion poll demonstrates a high degree of public support for RNs and integrated health delivery. Ninety-four per cent of Ontarians believe RNs play an important role in ensuring quality health care; 92 per cent believe health care would improve with better coordination between health agencies and 85 per cent oppose replacing RNs with generic workers.

**May:** ONA releases the Pollara polling information during **Nursing Week 1997** and generates significant media coverage. Posters and brochures are distributed to Locals; a billboard campaign brings information to selected strategic communities.

An arbitration award gives Central Nursing Homes members a contract with increases in layoff notice to 90 days, retraining reimbursement up to \$2,500 and a wage increase of one per cent effective January 1, 1997.

ONA provincial leadership meets with **Health Minister Jim Wilson** the same day as details of the new agreement between Ministry of Health and the Ontario Medical Association are released, with a one-and-a-half per cent increase for the next three years. The cost is estimated at more than \$1 billion, consuming the anticipated savings of hospital restructuring. ONA sends a blunt message to the Minister saying ONA "will ensure the public understands that if the government does not reverse its decisions, then Medicare will collapse."

**June 3:** **Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer** tables *Bill 136, The Public Sector Transition Stability Act* impacting labour relations in the broader public sector with regard to amalgamations of municipalities and local boards, or dissolutions of local boards. ONA responds with a message to the membership that this legislation will allow employers to replace RNs and take away their voice as champions of quality patient care.

**July:** ONA calls for a public inquiry into patient care examining the impact of government health-care policy and hospital budget cuts following patient deaths at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre in Toronto.

ONA engages in ongoing discussions with the Canadian Red Cross and the federal government about how ONA members at the Red Cross will be affected by the removal of blood system operations from the Red Cross.



# 1998

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## Barb Wahl, RN, is President

**President Barb Wahl** and **CEO Lesley Bell** respond to the final report of the Health Services Restructuring Commission for Metro Toronto, noting that it fails to create coordination and linkages between agencies and sectors and prevents the development of an integrated system for health services in the province.

**August:** ONA's Board of Director's lifts the censuring of three health agencies: the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk in Simcoe; Kincardine and District General Hospital in Kincardine and Timmins and District Hospital in Timmins.

An opinion editorial by **President Barb Wahl** on integrated health services is published in five major Ontario daily newspapers.

**September:** The Ontario government is ordered by the courts to implement pay-equity raises for women in the broader public sector.

**October:** ONA launches its *Care Plan to Save Medicare* to keep Ontario's health-care system rooted in the principles of the *Canada Health Act*.

**October 29: Public Sector Transition Stability Act (Bill 136)** is proclaimed, bringing into effect changes to the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act* (HLDAA) including a provision terminating arbitration proceedings that commenced prior to the new legislation coming into effect, and regulations with regard to the labour relations consequences of restructuring taking place in the hospital, municipal and educational sectors.

**November:** The Toronto branch of the Canadian Red Cross ratifies its collective agreement, including unparalleled job-security language.

**November 18-20:** Part I of ONA's Annual Meeting takes place at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The meeting is staged in two parts to conclude work to amend the constitution to reflect Organizational Transformation. **Barb Wahl** is President, **Enid Mitchell** Vice-President and **Anita Henson**, Secretary-Treasurer. Following the Annual Meeting the Strategy Team identifies five core areas of activities: Governance; External Vision Campaign; Strategic Information Systems; Learning and Operations System. About 500 members, staff and supporters rally at Queen's Park and deliver ONA's *Saving Medicare Plan* to Premier Mike Harris, wrapping up a month-long campaign which presented the plan at media conferences in 13 communities across the province.

**December 17-18:** Part II of ONA's Annual Meeting is held at the Royal York Hotel, with debate and amendments to the proposed constitution before all 22 articles carry.

**January:** ONA's Board lifts the censure of the Toronto Hospital, General Division.

Voluntary mergers of Locals and Bargaining Units commence.

**February:** ONA's Board censures Comcare (Canada) Health Services Inc. due to stonewalling during negotiations with Local 146.

In partnership with four unions representing hospital workers, ONA negotiates a four-year agreement with Toronto hospitals, providing a framework for future negotiations and the treatment of hospital employees as restructuring continues.

ONA and other nursing groups agree that new legislation enabling primary health care nurse practitioners to perform additional duties will open the door for expansion of collaborative practices between nurse practitioners and physicians and expand choice in primary health-care services.

**March:** The Labour Board orders first-contract arbitration in ending the 17-week-old strike of Local 146 against Comcare (Canada) in Kingston.

A celebration team, mandated to develop a process to celebrate ONA's successes during the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is selected and begins meeting.

**March 30:** The Central Nursing Home Team begins negotiations on a without-prejudice-basis without a Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining.

**April:** In partnership with five unions, ONA negotiates a three-year framework agreement with Ottawa hospitals for future negotiations and treatment of employees during restructuring.

An ONA pilot project determines that regional offices can connect for work through the Internet and a plan is developed to network all regional offices through the Internet by the end of August 1998.

**April 1:** The Central Nursing Home Team concludes an 18-month collective agreement running to June 30, 1999.

**May:** ONA kicks off Nursing Week by releasing a position paper on the state of nursing in Ontario. ONA calls on the provincial government to invest \$5 million and create 7,000 new nursing positions at a joint media conference with six provincial nursing groups. ONA also unveils the *Nurses' Bill of Rights* at media conferences

around the province throughout the week.

ONA wins a certification vote at Branson General Hospital in Toronto, adding 360 new members.

An arbitration award under the *HLDA* brings stronger job security to ONA members in the hospital sector and a two-per-cent retroactive pay increase in a contract covering April 1, 1996 to March 31, 1998, concluding two years of bargaining between ONA and the OHA.

**President Barb Wahl** is the guest on Global TV's *Focus Ontario*.

The membership ratifies a collective agreement for 1,000 RNs working at 95 provincial nursing homes, effective until June 30, 1999.

**June:** ONA's Board approves the televoting process for 1998 provincial positions and voicemail access for all Local presidents. All bona-fide members can vote by telephone for a President, First Vice-President and one of five Vice-Presidents.

RNs and clerical workers from St. Elizabeth Health Care, Local 57 take to the picket line after negotiations with the employer break down.

**July:** **President Barb Wahl** writes a letter to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children protesting the layoff of intensive care nurses who hold a diploma, rather than a baccalaureate.

**August:** ONA settles a proxy pay-equity plan with 14 branches of the VON in which one per cent of the previous year's payroll will be used to close the pay-equity gap at each branch.

ONA wins a precedent-setting case at the OLRB under *Bill 136*, allowing the OLRB to order a professional Bargaining Unit. The OLRB can order a separate Bargaining Unit for registered nurses and graduate nurses in newly amalgamated or merged corporations.

All ONA Local Coordinators receive access to voicemail boxes in regional offices.

**September:** The mandates of ONA staff teams are revised to address gaps and bring further clarity to the work of teams, followed by a report to the Board of Directors.

Four Eastern Ontario branches of the VON are locked out by the employer – Renfrew County (Local 49), Lanark (Local 67), Brockville/Leeds/Grenville (Local 67) and Eastern Counties (Local 42) – after three months of conciliation, talks break down in August.

The Board of Directors censures St. Elizabeth Health Care in Durham, Local 57, and lifts the censure of Scarborough Centenary Health Centre, Local 113.

The Board adopts a political action plan calling for ONA and members to speak out about the damage done to the health-care system by the Harris government. ONA issues a list of proposals to improve

the Ontario health system and patient care.

**Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer** establishes the Nursing Task Force to examine how nursing services can improve the health system. The task force includes representatives of the ministry and nursing, including **ONA President Barb Wahl**.

The College of Nurses of Ontario passes a requirement that as of 2005, all registered nurses entering the profession must hold a baccalaureate. ONA works to ensure there is no further reduction in employment opportunities for diploma-prepared nurses as a result.

**October:** Members of Local 57, St. Elizabeth Health Care in Durham, ratify a settlement after 19 weeks on strike.

ONA wins a *Bill 136* vote against OPSEU at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and gains 420 members.

An ONA media release states that the government provision of \$32.8 million for emergency services will help, but not resolve the problem.

**November:** The VON at three of the four locked-out Eastern Ontario branches – Renfrew County (Local 49), Lanark (Local 67) and Brockville/Leeds/Grenville (Local 67) – decide to terminate their visiting home nursing programs.

**November 21-23:** **ONA's First Biennial Convention** celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization.

The first televote, a total membership election where each member can vote by a telephone call, elects **Barb Wahl** as President, **Enid Mitchell** as first Vice-President and five vice-presidents with portfolios.

An ONA-sponsored poll of Ontario residents finds 88 per cent are concerned about the state of health care in Ontario and think patients are released too early from hospital. Seventy-three per cent believe hospital funding cuts have put patients' lives at risk.

**December:** The ONA Board lifts a five-year censure of La Verendrye General Hospital in Fort Frances at the request of Local 195.

# 1999

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## Barb Wahl, RN, is President

**January:** ONA's new governance structure comes into force with changes to the provincial and Local structures, reducing regions from 14 to five.

Three-day Local Design Workshops are held to help members determine how to accomplish work at the 62 newly structured Locals.

*ONA News* becomes the glossy, full-colour, *ONA Vision* magazine.

**February:** ONA's first Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) is held with 69 Local Coordinators attending. Local Coordinators will meet three times each year.

The Algoma VON loses its bid to provide in-home nursing services in Sault Ste. Marie.

The ministry of health releases the Nursing Task Force Report which calls for an infusion of \$375 million to health care before 2000 to put nursing jobs back into the system. ONA calls on the government to implement the recommendations as written.

The federal government allocates \$25 million for a nursing research fund to finance research of critical issues related to nursing and delivery of health care.

**March:** An ONA survey of emergency nurses at 18 hospitals indicates as many as five patients will routinely wait more than 24 hours in the emergency department for a bed.

ONA's Board approves 1999 election plan to allocate resources to four key ridings where ONA can have significant impact, including hiring campaign managers in each riding to supervise volunteers and canvass directly.

*ONA Pulse*, a bi-weekly internal newsletter, is born. Along with *ONA Vision* it replaces *ONA News*. The first-ever ONA news bulletin, *ONA Pulse* is distributed to Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit presidents for posting at the Local level.

Members of Local 7, Brant Community Care Access Centre in Brantford, are locked out by the employer after negotiations break down. Members gave a 92-per-cent strike mandate before being locked out.

**April:** ONA responds forcefully to *Blueprint*, released by the provincial government, to put the health-care system "back on track." The ONA response paints the document as empty promises and points to the government's failure to implement the recommendations of the Nursing Task Force.

ONA urges members to pledge four hours for health care in the upcoming provincial election campaign.

Local 7, Brant Community Care Access Centre, ratifies a settlement after a five-week lockout.

*ONA Vision* quarterly magazine is launched, replacing *ONA News*.

**May:** Members ratify a CCAC settlement during group bargaining for a contract running until December, 2000. It includes improvements in benefits, pay-equity raises, and a raise in evening and night shift premiums.

ONA responds to the provincial budget, saying half a billion dollars has been dedicated to hospital bricks and mortar with no indication of how the government will resolve the crisis in health care.

**First Vice-President Enid Mitchell** appears on City-TV's *Live at Five*.

The Central Nursing Home Bargaining Team meets with employers and finalizes the Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining. Bargaining continues during the week of May 24.

**May 10:** This year's Nursing Week theme is 'Nurses in Their Communities, Fighting for Health Care.' A media conference launches Nursing Week and political action campaign to defeat the Harris government, the first time ONA has tried to influence the outcome of a provincial election. A video, *Risky Business: Being A Patient in Ontario*, is viewed and sent to media. ONA's political message drives home nurses' concerns about health care and the safety of patients.

**June 3: Premier Mike Harris** is re-elected with a reduced majority.

**June 14:** Mediation begins in central nursing home bargaining.

**July:** ONA's Board provides \$45,000 from the Security Fund to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses to assist in covering a \$120,000 court-ordered payment to medical charities for defying back-to-work legislation.

**August: ONA President Barb Wahl** appears as sole guest panelist on Global-TV's *Focus Ontario*.

**September:** ONA members participate in the Labour Day Parade.

The Hospital Central Negotiating Team begins negotiations with the OHA.

Members and staff march from Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer's Toronto office to Queen's Park to protest the privatization of health care.

ONA representatives meet with **Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer** to outline the concerns of front-line nurses and proposed solutions.

ONA lifts its censure of St. Elizabeth Health Care in Durham, Local 51.

The ONA Board approves a \$50,000 donation and \$1-million loan from the Security Fund to the Quebec Nurses Union to demonstrate support for its work to preserve health care.

**October:** ONA urges quick implementation of recommendations arising out of a Coroner's Inquest into patient deaths at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. The second televote takes place October 29-November 1, re-electing **Barb Wahl** as President and electing **Brenda Halihan** as First Vice-President.

**October 30:** The Hospital Central Negotiating Team reaches an impasse in negotiations with the OHA.

**November:** PCM delegates recommend that Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents help design future PCMs and biennial conventions.

The second-degree murder charge against ONA member Gita Proudman is withdrawn by the Crown.

ONA releases *Voices from the Journey*, a special publication on the Vision statement and the Organizational Transformation process.

**December:** ONA's Board censures University Health Network in Toronto, Local 97 and lifts the censure on Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington.

# 2000

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**Barb Wahl, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA affiliates with the **Ontario Health Coalition** on an interim basis following a unanimous vote of Local Coordinators at the January PCM.

Mediation between Hospital Central Negotiating Team and the OHA ends in a three-year settlement with wage increases ranging from 6.7 to 31 per cent.

Central hospital settlement is ratified by 88 per cent of the ONA members voting.

**February:** ONA's strategic outcomes are finalized by the Board.

**March:** ONA joins the **Coalition for Primary Health Care**, a group of 11 health-care provider and patient advocate groups.

The Health Services Restructuring Committee issues its final report and its four-year mandate ends.

**President Barb Wahl** meets with federal **Finance Minister Paul Martin**.

**April:** ONA wins a *Bill 136* vote with non-unionized nurses at Salvation Army Grace Hospital and at Scarborough Grace Hospital.

ONA produces a video about the case of member Gita Proudman, *The Gita Proudman Story*. Proudman faced charges of second-degree murder in the death of a severely disabled newborn patient.

**May 8-14:** This year's Nursing Week theme is 'Ontario Nurses – Leaders in Health Care.' The Royal Bank donates \$20,000 to support Nursing Week activities. ONA's bilingual, calendar, information kit, radio ad and brochure support the theme.

An E. coli outbreak begins in Walkerton, Ontario after contamination in the water system goes unreported. ONA Local 4 nurses work through the outbreak.

**June:** ONA meets with representatives of the government, the OHA, employees and other unions to resolve human resources issues before management and governance of psychiatric hospitals are transferred to public hospitals.

Health-care activist Shirley Douglas urges PCM delegates to join with the groundswell fighting to preserve Medicare. ONA makes a video of her speech available to members.

**July:** An ONA media release calls attention to the provincial government burying an actuarial report that proves primary care reform would result in major cost savings to the health-care system.

Between June 1999 and July 2000, ONA lobbies the provincial government extensively to extend the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act* (HLDAA) to cover the community sector, apply successor rights in divestment of work from the hospital sector to the homes sector or to hospitals expanding into homes-sector work, obtain successor rights in relation to Request for Proposal (RFP) winners, challenge the RFP managed-care approach to community care and use information from Coroner's Inquests to improve staff and client interests.

**August:** In a media release, ONA welcomes the latest provincial funding announcement for emergency rooms but says it is not enough to fix the crisis.

**September:** As the Ontario legislature opens for the fall session, ONA issues a release saying it is keeping its eye on the government to ensure that federal monies allocated for health care are used for health care.

**October:** ONA members rally across the province to draw attention to health care as an issue in the upcoming federal election.

**October 26:** The third televote begins to elect five vice-presidents.

**November:** ONA demands the provincial government act on the recommendations coming out of the Joshua Fleuelling Inquest, including implementing the recommendations of the 1999 Nursing Task Force.

**November 20:** Equity caucuses precede the ONA Biennial Meeting at the Royal York.

**November 21-23:** ONA's Biennial Convention takes place with the theme 'We Can Make it Better.' Convention highlights include the launch of the **Not Enough Nurses Campaign: Your Tax Cuts at Work** in coordination with the Centre for Social Justice and other groups aimed at drawing attention to the impact of tax cuts on health

care. Delegates take home campaign buttons and postcards. Walkerton nurses are honoured and their photo runs in *The Globe & Mail*. A panel discussion on trends and issues in human rights is organized by the Human Rights and Equity caucus. ONA's redesigned website is launched, and members vote to affiliate with the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions and, as a corollary, the Canadian Labour Congress.

**December:** A new ONA orientation video is mailed to all Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents.

# 2001

## Barb Wahl, RN, is President

**January:** President Barb Wahl and CEO Lesley Bell meet with Ontario Chief Nursing Officer Kathleen McMillan and assistant deputy minister John King to discuss nursing retention, workload and education and how they relate to bargaining.

**February:** President Barb Wahl presents ONA's views on *Bill 159, The Personal Health Information Privacy Act*, to a standing committee of the provincial legislature.

ONA Vice-Presidents and members appear on CBC's *Counterspin*.

ONA and other unions participating in the Pay Equity Charter Challenge decide to continue with the case.

ONA co-sponsors province-wide long-term care forums.

**March:** Hospital central negotiations are underway with the OHA and wages, benefits and quality of worklife are priorities.

President Barb Wahl presents to overflow an crowd at the final long-term care forum at Queen's Park.

The Royal Bank of Canada announces it will partner with ONA for Nursing Week, with donations to ONA Locals and a \$20,000 lump sum for provincial activities.

**April:** Talks between Community Care Access Centres' Central Negotiating Team and the employer break down when the employer fails to present a monetary offer putting ONA CCAC nurses on par with other sectors.

The Nursing Homes Central Negotiating Team reaches a tentative contract settlement with nursing home employers.

Hospital bargaining breaks down over key priorities: wages and benefits.

ONA wins a *Bill 136* vote to represent all nurses at

St. Joseph's Health Care in Hamilton, retaining 1,038 members and gaining 174 new ones.

The first issue of ONA's new *Front Lines* membership publication is launched.

**May:** Members in the homes sector ratify settlement. Mediation talks with the OHA break down.

**May 1-2:** ONA's **May Day! May Day! Nursing in Crisis!** campaign brings ONA members to the streets to demand the government address workload concerns and the nursing shortage. **President Barb Wahl** and ONA members deliver more than 11,000 signatures on a "Not Enough Nurses" petition to Premier Mike Harris.

**June:** **President Barb Wahl** squares off with OHA President David MacKinnon on TVO's *Studio 2*.

Signatures on "Not Enough Nurses: Your Tax Cuts at Work" petitions reach 13,000.

Requests for magenta ribbons in support of the **May Day! May Day! Nursing in Crisis!** campaign and bargaining reach 42,000.

ONA gains 381 new members between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001 at Lakeridge Health Corporation, Finlandia Nursing Home in Sudbury, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Haldimand War Memorial Hospital.

Hospital Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents vote overwhelmingly to continue the **May Day!** campaign throughout the summer. Arbitration is tentatively scheduled for late fall.

**July:** The hot weather doesn't stop members from continuing with their successful **May Day! May Day! Nursing in Crisis!** campaign by handing out leaflets, writing letters and displaying campaign buttons, magenta ribbons, t-shirts, bumper stickers, posters and lawn signs.

More than 50 letters are sent to ONA allied groups to solicit their support for our campaign. Many letters of support are received.

ONA speaks out about the lack of success of the province's Family Health Network Pilot Projects, saying the chief concern is the failure to use nurse practitioners to ease Ontario's doctor shortage.

ONA issues a media release responding to the coroner jury's report into the death of Sanchia Bulgin, a patient at the Hospital for Sick Children. ONA is extremely disappointed that the report contains no recommendations to address the issue of nurse staffing in Ontario hospitals.

ONA says the OHA 2001 Report Card doesn't adequately reflect the real impact of cuts to nurse staffing and hospital funding.

ONA states the provincial government's six-page questionnaire asking Ontarians their views on the health-care system won't do much good because the

government has a history of not listening to or utilizing feedback from health providers and the public.

**August:** ONA holds a one-day discussion group with new members to learn about the challenges and realities they face.

**ONA First Vice-President Brenda Hallihan and Vice-President Marcia Taylor** lead a discussion with several American nurses and health-care consumers who want to learn more about the Canadian health-care system.

ONA questions the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee's progress report, which states that the government's "funding initiatives have potentially resulted in the equivalent of up to 12,833 additional nursing positions." These positions are not filtering to the front lines where they are needed most, ONA says.

**September:** ONA meets with the OHA to discuss the arbitration phase for the Hospital Central Collective Agreement.

ONA begins a series of editorial board meetings with the editors and publishers of major daily newspapers in Ontario to influence the editorial position and encourage support for nurses' efforts at arbitration.

ONA members from Community Care Access Centres overwhelmingly ratify a central agreement, which provides salary increases and benefit improvements.

The ONA Board of Directors donates \$5,000 to support the relief efforts of the American Red Cross following the September 11 terrorist attacks, and matches, dollar-for-dollar, any funds raised by the Locals.

**October:** More than 13,000 signatures on the "Not Enough Nurses" petition are sent to the provincial government.

December 10-11 are set as dates for mediation talks between ONA and the OHA. Arbitration is scheduled for December 16 and 17.

A report from Faculty of Nursing researchers at the University of Toronto supports Ontario nurses' long-held contention that higher proportions of nursing staff at hospitals leads to better patient health and satisfaction outcomes.

ONA issues a media release with Local 100 about the new strategic direction of the London Health Sciences Centres, which means some of the most complex pediatric procedures currently performed at the hospital will be transferred to other facilities in the province.

ONA leaders and members take part in a protest outside the Toronto hearings of the Senator Kirby commission. *The Kirby Report* on the options facing our health-care system focuses on privatization.

**October 26-November 1:** The fourth consecutive

televote is conducted for the positions of President and First Vice-President. Incumbents **Barb Wahl** and **Brenda Hallihan** are re-elected.

**November:** ONA issues a media release expressing outrage after two nurses from the Hospital for Sick Children are charged with criminal negligence causing the death of patient Lisa Shore.

ONA expresses deep concern about *Bill 130, The Community Care Access Corporations Act*, which will convert non-profit CCACs into statutory community care access corporations with CEOs and board members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. ONA's media release is one of the top-10 most accessed files on the Canada Newswire website that day.

A one-day meeting for community sector Bargaining Unit Presidents develops strategies for sector professional and collective bargaining issues.

**December:** A meeting is held with Local leaders in the hospital sector to outline some of the details of the settlement.

**President Barb Wahl, First Vice-President Brenda Hallihan and CEO Lesley Bell** meet with a delegation of public health and hospital nurses and doctors from Shanghai to discuss current nursing realities in Ontario.

ONA reissues its censure of the University Health Network.

**December 12:** During the final attempt at mediation, a settlement is reached in the hospital sector.

# 2002

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**Barb Wahl, RN, is President**

**January:** The **Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care** is up and running. ONA focuses on saving Medicare.

The second annual Treasurers' Conference allows new and returning treasurers to learn about ONA financial policies and keeping Local books.

Forty public health nurses from the Grey Bruce Health Unit in Owen Sound, Local 4, vote to strike the same day as the government releases the findings of its public survey on the health-care system which shows that Ontarians want a refocus on wellness promotion and illness prevention.

The tentative settlement in the hospital sector is ratified by an overwhelming 91 per cent. The agreement ends the very successful **May Day!** campaign.

**February:** Public health nurses from the Grey Bruce Health Unit, Local 4, settle with the employer one day before they are to hit the picket line. Both sides ratify.

The ONA Board of Directors decides to work with the Ontario Health Coalition on its **Saving Medicare** campaign.

Forty-two public health nurses from the Lambton Health Unit, Local 19, in Sarnia vote to strike one day before conciliation talks break down.

**March:** Public health nurses at the Lambton Health Unit, Local 19, reach a tentative settlement during mediation talks and ratify a day later.

ONA officially launches its **Saving Medicare** campaign at the March PCM in Toronto. The campaign is aimed at educating the public and lobbying the Romanow Commission and the government for adherence to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. On the eve of the PCM, ONA screens the documentary *Shelter from the Storm*, which features ONA member, homeless advocate and street nurse Cathy Crowe and her work with the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee. ONA members raise \$1,000 for the committee. **President Barb Wahl** unveils the Nursing Week theme, “Nurses: Trusted. Essential. Committed to Saving Medicare,” which ties into ONA’s **Saving Medicare** campaign.

The Ontario Health Coalition unveils its **Saving Medicare** campaign, with a three-week door-to-door canvass in April and May. ONA members are encouraged to help out. Some ONA members chair local branches of the Ontario Health Coalition. ONA issues its hugely popular “Say Yes! National Public Medicare” buttons and posters.

**President Barb Wahl, First Vice-President Brenda Hallihan** and **CEO Lesley Bell** meet for the first time with Mary Beth Valentine, the new chief nursing officer for Ontario.

**April:** ONA leaders and members take part in the mass appeal to save public Medicare, organized by the Ontario Health Coalition outside the public hearings of the **Romanow Commission** in Toronto, Ottawa and Sudbury.

ONA members participate in a door-to-door canvass, handing out leaflets and red ribbons – a symbol of support for Medicare. They also write letters, gather signatures for ONA’s **Saving Medicare** petition and plan events.

ONA launches a new publication for Local Coordinators entitled, *ONA Alert*, focused on **Saving Medicare** campaign news.

ONA members approach their city councils about declaring May 15 National Medicare Day. Many are successful.

**May 6:** **President Barb Wahl** teams up with renowned health-care activist **Shirley Douglas** to lead a panel

of six members at a media conference launching Nursing Week. The panelists describe their difficult working conditions and urge the public to help protect and improve Medicare. ONA members and leaders take part in an array of celebrations for Nursing Week. ONA radio ads are played on stations throughout the province.

**May 9:** ONA responds to the provincial Throne Speech, which acknowledges that nurses don’t receive sufficient respect. ONA calls the speech a hopeful sign, but notes that no funding is announced to deal with the nursing shortage.

**May 15: National Medicare Day!** ONA members from Kenora to Kingston take to the streets to protest against the growing threat of privatization. At Queen’s Park, members form a human chain in the form of a red ribbon on the front lawn and lead the gathering through the singing of “O Canada.”

The door-to-door canvass wraps up and the Ontario Health Coalition reports that 3,000 volunteers – including many ONA members – canvassed more than 215,000 people throughout the province.

**President Barb Wahl** speaks to the Toronto hearings of the Romanow Commission and is quoted in dozens of newspapers.

**June:** At the PCM, ONA hosts a public forum on **Saving Medicare** featuring Bea Levis of the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizen Organizations, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari from the Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Community Centre, and Jamie Court, co-author of *Making a Killing: HMOs and the Threat to Your Health*.

The Toronto-York Region branch of the VON, Local 5, and the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia, Local 50, vote in favour of a strike.

The ONA Board of Directors, Local leaders and members attend the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver.

**July:** Eight ONA members from the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia (HPS), Local 50, strike. Key issues include wages which are 20-per-cent below the norm for mental health facilities, and flexible working hours.

ONA censures Sarnia General Hospital of the Lambton Hospitals’ Group, employers for approximately 700 registered nurses from Local 19.

ONA members join NDP MPPs in a successful rock-in to protest a 15-per-cent increase in fees to nursing home residents. The government agrees to phase in the increase over three years.

**September:** After almost three months of job action, members of Local 50 reach an agreement with their employer.

At the start of the fall session of the Ontario

Legislature, ONA leaders call on the government to improve working conditions for front-line nurses, reduce overtime and allow nurses to take scheduled vacations. Stress, burnout, injuries and illness, make nurses the sickest workforce in Canada.

**October:** ONA members rally in Brampton and Ottawa, protesting the government's P3 initiative. **President Barb Wahl** addresses the Brampton rally, calling on the government to expand publicly funded and administered services.

ONA leaders argue the Kirby Report doesn't reflect what Canadians want in their health system. **President Barb Wahl** says nurses want profit out of health care and an end to the nursing shortage.

ONA meets with officials of the Ministry of Health to discuss how long-term care facilities are spending the \$100 million in funding the government announced in July.

**November:** ONA's Biennial Convention draws more than 1,000 delegates. Keynote speaker **John Wright** of Ipsos Reid says polling shows the vast majority of Canadians believe that increasing hospital hiring, budgets and paying nurses more would help resolve the nursing shortage. Author **Linda McQuaig** tells delegates to fight health-care privatization because it will have few benefits for the Canadian public and could jeopardize quality care. A Vector poll shows two-thirds of Ontarians oppose private, for-profit companies operating MRI and CT clinics. Delegates join the Ontario Health Coalition outside the OHA annual meeting to protest OHA support for public-private partnership hospitals (P3s). Delegates decide that the June PCM will be held outside Toronto.

**November 28:** ONA welcomes the recommendations of the **Romanow Commission's Report on the Future of Health Care in Canada**. Report recommendations support ONA's position on strengthening and expanding public services and rejecting privatization.

# 2003

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**Barb Wahl, RN, is President**

**January/February:** ONA participates in an NDP media conference questioning spending by long-term care facility operators. ONA and the NDP say \$100 million in funding provided by the government is being spent elsewhere, not on staffing.

Nurses at the Royal Ottawa Hospital argue that patient care will suffer and access will be reduced with the layoffs of nurses. Layoffs go ahead, despite

a cash infusion of almost \$3 million from the provincial government.

ONA censures the Niagara Health System.

**March: SARS** – severe acute respiratory syndrome – is diagnosed in Toronto and quickly becomes an outbreak in the area, and a major focus for ONA for the following months. Nurses are among the dozens of health-care workers who contract SARS. Hospitals are closed. Meetings and educational sessions at ONA head office are cancelled. ONA urges that hospitals be closed to visitors.

As the outbreak builds, ONA warns that shortages of properly fitting masks are putting the health and safety of nurses at risk of SARS and again urges closing hospitals to visitors, noting that many facilities allow the public to come and go at will. ONA is deluged by calls from the media and receives some of the most extensive coverage in its history. ONA leads the call for improved quarantine procedures and protection for hospital staff.

**March 20:** ONA participates in a joint media release with the NDP demanding the government reverse planned nursing layoffs at the University Health Network. "Nurses are fed up with being treated like disposable widgets," **President Barb Wahl** says in the release. "Nurses aren't surplus items to be tossed out at whim. That's how we got into the current shortage mess." **Wahl** joins Sudbury MPP Shelley Martel in calling for immediate action from the government to protect nursing jobs and invest in quality public health care.

**April:** The SARS outbreak continues. ONA works to ensure that members know their rights, particularly the right to refuse unsafe work, and keep them informed about equipment and procedures that can protect them from the virus. ONA develops and distributes information about reporting injuries to the WSIB, and about the role of joint health and safety committees. The legislature reconvenes and ONA demands that the provincial government examine the impact of the SARS outbreak on front-line care providers and deal with the nursing shortage. ONA says the SARS outbreak graphically shows what could happen when several hundred nurses are removed from a system that is desperately understaffed, and where working conditions are very difficult. ONA says the SARS outbreak demonstrates that bedside nurses must be fully equipped, protected and prepared to cope with virulent outbreaks.

**April 30:** ONA issues a media release responding to the Throne Speech and demanding that the provincial government confront the nursing shortage as it reviews the impact of the SARS outbreak.



**May:** ONA leaders meet with nurses in Ottawa and Chatham to kick off Nursing Week. The theme is 'Ontario nurses, when we can't care everyone hurts. Let's work together to promote safety, dignity and respect in the workplace.' The SARS outbreak makes the occupational health and safety message timely and appropriate. Members receive a Fox 40 emergency whistle and laminated cards with information on what to do if they are injured or become ill on the job. A companion piece to Nursing Week is a special all-member mailing of a letter from **President Barb Wahl** congratulating members on their dedication and courage throughout the SARS outbreak and their ongoing professionalism and commitment to their patients. Many Nursing Week activities are postponed due to concerns about SARS.

**May 6: Federal Health Minister McLellan** announces a National Advisory Group on SARS and Public Health to be chaired by Dr. David Naylor, Dean of Medicine at the University of Toronto and including senior hospital, disease control and public health officials. Chief Nursing Officers from University Health Network and St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg are included.

**June:** In a strongly worded letter to **Premier Ernie Eves**, ONA raises concerns about the effectiveness of masks against SARS and the Minister of Labour's decision to ease off on fit-testing requirements.

ONA and other unions attending the conference of the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions rally at Scarborough General Hospital, the site of the first SARS outbreak.

ONA members attending the PCM march on Queen's Park to protest the government's response to the SARS outbreak.

**June 30:** ONA expresses condolences to the family and friends of nurse, **Nelia Laroza**, the first RN to die of SARS. Nelia Laroza, who worked on the orthopedic floor at North York General Hospital, was a dedicated professional, an ONA member and one of 15 nurses working on the orthopedic floor who contracted SARS in March.

The ONA membership gives direction to ONA to enhance contract administration services and to try to reduce the time period in which arbitration files are resolved through the Litigation Pilot Project.

**July: Tecla Lin**, a nurse at West Park Healthcare Centre and Local 125 member, is the second nurse to die of SARS. After more than 35 years in nursing, Tecla Lin was one of the first nurses to volunteer for the SARS unit at West Park. ONA says, "At this time, our only concern is for the family of this dedicated nurse."

ONA, along with OPSEU and the Ontario Health Coalition, sponsor an information session/rally and

barbecue at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto to protest privatization. CAMH was slated to become a public-private partnership hospital.

**July 5:** The funeral is held for Nelia Laroza, a 20-year veteran of nursing and a long-time ONA member who contracted SARS from a patient at age 51. ONA members in attendance wear black ribbons in honour of their fallen colleague.

**July 31:** Hospital funding is announced – a total of \$620 million – including a \$484-million increase to base funding for hospital operations committed in the 2003 budget and \$136 million in new base funding for expanded services at restructured hospitals and for priority programs.

**September: Premier Ernie Eves** calls a provincial election for October 2.

**September 22: President Barb Wahl** makes a statement at head office asking the provincial government to detail what has improved since the SARS crisis and warning that Ontario isn't prepared for a third round.

**September 29:** ONA presents before the **SARS Commission**. **President Barb Wahl** tells Justice Archie Campbell that the government must ensure that adequate health and safety systems are in place and work to protect nurses so they can protect the public. President Wahl also reads from emotional impact statements collected by ONA from nurses directly affected by SARS.

**October: The Litigation Pilot Project** is fully implemented, making litigation the primary focus for some Labour Relations Officers who, as a result, don't carry a Bargaining Unit workload. Certain grievances are accelerated for early intervention and resolution under Section 49 of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*, including selection decisions on job vacancies, premiums, scheduling issues, compensation issues and discipline up to discharge. Initial feedback is positive.

The sixth annual televote for the positions of President and Vice-President gets underway.

The federal National Advisory Committee on SARS, chaired by Dr. David Naylor, releases its final report, recommending the creation of a new Canadian Agency for Public Health, new annual investment in public health of \$700 million, and a national Network for Communicable Diseases.

Membership research on bargaining objectives and values shows members believe the union is doing a better job in delivering services.

**October 2:** The Liberals, under **Dalton McGuinty**, win the provincial election with a majority. The Conservatives drop to 24 seats and the NDP wins only seven seats – a loss of two seats and official party status. When the new cabinet is sworn in, George Smitherman, MPP Toronto Centre-Rosedale, becomes the new Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and Chris Bentley, MPP London West, the new Minister of Labour.

**November:** With the televote results in, **Linda Haslam-Stroud**, Local 75 Coordinator, and **Sue Prettejohn**, Local 137 Coordinator, are elected ONA President and First Vice-President, respectively.

The PCM agenda is jam-packed. Delegates are treated to a surprise visit from Roy Romanow, receive a greeting from new Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman and view the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary video. It is a very moving time as members directly affected by the SARS crisis tell their first-hand experiences, and outgoing ONA President Barb Wahl bids farewell. ONA's much-improved website is officially launched to rave reviews.

**December:** ONA leaders join members and our partners at the Ontario Health Coalition for a "Betrayal Lunch" at Queen's Park to protest the Liberal government's backtracking on a promise to abolish public-private partnership hospitals (P3s). The sit-down meal includes 3-Pea soup and chicken a la Dalton.

**ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud** is chosen to participate on the health-sector panel for the Ministry of Labour's new Health and Safety Action Group initiative. The panel will look at reducing workplace injuries, developing policy and promoting safety through education.

# 2004

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## Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is President

**January:** Frustrated nurses at the Halton Regional Public Health Unit receive a better contract after going public. The 80 members asked (then) President Barb Wahl to write a letter to the editor on their behalf, which led to a front-page story in the *Burlington Post*, and was reprinted in the *Hamilton Spectator* and community papers.

ONA files notice of action of a lawsuit against the provincial government arising from ONA members contracting SARS.

**February:** An ONA media release responds to Premier Dalton McGuinty's request to unions to show

"restraint in negotiations." **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** says, "Nurses know it's more than just about money. It's about working conditions, staffing levels, scheduling and workloads. These are things that will keep nurses working."

ONA calls on Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman to immediately release the interim report of the SARS Commission to determine if concerns have been addressed.

**President Linda Haslam-Stroud** and **CEO Lesley Bell** meet with the **Health Minister**. Issues under discussion are the nursing shortage, long-term care, public and community health, P3s and *Bill 8*. Minister Smitherman says it's a four- to six-year challenge to rebuild the profession, and that he believes that nurses are the heart of health care.

At the National Executive Board of the CFNU meeting in Ottawa, ONA is asked to participate on Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) committees. The Board recommends that **Andy Summers, Vice-President, Region 3** participate on the Human Rights and Equity committee, and **First Vice-President Sue Prettejohn**, continue to represent the CFNU on the Political Action Committee.

**February 18:** A statement of claim for a potential class action suit on **SARS** is filed to protect time lines and avoid WSIB concerns around coverage. WSIB issues are resolved and ONA goes forward with its original plan to file individual claims rather than proceed by way of class action. A revised statement of claim for individual claims will go forward in March.

**March:** At the March PCM, members are urged to fight racism in the workplace by documenting everyday incidents.

The Ministry of Labour lays six *Occupational Health and Safety Act* charges against the North Bay Hospital related to exposure of employees to nitrous oxide in the hospital's operating rooms, alleging that the facility failed to complete workplace health and safety training to meet standards for ventilation.

**Health Minister Smitherman** tables amendments to *Bill 8, The Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act* at Committee, making explicit that trade unions, individual doctors and groups of doctors are not subject to accountability agreements.

**Labour Minister Bentley** names **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** to the health-care panel of the Minister's Health and Safety Action Group. The panel will establish priorities to reduce injuries, ensure proper policies are in place, and promote safety through education, training, regulation and enforcement.

**Health Minister Smitherman** announces funding for 45 new primary care initiatives across the province, bringing together family physicians, nurse practitioners and other front-line health professionals to deliver

around-the-clock care; \$39.2 million in funding comes from the federal Primary Health Care Transition Fund.

**Federal Finance Minister Goodale** tables the 2004 federal budget with an additional \$2 billion for the provinces and territories for health. The budget creates the new Canada Public Health Agency with \$665 million over three years to improve Canada's readiness to deal with public health emergencies.

**March 25:** ONA announces the **SARS lawsuit** at a media conference, noting that it has launched legal action against the Ontario government on behalf of 30 members who contracted SARS and their families. ONA members are given until May 20, 2004 to sign on to the lawsuit.

**April:** **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** is one the key speakers at a media conference to kick off a series of forums dealing with key issues in the long-term care sector, coordinated by the Ontario Health Coalition.

ONA extends its **Not Enough Nurses: Your Tax Cuts at Work** campaign with an updated slogan: 'Still Not Enough Nurses: Act Now. Patients Can't Wait.'

A postcard to **Health Minister George Smitherman** urging him to address the nursing shortage is inserted into the spring issue of *Front Lines*.

The ONA Board approves a number of changes to the *Membership Policy Manual*, including a new policy regarding the honouring of picket lines.

**April 3:** 2,000 union members from across Ontario, including those from ONA, march in Toronto to protest public-private partnership hospitals at a rally organized by the Ontario Health Coalition.

**April 21:** **Health Minister Smitherman** releases the interim report from Commissioner Archie Campbell on the SARS outbreak and announces a timetable for a comprehensive action plan on public health renewal. The report recounts how decades of problems and inaction in public health contributed to the SARS crisis. Smitherman says there is more work to be done and a comprehensive action plan for public health is coming in two months. ONA urges the provincial government to act quickly to shore up the province's public health system as recommended in the SARS Commission interim report.

**April 22:** **Health Minister Smitherman** receives and commits to act on the final report from Dr. David Walker and the Expert Panel on SARS and Infectious Disease Control. This report makes recommendations for improving Ontario's public health system based on lessons from the SARS outbreak.

Minister Smitherman announces \$25 million to create 400 new full-time nursing positions in Ontario hospitals, including an immediate \$25 million to 122 small- and

medium-sized public hospitals. This funding goes along with the \$25 million invested in large hospitals in February to create full-time nursing positions. As a result, 800 more full-time nursing jobs will be created.

**April 26:** **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** participates in a media conference to launch a series of Public Forums on Ontario's long-term care system. "Nurses and care workers believe Ontario's long-term care system – including nursing homes and home care – is in crisis because of understaffing and underfunding," says Haslam-Stroud. "There is a complete lack of transparency and accountability by the government and by nursing homes."

At the **CCAC Bargaining Strategy Meeting**, President Linda Haslam-Stroud welcomes ONA Board members, CCAC Bargaining Unit Presidents and servicing Labour Relations Officers to hear presentations on the current CCAC contract analysis, CCAC-specific cultural research, the OMERS to HOOPP pension transfer, and dispute resolution in the right-to-strike sector. Participants generate proposals on top-tier issues and address coordinated bargaining and strategy for future rounds of bargaining.

**April 28:** ONA honours the national **Day of Mourning** for workers who have been killed, injured, or become ill in the workplace. At ONA head office, a plaque is dedicated to nurses and other workers injured or killed on the job. The ONA ceremony draws other unions and community groups as well as Toronto Mayor David Miller, Minister of Health George Smitherman and Labour Minister Bentley. Across the province, ONA members take part in Day of Mourning ceremonies.

**April 29-30:** The Hospital Central Negotiating Team meets to work on developing proposals and preparing for bargaining. ONA and the OHA will meet May 17-19 for joint interest-based bargaining training for the negotiating teams. A Memorandum of Conditions for Joint Bargaining has been signed.

**May:** Members of Local 14 join the Canadian Auto Workers in a march at Thunder Bay City Hall to protest the city's plan to freeze construction of two new municipally run homes for the aged.

At the request of Local 4, ONA issues a media release stating that the reduction of eight full-time-equivalent RNs, who perform case management for the Grey Bruce Community Care Access Centre, will have a severe impact on clients needing in-home care.

North Bay Hospital appears in court to face health and safety charges laid in March, a historic first.

ONA issues a media release welcoming the government plan for reform of the long-term care system and urging speedy implementation.

An ONA media release responds to the provincial

budget, saying the Liberal government clearly understands the challenges front-line nurses are facing.

**May 10-16:** ONA members celebrate and acknowledge the nursing profession during **Nursing Week 2004**, under the theme 'Honouring Nurses. A Team of Dedicated Professionals.' Members hold special events at their work sites, many attended by ONA leaders. ONA speaks to the media about the nursing shortage and the need to improve working conditions for nurses.

**May 20:** ONA wins a *Bill 136* vote to determine union membership at the Cornwall Community Hospital, retaining 160 members and gaining another 161.

**June:** The first ONA Provincial Coordinators Meeting is held outside of Toronto in Ottawa and is a resounding success. The video from the Day of Mourning event in April is a highlight.

ONA wins the right to represent nurses at six relatively new Leisure World nursing homes in Toronto due to an arbitration decision and welcomes 76 new members. ONA was included in the vote against the SEIU, which had represented all nurses in the homes.

ONA's Board of Directors lifts the moratorium on organizing within the hospital and long-term care sectors. On a case-by-case basis, the Board will review organizing in other sectors.

The provincial government announces funding for the hiring and mentoring of nursing graduates. In a media release, ONA states this is further evidence of the health minister's commitment to addressing the nursing shortage and improving working conditions.

ONA responds to the Workplace Safety Insurance Board audit, saying it addresses some of the concerns of Ontario nurses, but fails to delve into the problems of a system designed to help injured workers.

Nursing home employers issue payment for outstanding pay equity payments as a result of the Pay Equity Charter Challenge by ONA and other unions.

**July:** In the wake of the provincial government's decision to provide \$25 million for the creation of 400 new, full-time nursing jobs at 122 small- and medium-sized hospitals throughout Ontario, ONA tells Bargaining Unit Presidents to meet with employers. "This is an important opportunity for our union to be involved," notes **President Linda Haslam-Stroud**. Members are urged to contact their Bargaining Unit President and their local MPP if they suspect dollars for new nurses are being diverted to other purposes.

The Ontario Health Coalition and the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions jointly release a cost analysis of the Brampton public-private partnership hospital showing capital costs for the project have shot up by 53 per cent over initial estimates; private companies want \$22 million more to keep negotiations alive.

**August:** A successful certification vote is held at Central Care Corporation, Roseview Manor, in Thunder Bay. Fourteen RNs are welcomed into ONA.

Health Minister George Smitherman announces a three-point plan for Women's College Hospital that includes restoring independent governance for Women's College. Women's College will assume a new role as an ambulatory care centre and provincial leader in women's health care, education and research.

**September:** The ONA Board decides to recommend ONA affiliation to the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), to be ratified at the 2004 Biennial Convention.

Public consultations begin on the Liberal government's plans to end mandatory retirement. ONA opposes any policy that compels workers to remain in their jobs beyond the normal age or ties benefits to an increase in the minimum retirement age. The small minority of nurses interested in working beyond 65 should have the option of doing so.

ONA reissues its censure of the Niagara Health System, Local 26.

**Minister of Health George Smitherman** announces a government plan to reorganize health-care delivery in Ontario. The initiative features the creation of 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), as well as a seven-member Health Results Team charged with reducing wait times. **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** responds that the health-care system has already been restructured to death. On a more positive note, the ONA President welcomes the Minister's commitment to re-examine the competitive bidding system through which agencies obtain home-care contracts with Community Care Access Centres.

**October:** Members and supporters of Local 73, Thunder Bay Regional Health Centre, hit the streets to protest the hospital's new scheduling plan for part-time nurses. Twenty-eight job-share positions are to be eliminated while the master rotation schedule for another 341 part-time nurses is also to be discontinued, according to an announcement by the hospital. Bargaining talks in the hospital sector conclude unsuccessfully, opening the door to mediation/arbitration for 45,000 ONA members.

Nursing home mediation breaks down, leading to arbitration.

**November 16: Health Minister George Smitherman** launches a public reporting website for long-term care, providing information to seniors and their families about individual homes and their records of care. The government also announces it will introduce new regulations requiring that a registered nurse be on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week in each long-term care home (effective Feb. 1, 2005).

**November 22-25:** Approximately 1,000 delegates gather in Toronto for what many will later describe as the most successful **Biennial Convention** ever. The week kicks off with the annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus, proceeds to three days of business and concludes with a series of workshops. Voting delegates carry a resolution to affiliate to the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) for a period of two years by 77 per cent. On the last business day of the Biennial, ONA launches the **Still Not Enough Nurses: Act Now! Patients Can't Wait** campaign, timed to coincide with the end of bargaining in the hospital sector. **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** tells delegates and the media that little has changed three years after the 2001 initiative of a similar theme, **Not Enough Nurses: Your Tax Cuts at Work**. Keynote speaker Armine Yalnizyan gives delegates all the details on why public health care beats a private, for-profit system.

**November 27:** ONA members take part in the OFL's 'Keep Your Promises' rally at Queen's Park, organized to remind Premier McGuinty about his commitment to rebuild public services and improve labour legislation. **First Vice-President Susan Prettejohn** tells the assembly that nurses have long been part of the struggle for public health care and the fight continues.

**December:** The *Vector Poll on Public Opinion in Canada* finds that 88 per cent of respondents have very positive feelings toward nurses, ahead of doctors, police officers, teachers and public employees. Some 67 per cent are of the view that paying public-sector workers who make life-and-death decisions more than workers in the private sector is a reasonable policy. Nurses are viewed as the most overworked professional group by 89 per cent of poll participants.

ONA's Board approves the release of an additional \$125,000 from the Security Fund to cover legal fees for the SARS lawsuit involving 30 members who contracted SARS and their families.

ONA endorses the **Call for Action: the Time for Pay Equity is Now** campaign initiated by the Canadian Labour Congress.

The Board of Directors reissues its censure of the University Health Network.

# 2005

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**Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA makes a submission to the pre-budget Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, stating ONA concerns that government funding for the creation of nursing jobs and other nursing initiatives

may not produce the intended results quickly enough to keep up with demographic changes and the demand for nursing services. The government is funding the creation of more nursing jobs and, at the same time, laying off nurses.

**Health Minister George Smitherman** announces that hospitals will receive a cash infusion of \$200 million; \$91 million to fund severance packages for 2,000 workers slated to be laid off, 757 of whom are nurses. The rest will help hospitals balance their budgets by March 2006. Layoffs, ONA notes, will impact negatively on patient care, despite government assurances to the contrary.

ONA Local Treasurers gather in Toronto to learn about relevant software applications, hardware, managing and balancing union books.

ONA produces the January 19 issue of the OFL's *Focus on Healthcare* and promotes the case for improved front-line patient care by discussing the **Still Not Enough Nurses** campaign in the document.

The Casa Verde inquest, reviewing the death of two residents at the hands of another resident at a nursing home on Keele Street in June 2001, commences. The inquest is looking into the care of cognitively impaired seniors in Ontario nursing homes. ONA is granted standing despite not representing any of the workers because it "has a substantial and direct interest in the inquest on behalf of its members who work in Long Term Care Facilities in the Province and in Community Access Centres."

**February:** Some 60 ONA members from Local 134, Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, hold a march and information picket to raise awareness about health-care issues in the community. According to Local 134 Coordinator Tracey Taylor, rallying RNs also want to let government representatives know how critically fragile our health-care system is.

Health Minister George Smitherman isn't forgotten on Valentine's Day, as Locals 82 and 6 deliver 300 cards to his office and a reminder not to forget that nurses are the heart of health care, as Premier McGuinty is fond of saying.

A key ruling comes down in favour of ONA at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, where four nurse practitioners are deemed to belong in the Bargaining Unit and not above the rank of first-level management, as the employer maintained. Professional supervision of RNs is not managerial supervision, and doesn't justify exclusion from the union.

The nursing home arbitration hearing concludes after three days.

The ONA submission to Elinor Caplan's CCAC procurement review says the quality of care in Ontario has declined as a result of health-care restructuring over the last three years. Ontario has also experienced an increased privatization of health care, including the

proliferation of a competitive bidding process for the provision of home-care services. Further privatized delivery of health care will decrease the quality of care and have a negative impact on the practice environment for nurses, says ONA.

**March:** After feedback from Local Coordinators, ONA decides to structure the **Still Not Enough Nurses** campaign in three phases corresponding to the spring and fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006.

RNs at the Sault Area Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie declare that planned layoffs of 20 professionals at an already-understaffed institution can only worsen patient care. The layoffs are scheduled to occur during Nursing Week 2005.

**April:** The Casa Verde Coroner's Inquest examining the challenges posed by placing cognitively impaired residents in long-term care centres, adopts all 52 of ONA's recommendations. The inquest concludes that specialized facilities staffed by RNs are required to effectively look after such patients.

Ontario's Superior Court hears arguments from lawyers representing 53 nurses that health-care workers were not told how to protect themselves from SARS for two weeks after the provincial government provided that information to physicians. ONA accuses Queen's Park of negligence in managing the outbreak.

Figures released by the WSIB show an increase of more than 60 per cent in physical assaults against Ontario hospital workers over a five-year period.

**May:** ONA criticizes the conclusions of the *Caplan Report* on home care, saying that the study's defense of the competitive bidding process endorses less-than-optimal care for patients and the erosion of rights for RNs employed by not-for-profit agencies like the VON.

Provincial Treasurer Greg Sorbara delivers the budget but fails to adequately respond to the health-care challenge. **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** criticizes the government's lack of provision for a sharp increase in nursing positions, saying, "It's very disappointing. Nurses are graduating at a time when we're laying them off." Hospitals respond to their \$100-million budgetary increase by saying that up to 4,000 jobs will be cut.

**May 9-15:** Nursing Week sees **President Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN** and other leaders visit front-line nurses in communities across the province. The theme for ONA nurses this year is: 'Nurses. Trusted, Vital, Professional. United in Caring.'

**May 27:** Members of ONA Local 51 gather in Oshawa to protest layoffs, bed and clinic closures by Lakeridge Health Corporation. To balance its budget, Lakeridge intends to replace RNs with less-skilled workers.

Members of Local 111 employed at the Scarborough Hospital in Toronto rally to protest layoffs caused by the government's insistence that hospitals balance their budgets by March 2006.

**June:** The arbitration award covering some 2,000 registered nurses employed by the province's nursing homes fails to reflect recommendations on RN safety and wages coming out of the Casa Verde inquest.

Cultural Research, the company that carries out membership studies, summarizes results from a recent human rights and equity project. Members' priorities are: handling of discrimination and equity issues; helping members with workers compensation/WSIB and long-term disability appeals; involvement in social issues; better occupational health; education of members on union matters; and finally, health-care reform issues.

**Federal Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh** announces that he is disappointed that the Canadian Medical Association will debate and possibly endorse a growing role for private medicine at its summer meeting. CMA President Dr. Albert Schumacher argues that the government could make room for some private services without dismantling Medicare.

Members of Local 50, employed in Hamilton's public-health clinics, ratify a retroactive three-year contract that extends until the end of 2006.

**July:** The Supreme Court of Canada issues the *Chaoulli* decision, stating that lengthy delays for surgeries are a violation of *Charter* rights and opening the door to private insurance as a solution.

**August: Health Minister George Smitherman** unveils a report on health care in northwestern Ontario, launched as a result of Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's policy of limiting access to beds to patients from the immediate area in periods when beds are scarce. The report calls for substantial investments in hospitals in Sioux Lookout and Marathon, new services for cardiac patients in Thunder Bay, and additional long-term care spaces.

**August 10:** More than 1,000 health-care workers and members of the community rally in front of Sarnia's city hall to protest announced cuts by Bluewater Health, Local 19. The cuts are liable to cause Lambton County to lose 60,000 hours of nursing care. ONA Region 5 Vice-President Jeanne Soden criticizes Bluewater for its lack of transparency, saying that ONA Bargaining Unit President Pam Gallie can't get a copy of a peer review report sent by the agency to the government.

**September:** After a year-and-a-half without a contract, ONA's approximately 45,000 hospital nurses finally receive a binding arbitration award that **President**

**Linda Haslam-Stroud** calls “a basis to build on in the future” but inadequate to meeting the chief challenges confronting nurses, such as workload issues, health and safety problems and the provincial nursing shortage. Haslam-Stroud says the deal will neither encourage many new nurses to enter the profession nor convince experienced professionals to remain longer on the job. The arbitrator recognized as much, saying that problems of this sort had to be addressed by government and employers rather than arbitration boards.

ONA launches the next phase of its **Still Not Enough Nurses** campaign, with advertisements covering bus shelters and billboards in towns and cities around the province.

**Prime Minister Paul Martin** and provincial/territorial premiers announce, “A 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care” worth \$41 billion, most of it without any specific strings attached to how provinces and territories spend the money. The funding includes a \$5.5-billion Wait Time Reduction Fund.

ONA members take part in Labour Day events around the province.

**September 14:** Members of Local 83 at the Ottawa Hospital hold a well-attended **Still Not Enough Nurses** rally that attracts coverage from most of the major media in the national capital area. At Union Station in Toronto, Region 3 ONA members receive an overwhelmingly positive response while distributing leaflets to commuters on their way to work.

**October:** ONA Local 4 reaches a settlement with the Grey Bruce Health Unit’s Board of Health two days before members are set to strike, ratifying a three-year contract scheduled to expire in December 2007.

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) holds a press conference in Kingston to release its report, *Understaffed and Under Pressure*, on the state of the province’s health-care system. The OFL argues that health-care workers are exhausted and excessively stressed out.

ONA releases its main **Still Not Enough Nurses** background document, *Patients Matter: The Roots of a Health Care Problem and How to Alleviate It*.

A groundbreaking, preliminary arbitration decision concludes that the Eastern Ontario Health Unit qualifies as an arm of government and is subject to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The case involves a grievance against the employer’s policy of staff immunization against influenza. The arbitration will proceed to consider whether the policy violates Section 7 of the *Charter*.

**October 7:** Toronto Public Health announces that Legionnaires’ disease is the culprit in the previously unexplained deaths of residents in Toronto’s Seven

Oaks Home for the Aged. SARS and Avian Flu had been ruled out, but the city remained nervous as the death toll climbed.

**November:** Televote results show that **Vicki McKenna** has been elected as First Vice-President. **Linda Haslam-Stroud** is acclaimed President.

ONA renews its censure of Bluewater Health, Local 19, in Sarnia.

Ontarians are shocked and saddened by the murder of Local 8 member Lori Dupont at Hôtel Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor by anesthesiologist Marc Daniel.

A key rights arbitration award is issued that should serve to enhance ONA’s argument against the growing practice of replacing RNs with less-skilled workers. In a decision against the Scarborough Hospital, the arbitrator applied Article 10.12 (a) of the collective agreement to determine that in one unit in the facility, where acuity is high and patients unpredictable, a decision to substitute RNs with registered practical nurses would not maintain “quality patient care.” This is the first significant decision on the meaning of Article 10.12 (a).

**November 9-10:** ONA’s PCM is held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Guest speakers are Linda O’Brien-Pallas, an expert on Ontario’s nursing demographic, and journalist Michael Enright. Enright tells nurses to “hold the government’s feet to the fire” with the **Still Not Enough Nurses** campaign. Linda Haslam-Stroud is returned as President and Vicki McKenna is elected as First Vice-President.

**November 21-25:** ONA’s delegation makes a splash at the union’s first-ever Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention in Toronto. **OFL President Wayne Samuelson** makes health care – and defence of a publicly administered system – front and centre in the convention’s policy discussions. Conversations between **President Linda Haslam-Stroud** and other union leaders spark the birth of a four-union coalition, involving the CUPE, OPSEU and the SEIU (Local 1 Ontario) determined to ensure that the Ontario government’s Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) initiative doesn’t lead to more privatization, the loss of union jobs and the deterioration of health care.

**November 28:** Demonstrations and vigils take place as ONA and other organizations mourn the tragic loss of friend and colleague Lori Dupont and to demand improved measures from the government and employers to protect women from violence and harassment – on the job and off.

**December:** Staff and political leaders from the four-union coalition of CUPE, OPSEU, SEIU and ONA, meet in downtown Toronto to plot a response to the

government's LHINs legislation. Participants suggest collaboration on a range of issues, including organizing non-unionized workplaces, bargaining, pension matters and a communications plan to publicize their criticisms of the LHIN initiative. Later in the month, ONA holds a special meeting of regional leaders to discuss the campaign and its objective of amending *Bill 36* to block further privatization, ensure the protection of local health services and defend union jobs.

Local 13 Bargaining Unit President Ann Kennealy criticizes the government for choosing to privately finance the capital construction project at Sudbury Regional Hospital. "Alternative financing and procurement is just another expression for privatization," she says.

ONA members mark **December 6<sup>th</sup>** as a national day of remembrance and day of action on violence against women. The event is particularly poignant as members in Windsor remember Lori Dupont, RN, who was stabbed to death in November while working in the recovery room of Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. President Linda Haslam-Stroud's opinion editorial about violence against women – and particularly against nurses – is published in the *Toronto Star*.

# 2006

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## Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, is President

**January:** The **LHINs campaign** unfolds with 17 regional mobilization meetings across the province. Health-care workers hear an analysis of the government initiative, ask questions, state their views and plan joint actions. First Vice-President Vicki McKenna is ONA lead. ONA organizes meetings in Windsor and Ottawa.

The provincial government announces a **\$40-million fund** to provide RNs and RPNs with opportunities to expand their knowledge and training to work in other clinical areas or nursing roles within their hospital. Hospitals will be reimbursed for costs incurred for up to six months of orientation, training and education that increases clinical skills and expertise of nurses. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud says, "This is a concrete step that will assist in providing quality care for our patients during Ontario's nursing shortage."

Orientation for the **Hospital Central Negotiating Team** takes place.

The Superior Court Justice adjourns ONA's **SARS lawsuit** against the provincial government, citing two other cases which she views as potentially similar, pending before the court of appeal. ONA's SARS case can resume when those have been heard.

**January 23:** The Conservative Party under Stephen Harper wins the federal election and appoints former

Ontario **Tory Cabinet Minister Tony Clement**, a keen advocate of private-sector involvement in health care, as Minister of Health. Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions President Linda Silas comments that nurses "do not believe the solution to [long wait times and other systemic woes] is a privately delivered system."

**February:** Local 35 Bargaining Unit President Greg Walden responds forcefully to an announcement by Chatham-Kent's department of social services that it will eliminate seven RN positions at **Riverview Gardens Home for the Aged**. In a letter to the *Chatham Daily News*, Walden expresses doubt that the six full-time and three part-time RNs remaining in the facility will be able to guarantee top-quality care to the centre's 320 residents.

Provincial direction from the **Long-Term Care Non-Institutional Sector Project Team** with respect to CCAC bargaining is circulated, asking CCACs whose Collective Agreements expire during 2006 to expedite bargaining and focus on key issues only. LHINs legislation will essentially suspend collective bargaining for at least one calendar year.

Staff from OPSEU, SEIU and ONA meet with the government to discuss how they **define workplace violence** and what the employer's responsibility is under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* to protect workers from all forms of violence.

**February 14: Workplace protests** against the Ontario government's LHINs legislation take place all over the province as members of the four health unions call on Ontarians to 'Protect the Heart of Health Care.'

ONA issues an invitation to female members from designated groups to participate in a **Leadership Development Program** scheduled for the fall of 2006. The program is to be an intensive, five-day session designed to help cultivate new leaders who reflect diverse grassroots members.

**March:** March is the deadline for **Ontario's hospitals to balance their budgets** – even if it requires staff layoffs. London Health Sciences Centre, Local 100, announces that 120 positions, nursing jobs among them, are to be eliminated.

Kingston General Hospital, Local 99, finds itself in its **sixth "bed crisis"** in two years, with 55 patients awaiting transfer to a long-term care facility in a region with 400 people in total on a waiting list to get into a home.

The *Windsor Star* takes Bill Marra, chair of the Board at Hotel Dieu Grace, Local 8 in Windsor, to task for **not supporting ONA's call for an inquest into the death of ONA member Lori Dupont** in November 2005, and calls on the province to proceed with an inquest. ONA continues to wage a media and behind-the-scenes campaign calling for the inquest.



**March 28:** *Bill 36, The Local Health System Integration Act*, receives Royal Assent.

**March 29-30:** ONA's PCM is held at the Delta Chelsea in Toronto.

**April:** The Ontario Long-Term Care Association tells the government that residents of nursing homes need at least 20 additional minutes of personal care on a daily basis, saying this will cost more than \$300 million between now and 2008. Long-term care facilities in Ontario, according to the employer association, claim to provide an average of 2.25 hours of daily care to residents.

A British report reveals that **privately financed hospitals** in that country are failing to deliver proper cleaning, catering and other ancillary services.

ONA mourns the passing of first and founding provincial **President Jean Lowery**, an activist who "worked tirelessly to make things better for RNs." Lowery participated in the founding meeting of ONA in 1973. She served as ONA President 1973-75, and as Director of Human resources for ONA from 1981 until her retirement in March 1991. Lowery was awarded an honorary membership in ONA in December 1991.

**April 5:** ONA ends a dramatic organizing drive with a **winning OLRB vote** at York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill. ONA retention and recruitment staff began working with a core group of union supporters in the facility in 2005. ONA produced 12 bulletins of facts and arguments and staff members made presentations on professional practice and collective bargaining at a series of evening sessions in the Richmond Hill library. The new Local 237 has 673 new full-time and part-time RNs. Other organizing victories include Highbourne Lifecare Centre (24 members) and Tall Pines long-term facility (18 members).

**May:** The provincial government marks **Nursing Week** by announcing that all nursing graduates in 2007 will be guaranteed a full-time job opportunity. ONA responds that while this is an excellent policy, it is important that in offering these jobs, Ontario employers respect collective agreements and offer available full-time posts to working part-time nurses who want them. The Nursing Week theme is 'Our Nurses. Respected, Vital professionals. Caring for you.'

**May 1:** Members of Region 3, **ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, CEO Lesley Bell** and staff push a gurney loaded with more than 8,000 **Still Not Enough Nurses** postcards up University Avenue's hospital row to Queen's Park, delivering them to the care of NDP health critic Shelley Martel. She presents them to **Health Minister George Smitherman** in the Legislature.

Nurses at St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital, Local 36, deliver a similar message with their own **information picket**. Bargaining Unit President Trudy Frank-MacEwan says that rather than addressing the nursing shortage at her hospital, government balance-the-budget policies will eliminate 14 nursing positions (13 of them full-time) at St. Thomas-Elgin in August.

**May 2:** Prime Minister Stephen Harper's first budget is tabled with **no new money added** to the 10-year plan. The \$20-billion dollar Canada Health Transfer (CHT) will rise \$1.1 billion this year by virtue of a six-per-cent annual escalator that took effect April 1. The federal government urges the provinces and territories to ensure health reforms, spelled out in the 10-year plan, are achieved and that health-care spending is managed efficiently. The timeline for provinces to set wait-time reduction targets for priority procedures is moved to the end of 2006.

**May 29:** The OHA tells ONA's Central Hospital Negotiating Team that it has "no appetite" for continuing bargaining a new contract if the union is unwilling to accept cuts to long- and short-term disability benefits, a proposal **ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud** describes as "draconian." An ONA media release about the breakdown in negotiations receives wide-spread coverage.

**June:** ONA urges its hospital members to contact the Ministry of Health, the Premier and heads of hospitals to urge a withdrawal of the OHA's demands that **nurses' sick benefits be gutted**. Reducing benefits is no way to convince late-career nurses to keep working or to draw young people into the profession, says ONA.

The **closure of Brockville Psychiatric Hospital (BPH)**, Local 74, is off the table. ONA member Shelby Linseman says workers at the facility are relieved "but cautious too," adding that the area definitely needs the BPH's services.

An arbitrator decides that in the case of an ONA Bargaining Unit participating in central hospital negotiations – **Four Counties Health Services** – RPNs with 25 years' experience forming part of the Bargaining Unit are also entitled to the extra salary grid and the two per cent additional compensation awarded in September 2005. The arbitrator says that the Keller-chaired interest Board applied the retention and recruitment incentive to "employees," intending both categories of nurses to be taken into account and noted that when the Keller Board wanted to distinguish between the two classes, it employed the terms RN and RPN.

**June 8-9:** At ONA's exciting and successful **PCM in Thunder Bay**, members from across the province discuss a busy year of campaigns (**Still Not Enough**

**Nurses and Local Health Integration Networks**), bargaining and successful organizing campaigns, highlighted by the representation vote at York Central Hospital. ONA's Health and Safety Specialist does an introduction on violence affecting ONA members, including the death of member Lori Dupont, and a health and safety workshop with the focus on violence and a presentation follows. A province-wide violence initiative will roll out in the fall.

**August:** Members of **Local 81**, Lake-of-the-Woods District Hospital, make public their concerns about the hospital's short-sighted recovery plan for its sizeable deficit.

Interest arbitration hearings take place in hospital-sector bargaining.

**September:** **ONA President Linda Haslam Stroud** responds critically to the report of Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital's internal investigation into the murder of Lori Dupont, calling on the coroner to "bring to light the true scope of events."

A draft provincial report sets out **guidelines for establishing Health Professionals Advisory Committees** (HPACs) within Ontario's 14 LHINs. ONA meets with ministry officials to that ensure nurses, including ONA Local leaders, will have a strong voice on the HPACs.

Local 83 members conduct an **information picket** calling attention to layoffs and understaffing at Ottawa Hospital's Civic Campus.

**November 14:** ONA's **Nursing Homes Central Negotiating Team** outlines the tentative agreement to Local leaders. The agreement is later ratified with 97-per-cent support.

**November 16:** The **Safe Needles** campaign takes centre stage as **ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud** presents 1,500 postcards calling for a law mandating the use of safety-engineered needles at Queen's Park. ONA joined SEIU and OPSEU to support MPP Shelley Martel's private member's bill on the issue.

**November 21-23:** ONA's Biennial Convention at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto **adopts new vision and mission statements**. Former UN Special Envoy on AIDS/HIV in Africa, Stephen Lewis tells the convention that, "Nurses should have the strongest possible voice" in LHINs management. Answering a question from the floor, Health Minister George Smitherman appears to open the door to the possibility of ONA negotiating directly with the province in central hospital bargaining, rather than with the OHA. Convention passes motions to eliminate the limit on the number of years that members can sit on the Board and to continue to affiliate with the Ontario Federation

of Labour. Six new ONA DVDs are unveiled and Local executive members are honoured at a special luncheon. The new ONA website is officially launched.

**December:** The year ends with ONA waiting for the **arbitration award** in the hospital sector.

The *National Survey of the Work and Health of Nurses* is released and finds that two-thirds of nurses say they have too much work for one person to do. One-third surveyed say they work too much overtime, nearly half unpaid. Rates of violence were also up, according to the report and 11 per cent say they suffered a workplace injury in the last year.

# 2007

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## Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is President

**January:** The **final report of the Independent SARS Commission** demonstrates a clear understanding of the critical issues faced by nurses during the outbreak. ONA members figure prominently throughout the report, and Justice Archie Campbell praises the role of RNs, their bravery, and calls them the heroes of the crisis. The report recommends dozens of changes to hospital practices, disease surveillance and provincial and public health and emergency legislation. Most significantly, the report calls for the use of the precautionary principle – or erring on the side of caution – when there is uncertainty about the transmission of a disease.

The **OHA dismisses the call for the precautionary principle to be used** – ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud rebuts the OHA position in a series of letters to the editor and opinion editorials.

ONA holds its annual **Treasurers Workshop** with Local Treasurers from across the province. Attendees learn about financial issues, receive training on applicable accounting programs and connect with others. New Local Coordinators receive an orientation on how to effectively manage fiscal issues in accordance with ONA's policies and Constitution.

ONA tells the **Standing Committee on Long-Term Care** that the government must include minimum staffing levels and improve whistle-blower protection in its amendments to *Bill 140, The Long-Term Care Act*.

**February:** ONA tells a roundtable discussing the **2007 Ontario budget** that significant investments must be made in nursing, with strict accountability conditions attached in order to improve the health care of Ontarians.

ONA launches **E-News**, a new electronic newsletter that is e-mailed to all interested members who sign up.

The newsletter is designed to provide a quick update on breaking news of interest to ONA members.

The minus-30-degree temperatures don't stop ONA members from joining the Ontario Health Coalition **rally for public health care** outside the First Minister's meeting in Toronto.

ONA reaches a **settlement with North Bay General Hospital** which addresses many health and safety grievances filed in the spring of 2003. The grievances were filed following the discovery of problems with the installation of new anesthetic gas machines at the hospital's Scollard site.

ONA members join other activists to protest outside **Humber River Regional Hospital** when the hospital appeals a Ministry of Labour order to provide safety-engineered medical devices to staff. More than 100 needlestick injuries have occurred at the hospital in three years.

**March:** The **Albertyn Award** is announced for almost 50,000 hospital nurses, giving them wage increases and other improvements over a two-year contract. ONA says that although Ontario nurses will maintain the highest maximum wage rate in Canada, the overall total compensation package lags behind Alberta's and doesn't go far enough to address the serious issues facing Ontario RNs.

Attendees of **ONA's March PCM** in Toronto get a special private, guided tour of a new exhibit, "A Century of Women and Work." The exhibit, at Toronto's City Hall, is launched by the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre to highlight women's determination to effect change through the decades. Toronto Mayor David Miller interrupts city budget discussions to greet ONA members and praise the work of nurses.

Stemming from a 2006 Biennial Convention motion, ONA begins holding **pandemic planning workshops** as part of the spring Area Coordinators Conferences.

After failing to reach a negotiated agreement, **ONA's Eastern Ontario Homes for the Aged Negotiating Team** and participating homes proceed to arbitration.

Professional staff at the South West Community Care Access Centre – in the first *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* representation vote – overwhelming **vote for ONA**. The votes are necessary because of the realignment of CCACs under the 14 new Local Health Integration Networks.

ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud is chosen as a Canadian delegate to join leaders from 35 Commonwealth countries to participate in the **Commonwealth Study Conference**. The group examines the human aspects of industrial issues in Commonwealth nations, pools their experience and studies views and options. India is the host country for the study.

A new study shows that Canadians have become more reliant on home care, but **funding isn't keeping**

**up with need**. Spending on home care has more than doubled since 1995, but increases haven't kept up with inflation and demand has risen as population growth has accelerated.

**April:** ONA wins the second *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* vote, this time at the **Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Community Care Access Centre**.

ONA leaders and staff attend a somber **Day of Mourning** ceremony in Toronto to commemorate workers who have been injured or killed on the job. Members across the province participate in local ceremonies marking the occasion and remember Lori Dupont, RN, the nurse murdered at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor.

ONA's highly successful **Still Not Enough Nurses** campaign shifts its focus to the Local level.

ONA members join 3,000 concerned Sarnia citizens to protest the management and governance of **Bluewater Health**, Local 19. It has come under heavy criticism for its cost-cutting measures and ONA has censured the hospital for more than five years.

The provincial government introduces amendments to *Bill 171, The Health Systems Improvement Act, 2006* which address concerns raised by ONA, including adding the precautionary principle to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. The bill also adds some protection to posting personal health information of regulated health professionals on relevant College websites.

**Justice Archie Campbell** passes away, and ONA expresses deep sadness at losing such a strong champion of nurses.

**Negotiations break down** between the Halton Region Public Health Unit and ONA. The two remain apart regarding wages, hours of work and equitable benefits packages for permanent, part-time nurses.

**May:** ONA leaders, members and staff, carrying six-foot, blood-tipped "needles," converge on Queen's Park to send the message that safe needles save lives. The **May Day rally** is organized by Region 3 and includes ONA allies, staff and help from the needlestick alliance. The event attracts a great deal of media attention.

Members across the province and the ONA Board acknowledge and celebrate the profession during **Nursing Week 2007**. The Nursing Week theme is 'Our Nurses. Respected, Vital Professionals. Caring for You.'

ONA experiences a triumph when a **Coroner's Jury Inquest** is called into the murder of member Lori Dupont, RN and ONA is one of six parties granted standing. The inquest begins in September 2007 – ONA has been advocating for the inquest since shortly after the incident.

ONA's article, *Pandemic Flu Preparedness:*

*The Nurses' Perspective*, is the cover story of the Ontario Federation of Labour's *Focus on Health Care* publication.

Thanks to the involvement of ONA Locals and Bargaining Units, ONA is listed on the United Way of Greater Toronto's **Union Honour Roll**.

ONA encourages non-bona fide members to sign membership cards. Only bona fide members can attend ONA meetings (other than strike/ratification meetings) and receive ONA publications. Several hundred non-bona fide members sign up as a result.

**June: North Bay General Hospital is convicted** and fined \$25,000 for its failure to deal with improperly installed and malfunctioning anesthetic gas equipment that led to a nitrous oxide leak. ONA calls this a wake-up call for improved occupational health and safety practices in all Ontario hospitals.

ONA has two more **successful Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act votes** – at the Central and Central East CCACs.

ONA continues meeting with the OHA over a series of implementation issues arising from the Albertyn Arbitration Award.

Niagara Falls is the site of ONA's June PCM. During the meeting, members take time to travel to the St. Catharines' site of the Niagara Health System and hold a **successful rally** to protest serious ongoing workload issues. The ONA Board agrees to Local 26's request to reissue the censure against the NHS.

The **Independent Assessment Committee** issues 19 recommendations for Grand River Hospital Corporation in Kitchener-Waterloo (Local 19). The hospital's surgical unit is the target of the recommendations – ONA meets with the IAC to discuss the recommendations, which focus on improving staffing, resource supports and communications.

About 134 ONA members attend the **Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions biennial conference** in St. John's, Newfoundland. At the convention, ONA's resolution calling on the CFNU to support the precautionary principle is overwhelmingly passed. ONA's position statement, "Racism and Racial Discrimination in the Workplace," is also endorsed.

ONA leaders and staff carry **ONA's rainbow flag** in the Toronto Gay Pride Parade as part of the union's commitment to human rights and equity.

**July:** ONA mourns the loss of Lois Fairley, RN. Fairley served as ONA President from 1977 to 1978.

**August:** Years of lobbying finally pay off as the provincial government announces that the use of safety-engineered needles will become mandatory, and that the government will stockpile N-95 respirators for

health-care workers' use in the event of a flu pandemic.

ONA calls on the Ministry of Labour to investigate a violent physical attack on three RNs at Windsor's Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. ONA believes under-staffing and lax security measures put the nurses at risk.

**September:** After eight years, ONA's Board lifts its censure against University Health Network in Toronto.

**October:** The first issue of the new *Front Lines* publication is launched. The publication is a merger of *ONA Vision* magazine and the former *Front Lines* newsletter.

ONA members are the first to voice their concerns about a controversial new **chewing gum commercial that negatively depicts nurses**. The ad is removed from the airwaves soon afterward.

**November:** ONA's November PCM is held in Toronto. During the meeting, members rally outside **Humber River Regional Hospital**, protesting poor labour relations practices. The media provide widespread coverage. President Linda Haslam-Stroud is elected for a third term as ONA President. First Vice-President Vicki McKenna is acclaimed for a second term.

ONA attends the **OFL** conference in Toronto and makes a splash, with a number of members attending, and participation in a rally. Also during the OFL conference, ONA holds a media conference to demand immediate legislation to protect nurses from **workplace violence**. The call comes as three nurses at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health suffer injuries – some severe – at the hands of a patient. The media conference attracts widespread coverage from television, radio and print journalists.

ONA's inaugural **Leadership Development Program** participants wrap up the program, with the group noting they are already using the new leadership skills they've developed in the program. The goal of the program is to increase leadership representation from under-represented groups.

**December:** The **Coroner's Jury** investigating the death of Lori Dupont, RN returns with 26 recommendations on December 11. The recommendations are aimed at preventing similar incidents in the future. ONA is very pleased with the recommendations, which address our concerns. They include a review of Ontario's *Public Hospitals Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Act* with a view to including emotional or psychological harm as a workplace safety issue.

The ONA Board issues a position statement on **hallway nursing/overcapacity**. ONA urges the Ontario government to take action to eliminate overcapacity protocols that result in hallway nursing.

# 2008

## Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is President

**January:** ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud attends a **Save our Home Care** rally in Hamilton with about 1,500 community members, ONA members and other unions. The rally is the latest in a series of media and grass-roots events to protest the use of the competitive bidding process for home-care providers that has resulted in long-time providers losing their contracts.

One week after the rally, the Ministry of Health announces it has **halted the competitive bidding process** for home-care services and will again review the process.

**February:** ONA hospital-sector Bargaining Unit Presidents review a **tentative deal reached** with the OHA. The agreement – ratified overwhelmingly in March – includes salary increases of 3.25, 3 and 3 per cent, plus lump sum payments of up to \$3,250 per member. It also includes vacation, benefit and premium improvements, a new premium for student supervision, contract language regarding improving workplace safety, commitments to address violence in the workplace and dental benefits for retirees.

ONA's **Human Rights and Equity Team** recommendations for an Equity Caucus education session are endorsed by the Board. They are: the duty to accommodate, focusing on mental illness and addictions, and how to accommodate an individual within their restrictions.

ONA President **Linda Haslam-Stroud joins BC Nurses Union** members to participate in a panel discussion on "Nurses Fighting Public Health Care." She speaks about the efforts in Hamilton to halt the competitive bidding process for home-care providers, and joins BCNU members in a march to protest long-term care conditions.

**March:** The provincial government announces an increase in spending of \$500 million over the next three years to **hire 9,000 more nurses**, 2,000 being designated for long-term care during the next four years. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud says the main concern is the lack of specific details about how and when the money will be released, and the challenge of finding 9,000 more nurses.

ONA mourns the **loss of Monica Leslie**, RN at the age of 71. Leslie was a dedicated nurse and union leader and served as Provincial President of ONA.

ONA leaders from across the province attend the **March PCM** in Toronto. They hear from OFL President Wayne Samelson, Chief Nursing Officer Vanessa

Burkoski and attend an education session on how to hold "meticulous" meetings.

ONA declares that **emergency room overcrowding – and hallway nursing** – is the biggest issue facing hospital-sector RNs. Haslam-Stroud tells the media that ER overcrowding is having a domino effect throughout the health-care system. Ontario has a shortage of long-term care beds, and not enough nurses working in the community to provide the necessary home care.

Health Minister George Smitherman announces the appointment of the founding president and CEO of the new **Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion**, and that the new agency will be named the Sheela Basrur Centre in honour of the former Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health. Dr. Basrur – whom many consider the heroine of SARS – is suffering from cancer.

ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud speaks to a group of community members in Toronto about **challenges to home care**.

**April:** ONA leaders and Local 24 members hit the media with news that **Rouge Valley Health System will lay off 72 nurses** to eliminate a large budget deficit. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud writes an impassioned opinion editorial published by the *Toronto Sun* that ties the issues of workplace violence and nursing lay offs together. Local 24 Bargaining Unit President Carol Oates appears on a number of television newscasts to discuss the impact on patient care.

On April 28, ONA members across the province mark the **2008 Day of Mourning**. They remember ONA members Tecla Lin and Nelia Laroza who died during the SARS outbreak, and Lori Dupont. ONA leaders join a Toronto service of remembrance.

**May:** ONA leaders and members join other unions for a **May Day rally** at Queen's Park. Carrying signs reading, 'Workplace Violence: Not Part of the Job!' participants urge the Ministry of Labour to treat workplace violence like any other hazard and demand that employers take every precaution reasonable to protect workers' health and safety in the health-care setting.

ONA leaders visit dozens of workplaces and meet hundreds of members during **Nursing Week 2008**. Members also receive a video greeting from Linda Haslam-Stroud. Media interest is high as President Linda Haslam-Stroud travels the province, and there is extensive coverage of the nursing shortage and worsening conditions.

ONA Local leaders and members attend the **Canadian Labour Congress** convention to discuss ways of improving the quality of life of workers and their families. ONA members participate in a rally and mass leafleting in support of the campaign for women's economic equality.

**June:** ONA holds its **June PCM in Ottawa**. Region 2 hosts members, who are welcomed by the Mayor of Ottawa, hear reports on governance and operations, bargaining updates, organizing, local elections and our ongoing fight against RN lay offs. Members remember Dr. Sheela Basrur, who passes away from a rare form of cancer.

A new report is issued by the Canadian Nurses Association that confirms what ONA has been saying: there **aren't enough nurses graduating** to replace all the RNs who are about to retire. In 2007, 9,447 RN graduates were eligible for registration but that is far short of the 12,000 RNs needed to keep up with demand. Canada is graduating far fewer nurses than it did 30 years ago, despite a 39-per-cent increase in population.

ONA expresses disappointment in the **Sharkey report on long-term care**. The report fails to recommend a regulation requiring a minimum standard of care for residents, something the provincial government has been promising for years. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud notes that none of the thousands of new nursing positions in long-term care announced by the provincial government are RN positions, and says seniors need the skills and experience of RNs on their care teams.

ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna joins the **Governor-General's Study Conference** as it embarks on a weeks-long tour of Canada's north.

**July:** ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna joins CUPE, SEIU and OPSEU leaders at Queen's Park media conference calling for immediate **improvements to long-term care**. A new report fails to recommend a minimum standard of nursing and personal care regulation in long-term care residents. McKenna notes that the voluntary guidelines called for in the report "won't improve the quality of care for our seniors. The increasing care needs means they require the experience and skills of an RN on their care team."

ONA agrees to enter into a joint mediation process with the provincial government in an effort to settle the **class action lawsuit on behalf of CCAC members**. The suit was launched to redress the government's failure to live up to its promise to ensure members' full pensionable service to the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan.

ONA and Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital **resolve a long-standing grievance filed following the workplace murder of Lori Dupont, RN**. The hospital agrees to implement all the recommendations of the Coroner's Jury that are within its legal ability, commits to a violence- and harassment-free workplace, and will hire a full-time Safe Workplace Advocate.

ONA informs the media that Toronto East General Hospital is **cutting 26 RN positions** – the beginning of a series of media-relations efforts to inform the public about ongoing nursing cuts across the province.

**August: RN positions being cut continues** and ONA continues with its media releases. The Nursing Secretariat asks ONA to keep it informed of layoffs. In July and August, cuts are made to RN positions in Toronto, Hamilton, Hagersville, Leamington and Sturgeon Falls as hospitals grapple with budget deficits.

**September:** ONA members participate in a **mass protest** organized by the Ontario Health Coalition in support of public health care. 'Listen Up, McGuinty!' is the theme as participants urge the Premier to stop the cuts to hospital services and public-private partnerships, rid the province of competitive bidding for home-care services permanently, regulate a minimum care standard in long-term care and put an end to privatization and two-tier medicine.

**October:** The Ministry of Labour's 30-day consultation period begins – it will examine whether there is a need to amend the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* with a view to **including violence as a workplace hazard**. ONA provides input, as do a number of other health-care-related unions.

ONA provincial leaders and members join hundreds of health care workers and members of the public to demand the preservation of public health care in Ontario. '**Listen Up, McGuinty!**' **rallies**, organized by the Ontario Health Coalition, call for the government to stop the cuts to hospitals, bring in a minimum standard of care for long-term care residents and end competitive bidding in home care.

**October 18:** Public health nurses at the **Grey Bruce Public Health Unit reach a settlement** during mediation, after several months of negotiations and just hours before an October 18 strike deadline. The three-year agreement includes wage increases which narrow the gap between nurses within this health unit and their counterparts in neighbouring counties.

**October 21:** Following **another assault of a nurse**, ONA calls on the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to stem the rising number of violent attacks on front-line health care workers. ONA believes CAMH is in violation of orders written by Ministry of Labour inspectors after assaults on RNs the previous November. The Ministry had ordered that CAMH develop a workplace violence policy and program, but CAMH hadn't done so.

**November:** ONA leaders and members attend the Biennial Convention, Human Rights and Equity Caucus and education session with the theme, '**ONA 35 Years: A Proud Past. A Powerful Future.**' Delegates vote to establish a student affiliate membership classification for Ontario members of the CNSA to encourage links

with students prior to graduation and support them in their transition into the workforce.

ONA leaders commit to taking a **new approach to the Professional Responsibility Clause**, to provide more education and support to members on the issues of workload and professional responsibility.

In a new workshop preview, participants at the **Human Rights and Equity Caucus** are educated on accommodation of workers with addiction and mental illness.

**ONA Vice-Presidents** are elected/acclaimed during the fall televote: Region 1: Diane Parker; Region 2: Anne Clark; Region 3: Andy Summers; Region 4: Dianne Leclair; and Region 5: Karen Bertrand.

ONA leaders, members and staff take part in the two-day Ontario Health Coalition Strategy Summit on **Ontario's Planned Hospital Cuts, Downsizing and Restructuring**. They discuss the extent of hospital cuts across the province, identify trends, and firm up messaging and strategies.

**December:** Following a year-long media push by ONA which outlined escalating violence, **CAMH is charged** by the Ministry of Labour with violating the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Nine charges include failing to develop and maintain violence prevention procedures and failing to protect workers.

ONA expresses shock when the government says it is reinstating the **request for proposal process for home care services**, less than one year after announcing a temporary suspension of the controversial system. Competitive bidding has resulted in a lack of job security for ONA members and an absence of continuity of care for home care clients. Several newspapers publish letters from President Linda Haslam-Stroud.

The College of Nurses of Ontario reports that 24,083 registered nurses are aged 55 and up – **more than one in four RNs is eligible to retire**. ONA calls for investment to be stepped up to stop the flow of nurses from the profession.

**December 4:** ONA leaders, members and staff join allies and politicians to demand the government implement a **minimum standard of care for long-term care residents** at the Canadian Union of Public Employees' 'Rally for 3.5' at Queen's Park in Toronto.

**December 11:** Before the **pre-budget Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs**, ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud says that laying off nurses and reducing hours to meet a government directive to balance budgets is wrong. "Ontario health care employers cannot balance their budgets on the backs of registered nurses and their patients."

**December 11:** Following mediation, 645 ONA case

managers and allied health care workers reach a **settlement with the Central Community Care Access Centre**, narrowly averting a strike. Bargaining began in November 2007 following the merger of five separate Bargaining Units as a result of the realignment of health care services when Local Health Integration Networks were created. The settlement includes harmonized wages across the Central CCAC and improvements to wages, benefits and working conditions.

# 2009

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## Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is President

**January:** ONA **Local 67 members reach a settlement** with the South East Community Care Access Centre.

ONA hosts the **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) Negotiators Meeting** as they discuss bargaining strategies, issues, trends and difficulties.

**ONA goes to arbitration** in an attempt to stop the layoffs of 42 registered nurses working as Patient Care Coordinators or on the medical, surgical and transitional care units at **Toronto East General Hospital**.

ONA is appalled by the announcement that **Hamilton Health Sciences is cutting 51 RNs** and decreasing work hours of other positions. It prepares dozens of grievances and a court action over the forced transfers, and encourages members to send letters to their MPPs.

**January 27-29:** ONA Treasurers and new Local Coordinators attend the annual **Treasurers/Local Coordinators Conference** to discuss financial issues, receive training on accounting software and network with colleagues. ONA launches *Minutes, Motions and Meticulous Meetings*, a CD toolkit comprised of templates to help Locals run their meetings more efficiently.

**February:** ONA **launches the Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care campaign** with radio ads running in 10 Ontario cities. The campaign lobbies the government and employers and educates the public on the serious impact nurse layoffs and reductions in nursing hours are having on patient care. The campaign includes a dedicated website – **www.cuttingnursescuttingcare.ca** – offering facts about the cuts, the nursing shortage and risks to patient care. The site also features a link so visitors can easily e-mail their MPP. The same week, Leamington District Memorial Hospital closes beds and warns that RN cuts are coming.

A new survey shows that **83 per cent of Ontarians**

**polled oppose cutting RN jobs** and nursing hours to balance health care facility budgets. Poll results also show 77 per cent of respondents believe that the current uncertain economic conditions are not a good reason for delaying the government-promised hiring of 9,000 nurses.

ONA First Vice-President **Vicki McKenna speaks at a town hall meeting in Owen Sound** regarding concerns about decisions made by the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit to lay off two full-time and four part-time public health nurses, close satellite offices, and cut services and programs to deal with its deficit

ONA prepares a **resolution on public health** for the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions National Executive Board, urging it and its member organizations to lobby to reverse the erosion of the roles of public health members. Public health programming should grow and the significant role of public health nurses be recognized.

The **Ontario Court of Appeal hears ONA's case** against the Ontario government over its handling of the SARS outbreak in Toronto. ONA launched an action against the government in 2005 on behalf of ONA member Tecla Lin, who tragically lost her life in the second SARS outbreak, and on behalf of 52 other nurses, for negligence in the handling of the SARS outbreak.

**February 23: ONA launches phase II of Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care.** A television ad airs across the province for two weeks and transit shelter ads and billboards are up in numerous cities across Ontario. The multi-faceted campaign garners extensive media and public attention.

**February 23:** ONA asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to **review the Grey Bruce Health Unit** under section 82 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. ONA is concerned that management decisions about service delivery and the cutting of public health nursing positions will result in the degradation of its ability to deliver mandated services. The review would also assess the quality of management's administration of the affairs of the board of health.

**February 26:** Addressing the topic of emergency room wait time targets set by the government, ONA President **Linda Haslam-Stroud appears on Goldhawk Live**. She says setting targets is a fine exercise "on paper," but that the system needs more RNs and beds. Haslam-Stroud speaks about hallway nursing and the rising morbidity and mortality risks as RNs are required to care for increasing numbers of patients when their workloads are already too heavy.

**March:** ONA decries the decision of **Bluewater Health to cut 18 RN positions**, including some in

its mental health, surgical/day surgery, medicine, maternity, professional practice educator, rehabilitation, ambulatory care and breast screening areas.

**March 3:** ONA says the **Canadian Blood Services' plan to replace RNs** with unregulated employees will risk the safety of Canada's blood supply. CBS plans to train people to become "multi-skilled employees" and perform the health screening and health assessments work previously done by ONA members in its collection sites and clinics.

**March 4-5:** The **March Provincial Coordinators Meeting** is held and delegates hear from nursing student representatives, who speak of their participation in ONA's **Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care** campaign.

**March 5:** ONA leaders, members, staff, CNSA members and allies **rally at Queen's Park, carrying 'Stop the Nursing Cuts'** signs. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud reads out a list of 61 health care facilities where RN positions are being cut, totalling one million hours of lost care to patients, clients and residents.

**March 26:** ONA says the **provincial budget** does nothing to address the ongoing reduction of nursing care hours and asks the government to direct health care facilities to find alternative ways to balance their budgets to sustain the nursing workforce and ensure that patients receive the quality care they need.

**April:** ONA reaches a **settlement with Toronto East General** to stop implementing layoffs of Patient Care Coordinators (PCCs). RNs performing the team leader role in the new model will be paid the premium the hospital was refusing. As well, the grievors are allowed to stay in their current positions and receive the full notice pay they were denied.

Despite an **Independent Assessment Committee's** report that ONA members working in the ER of the **Niagara Health System's St. Catharines' site** are caring for too many patients to do so safely, the organization announces it is cutting even more RNs.

In a presentation to the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association, ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud speaks about **workplace safety and the coroner's jury recommendations** after the November 2005 murder of ONA member Lori Dupont.

ONA leaders, members and staff join labour allies and other concerned citizens at a Canadian Auto Workers rally at Queen's Park in Toronto to demand **stronger pension protections from government and corporations**.

**April 2:** President Linda Haslam-Stroud **urges Leamington residents to speak out about the**



**deterioration of health care in their community**, and refers them to the **cuttingnursescuttingcare** website. Leamington Hospital is slashing RN positions, closing half of its intensive care unit beds and accelerating the closure of its rehabilitation program.

**April 15-17: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care David Caplan** and his policy advisor attend ONA's board meeting to discuss Ontario's health care priorities and ONA's concerns about nursing layoffs, position/hour reductions in all sectors and the need to stabilize the nursing workforce.

**April 18:** About 4,000 concerned citizens and dozens of ONA members protest hospital cuts and closures at Queen's Park. Busloads of people come from across Ontario and send an urgent SOS – '**Save Our Services**' – to the provincial government. They outline a strategy to protect local hospitals and save health care services in the province.

**April 28:** At the annual **Day of Mourning** services in Toronto, ONA Region 3 Vice-President Andy Summers tells the crowd that in addition to threats posed by infectious diseases and registered nursing position cuts, front-line nurses continue to face workplace violence and abuse in record numbers.

**May:** On **May Day**, ONA Region 3 members hand out **Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care** campaign flyers to downtown Toronto commuters. **Quinte Health Care Local 31** members demonstrate outside the offices of the Southeast Local Health Integration Network and meet with their MPP to discuss their working conditions.

The Ontario government releases the first set of draft regulations under the **Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007**, for a 30-day public consultation. ONA is dismayed that they do not contain a minimum staffing standard of 3.5 hours per long-term care resident per day and points out a number of gaps in content and process in a submission to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

ONA enters into a joint **mediation process** with the provincial government to settle a class action lawsuit initiated on behalf of ONA and OPSEU members working for **community care access centres**. The suit was launched to redress the government's failure to live up to its promise to ensure the transfer of members' full pensionable service to the **Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan**.

**May 7:** ONA Region 3 leaders and members join Vice-President Andy Summers for a Stewards Assembly organized by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council entitled "**Solidarity in a Time of Crisis**." Attendees discuss the looming challenges

the economic crisis will put on wage levels, benefits, pensions and basic labour rights, and map out a united defence of collective agreements and the standard of living of members.

**May 7:** The Ontario Court of Appeal **dismisses a class action suit brought by registered nurses following the SARS outbreak**, ruling that the provincial government does not owe a "private law duty of care" to front-line registered nurses and that the "interest of nurses cannot be prioritized over the general public interest." Nurses decry the lack of accountability. ONA subsequently applies to the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal this decision.

**May 11-17:** Celebrations for **Nursing Week** begin with a series of site visits across the province by ONA leaders. The theme for 2009 is, 'Our Nurses. Respected, Vital Professionals.'

**June:** ONA leaders and members rally at Queen's Park for the 26th annual **Injured Workers' Day** to protest health and safety legislation that doesn't adequately protect workers, and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board policies that can restrict workers' entitlements to benefits.

ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna travels to Regina, Saskatchewan to demand the First Ministers take real action on their **10-year strategic plan to boost health care**.

ONA leaders and grassroots members join allies for the Canadian Labour Congress' '**Good Jobs for All**' rally in downtown Toronto. They demand that the government fix Employment Insurance, protect pensions and put people before banks.

To celebrate equality, diversity and human rights, ONA leaders and members wave ONA's pride banner and ONA flags as they march in Toronto's annual **Pride Parade**.

ONA leaders and members speak out **about the real impact the recession is having** on working Canadians at the Ontario Federation of Labour's 'Drive to Work Caravan' rallies in various communities throughout the province.

**June 3-4:** The **June PCM** is hosted by Region 3 (York Region) in King City. Delegates receive reports on governance and operations, and updates on bargaining in all sectors, organizing, the ONA budget, student affiliation activities, Nursing Week and the **Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care** campaign.

**June 8-12:** A large delegation of ONA members attends the **CFNU Biennial Convention** in Vancouver, to discuss nursing concerns at both the provincial and national levels. ONA presents a session on the lessons learned from the Lori Dupont case.

**June 12:** More than 2,000 RNs working in **151 Ontario nursing homes ratify a new collective agreement** which improves occupational health and safety and provides for the precautionary principle. The agreement between ONA members and participating nursing homes runs from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011 and includes wage increases, gains in workload and staffing issues and increases to premiums. Wage parity with hospitals has not yet been achieved.

**June 25:** ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna makes a **presentation in Ottawa to the Canadian Blood Services Board of Directors**, discouraging CBS from its plan to replace RNs with unregulated workers. ONA takes its concerns to the media and embarks on a new phase of activities, including a letter-writing campaign and online petition.

**June 26:** By an overwhelming vote, RNs with the **North Bay General Hospital and North Eastern Mental Health Centre choose ONA** to be their union following the amalgamation of those two facilities.

**June 27:** ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud presents at the **International Council of Nurses' 24<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Congress in South Africa**. She speaks to nurses from throughout the world on ONA's fight against violence in the workplace.

**July:** ONA asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to appoint an assessor to **investigate what appears to be poor management at the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit**. Soon after the health unit signed a new three-year contract with ONA members last October, the employer announced that it wanted to cut six RN positions.

ONA wins **an important rights award for members serving as diabetic educators and infection control/occupational health coordinators** (both classified as RNs) at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elliot Lake, Local 2. An arbitrator orders a wage grid for the diabetic educator of 4.5 per cent higher than an RN if not certified, nine per cent higher when certified, and rates three per cent and six per cent higher for the infection control/occupational health coordinator.

As the **World Health Organization declares a worldwide pandemic** and with flu season rapidly approaching, ONA reminds members to use the precautionary principle at all times. A Pandemic Steering Committee is set up to monitor and report the latest information on the virus on ONA's website.

ONA requests that the Ministry of Health appoint **an investigator to look into the quality of management and administration of the Niagara Health System (NHS)**. The request stems from ongoing concerns at the St. Catharines General and Greater Niagara General sites, including poor working conditions,

workload issues, labour relations issues and patient safety and practice concerns. ONA has censured NHS since 2003.

**July 10:** A new three-year **collective agreement with the Regional Municipality of Niagara covering 154 public health nurses** is ratified by both parties. The new contract, retroactive to April 1, 2008, runs until March 31, 2011 and contains annual wage adjustments of 3.0 per cent in 2008, 2.75 per cent in 2009 and 2.5 per cent in 2010.

**August:** Although the World Health Organization is recommending that health care workers in every country be immunized against the H1N1 virus, **ONA objects to any attempts to make the vaccination mandatory** for members, saying it is a human rights issue.

**Members at Hamilton's St. Joseph's HealthCare, Local 75, win a precedent-setting arbitration ruling** which prevents their employer from arbitrarily transferring nurses from one job to another to try to balance the budget. The arbitrator rules that the reassignment of nurses whose jobs have been declared surplus constitutes a layoff, and they should receive the same rights under the collective agreement as nurses losing their jobs.

**August 6:** ONA **applies to the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal** the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal that dismissed an action on behalf of 53 nurses who contracted SARS while caring for infected patients in 2003.

**August 13:** **CAMH pleads guilty to two charges** filed against it under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, thus avoiding a trial. CAMH is fined \$35,000 for each charge. Despite the admission of guilt, ONA notes that this employer continues to fail to provide a safe workplace.

**September 3:** **Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is acclaimed as President** and will serve a fourth two-year term. **Vicki McKenna, RN is also acclaimed** and will serve a third term as First Vice-President.

**September 7:** Approximately 50 ONA members, staff and their family and friends accompany a specially decorated mobile ONA stage, complete with music and microphones, at **Toronto's annual Labour Day Parade**, celebrating solidarity and our accomplishments as a collective.

**September 14:** ONA expresses **concerns about the future quality of resident care at Community Nursing Home Port Perry** as staff is dramatically cut. ONA holds an information picket outside the Home.

**September 22:** ONA appeals the decision by a Ministry of Labour inspector to not issue orders against London Health Sciences Centre or make recommendations for improvements in procedures and practices following the death of one of an RN of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

**September 28:** As a first step in trying to resolve ongoing conflicts, ONA's Board of Directors approves the lifting of the censure that has been in place against the Bluewater Health over labour relations issues since June 2002. ONA hopes that Bluewater management will move quickly to prove to front-line RNs that this significant move is recognized, respected and reciprocated.

**October:** In a certification vote at Westmont Long-Term Care Residence in Kitchener, all its RNs vote in favour of joining ONA.

**October 1:** ONA retains three RNs and gains six new members as a result of a *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* vote at the Queen's Family Health Team in Kingston.

**October 7:** The 157 registered nurses and registered practical nurses at the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) vote to join ONA.

**October 7:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care David Caplan resigns, just as the auditor general's report into spending scandals at e-Health Ontario is released. Deb Matthews assumes the health ministry portfolio.

**October 13:** Public health nurses with the Haldimand Norfolk Public Health Unit vote 90 per cent in favour of a strike. The nurses have been without a contract since March 31, 2009. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, the two sides reach a mediated settlement.

**October 26:** ONA wins an important arbitration decision related to disability management. Hamilton Health Sciences Centre (HHSC) is found to have engaged in "bad-faith behaviour" and "reckless" management related to the case of an ONA registered nurse who tried to return to work following an illness. This award is one of a number of successful arbitrations for ONA on attendance management against HHSC.

**November:** ONA launches a media-targeted newsletter, *Behind the Front Lines*, which provides a critical look and recap of health care news. It is sent to a targeted list of health care journalists across the province.

The government amends the Needle Safety Regulation under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to

make it apply to additional health care workplaces. The regulation, which currently pertains to hospitals, long-term care homes, laboratories, specimen collection centres and psychiatric facilities, is extended to include public health units, doctors' and dentists' offices, community health centres, independent health facilities, family health teams and home care services. This is the culmination of an exhaustive campaign with our union allies that began in November 2005.

**November 10:** The annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus is held in Toronto. Team members are given "ownership" of the day by serving as lead facilitators in their designated group's breakout session, a role generally performed by a member of staff.

**November 17:** ONA's Board of Directors agrees to censure Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation (HHSC). The major issues include continuing disrespectful treatment of disabled and ill registered nurses by a firm contracted by HHSC, repeated challenges to past practices and well-established interpretations of the collective agreement, and a decline in responsiveness and information-sharing with the nurses' representative at Joint Health & Safety Committee meetings, such as the suspension of N95 respirator fit-testing of staff in the midst of the flu pandemic.

**December 3:** Registered nurses and nurse practitioners with Sudbury & District Public Health Unit reach a tentative settlement. The 118 ONA members have been working with an expired contract since April 1, 2009.

**December 17:** RNs in Ontario are devastated to learn that the Supreme Court of Canada has denied an appeal of an earlier legal decision regarding responsibility for keeping nurses safe during the SARS outbreak.

# 2010

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Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, is President

**January:** 2010 is designated "International Year of the Nurse" to recognize the significant contributions of the world's nurses in bringing health to their communities and promoting the United Nations' goal of world health.

ONA releases an electronic Professional Responsibility Workload Reporting Form (PRWRF) and guide specific to the public health sector.

ONA welcomes 12 new RN members from Queens Garden Long-Term Care Residence in Hamilton, 11

RNs from **Cedarvale Lodge** in Keswick, and 18 RNs from **Meadowpark Nursing Home** in London.

**January 19:** Determined letter-writing by Local 51 Bargaining Unit Presidents and the ONA Board and staff yields a successful result as **the Central East LHIN commits additional base funding to Lakeridge Health** – enough for the hospital to rescind plans to close its respiratory therapy clinic and merge the outpatient adult day hospital.

**January 26-30:** The ONA Board shows the union's commitment to future nurses by supporting and attending the **National Conference of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA)** in Quebec City.

**January 26-27:** ONA Local Treasurers meet to discuss financial issues, receive training on applicable accounting software and network at the annual **Treasurers Workshop** in downtown Toronto.

**February:** ONA launches its **newly redesigned website, www.org** with an improved search feature and political campaign pages which allow a campaign to quickly be set up for Locals.

The **New Member Orientation Toolkit** becomes available for download on the ONA website, providing leaders with the tools to inform new members of their rights as union members and provide them with the contact information for Local leaders.

ONA calls for **an IAC hearing into RN staffing levels at Cassellholme Home for the Aged** in North Bay. RNs working at Cassellholme believe that inadequate staffing of full- and part-time nurses, unfilled vacancies on work schedules, failure to replace RNs, heavy workloads and a high volume of assigned non-nursing duties are taking them away from resident care, as well as a very high staff turnover rate.

**February 1:** ONA joins allies in the provincial labour movement in launching the **Communities That Work** campaign, an ad campaign **to lobby for a 'good jobs' budget** from the Ontario government.

**February 9:** ONA warns that London-area cancer patients will face longer wait times as **London Health Sciences Centre cuts five of its 22 full-time and four of its part-time front-line primary care nurses providing outpatient cancer care**. The hospital also announced that all seven registered nurses (two part-time, five casual) working in the Ontario breast screening program have been eliminated. Mobilization by Local 100 and the community includes a Facebook page, petitions, and letters to the editor. The Local also holds a Town Hall meeting that is well attended by media, the public and politicians. The resulting public

outcry is overwhelming and results in the employer delaying the cuts.

**February 26:** ONA urges patients and the community to protest as the **Ottawa Hospital announces that it is laying off 70 RNs and is eliminating 120 RN positions**. Some of those positions will be replaced by less-skilled workers.

**March:** At the **March 2010 Provincial Coordinators Meeting**, the Professional Practice Specialists deliver education on "RN/RPN Scope of Practice: Managing Issues at the Bargaining Unit Level." President Linda Haslam-Stroud **challenges Local leaders to help spread the message to elected officials** that it's unacceptable for health care facilities to balance budgets on the backs of RNs and patients, which results in a deluge of letters to the editor and politicians.

ONA participates in the **Ontario Health Coalition's public hearings on the future of rural and northern hospitals**. Hospital restructuring has meant that some local hospitals are facing ER closures, the elimination and privatization of services and/or the closure of the entire hospital itself – all without full disclosure, consultations and consideration of all the options. The OHC panel delivers a report to the Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Northumberland Hills Hospital announces it will close 26 beds**, its diabetes clinic, its outpatient rehabilitation clinic and the equivalent of almost 10 full-time RNs to balance the budget. ONA's Local Bargaining Unit President makes a submission at the Ontario Health Coalition's hearing in Cobourg about the impact of the cuts and closures.

**March 1-7:** ONA's Social Work members, a component of the allied health group, celebrate **Social Work Week**, which lauds the role and contributions of these highly skilled professionals.

**March 21:** Advocacy continues regarding the **deletion of the Breast Screening Program at London Health Sciences Centre** with an open forum organized by ONA and the Myeloma Support Group. It allows the public to discuss how these cuts will affect the community's health. Approximately 100 people attend.

**March 25:** ONA says **the provincial budget means more service and nursing cuts for patients**, as base funding for hospitals will increase by just 1.5 per cent for 2010/11. President Linda Haslam-Stroud notes that care has already been cut in communities throughout Ontario in recent months, and that this increase won't even maintain current levels of patient care.

**April 6:** Following Federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq's decision to allow **Canadian Blood**

**Services to conduct a pilot project** that replaces nurses with low-skilled workers for initial blood donor screening, ONA and the CFNU call for a transparent, independent and thorough evaluation, saying there is no compelling evidence to suggest that this change is needed or safe.

**April:** Nursing layoffs continue. At **Soldiers' Memorial Hospital** in Orillia, 33 experienced and skilled RNs are given layoff notices, while 29 nursing positions are eliminated from the RN roster at **Sault Area Hospital**.

**April 6:** The Independent Assessment Committee investigating concerns expressed by registered nurses at **Cassellholme Home for the Aged** provides 25 recommendations to improve the ability of RNs to provide safe, quality care to Cassellholme residents. The recommendations include an increase in both RN and RPN staffing levels, that a care delivery model be put in place, and that the management structure be revised.

**April 13:** The Board of Directors approves **human rights and equity strategies** that include: highlighting human rights and equity education programs in *Front Lines*, the *Human Rights and Equity Bulletin* and other communication vehicles; increasing the profile using the ONA website; and evaluating ongoing strategies regarding the role of the Human Rights and Equity Representative in the Bargaining Unit.

**April 21:** ONA urges patients and the community to join with nurses in speaking out as a Peer Review report at the **Peterborough Regional Health Centre recommends significant bed closures and deep cuts to nursing positions** – threatening the loss of approximately 250,000 hours per year of nursing care for patients. ONA members from PRHC lobby outside of their MPP's office, hold an information picket at the city's farmers' market, and converge on Queen's Park for Question Period to hear queries from the Opposition about nursing cuts

**April 28:** Nurses across Ontario mark the 2010 **Day of Mourning**. ONA members remember their colleague, a London RN, who died as a result of acquiring a super bug disease while on the job in September, 2009.

**May:** On **May Day**, students from nursing schools in Toronto help with door-to-door leafleting as Local 115 members spread the word that Toronto East General Hospital has laid off more than 120 nurses since last summer.

A total of 284 members are educated on infection control at the **Health and Safety Caucuses** at the spring 2010 Area Coordinators Conferences.

ONA unveils the **third phase of the Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care campaign** to amplify efforts to stop nursing cuts. Radio, transit shelter and newspaper ads run in targeted cities across the province. Electronic billboard ads appear in high-traffic locations in Toronto, and RNs in several parts of the province organize local actions to raise awareness among their communities of the threats to quality health care.

A provincial **moratorium on competitive bidding for home care services expires**. ONA vows to continue to demand that the government revise its approach to home care, and restore the moratorium while it does so.

In a written submission on **Bill 21, Retirement Homes Act, 2010**, ONA states that retirement homes should be regulated, inspected and enforced by the Ministry of Health. ONA is concerned that *Bill 21* does not define the level of care that is appropriate in the retirement home context, set out staffing requirements or specify who should deliver care.

**May 7:** ONA invites members of the public to join in celebrating the achievements of nurses during **Nursing Week**. Noting that RNs in Ontario continue to experience nursing cuts and rising workplace pressure, ONA says Nursing Week 2010 is a time to put the spotlight on the priceless contributions that nurses make.

**May 14:** A Nursing Week event scheduled at **Chatham-Kent Health Alliance** is subdued as 15 registered nurses are told that their positions are being cut, just prior to a scheduled celebrational barbeque lunch outside the hospital.

**May 26:** The annual **ONA Health and Safety Caucus** is held in Brockville. Local leaders from across the province are interviewed about their safety committees' investigations of SARS and MRSA.

**June:** The **eLearning hospital-focused module on completing the Professional Responsibility Workload Report Form (PRWRF)**, which shows members how to complete the PRWRF at their own speed and at no cost to members, is launched by ONA's Provincial Education Coordination Team.

ONA also welcomes new members at **Huntsville's Victorian Order of Nurses and Lady Isabelle Nursing Home in Trout Creek**.

**June 7-11:** ONA's **first Leadership Conference** is held in Waterloo and attended by 25 new Local leaders who learn about the workings of ONA, negotiations and grievances, leadership styles, succession planning, mentoring, and effective communication. Participants and mentors continue to be supported through video conferencing and teleconnects.

**June 15:** ONA's persistent efforts to end workplace violence come to fruition as **significant amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act come into effect**. Employers must now develop and implement written policies on workplace harassment and violence or face a \$500,000 fine. The amendments, largely prompted by the 2005 workplace murder of Windsor nurse and ONA member Lori Dupont, come into effect during the June PCM, which is fittingly hosted by Region 5 in Windsor.

**June 15:** The **60 RNs at Toronto Grace Health Centre vote to join ONA**. Earlier in the year, the 119-bed hospital – which provides the community with continuing care, rehabilitation and palliative care – was threatened with closure, but in a last-minute reprieve, the provincial government pledged \$15 million to keep the hospital open.

**June 24:** ONA members stage a **rally and information picket outside the Civic campus of The Ottawa Hospital** to express their concern for patient safety after the hospital announced it will cut 90 RN positions and close to 28 inpatient surgical beds despite being at more than 100-per-cent capacity much of the time.

**June 28:** Representatives of ONA provide 58 recommendations to the **Expert Advisory Panel to Review Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety System**, saying that Ontario health care facilities fail to meet even the minimum health and safety standards and lag behind other industries in embracing OH&S as a core value.

**July: Royal Victoria Hospital** in Barrie announces that it is reducing beds, replacing some RNs with registered practical nurses and investigating the contracting out of services, allegedly to be more efficient while it prepares for an expansion.

**July 2:** An unprecedented public outcry from the community results in the **cancellation of RN cuts at London Health Sciences Centre's cancer care program**. London residents started Facebook groups, on-line petitions, wrote letters to the media, their elected officials and hospital administrators, and attended an Open Forum in March organized by RNs.

**July 15:** ONA health and safety activists from around the province meet in Toronto with the **Expert Advisory Panel reviewing Ontario's occupational health and safety prevention and enforcement system**. Members testify about the realities in the workplace.

**July 30:** ONA draws attention to the fact that **Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC)**

**is misinforming the public** by understating cuts to registered nurses and overstating management cuts. ONA urges the community to speak out.

**August:** ONA welcomes new members: eight RNs from each of **Maple View Lodge**, Athens, **Bethesda Services**, Thorold, and **Delhi Long-Term Care Centre**.

**September:** ONA participates as a stakeholder in a **review of the base funding provided to public health units** by the Public Health Division of the MOHLTC.

**September 7:** The **hospital central bargaining questionnaire**, giving members the opportunity to tell ONA their priorities for their next contracts, goes electronic on the homepage of the ONA website.

**September 22:** ONA attends meetings with government and health sector employers over a **government-proposed, two-year wage freeze for public-sector workers**. ONA takes the position that if the government wants to balance the budget more quickly it should cancel planned corporate tax cuts, and continues to prepare for hospital-sector bargaining.

**September 29:** As the scope of practice for NPs expands under *Bill 179, The Regulated Health Professions Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009* and more Nurse Practitioners join ONA Bargaining Units, **ONA holds a focus group for NPs** to talk about key issues affecting their practice, their role within the health care system, and what they see as bargaining priorities for their group.

**October:** ONA holds a series of successful certification votes: **Helen Henderson Care Centre**, Amherstview adds 12 RNs to the membership; **VON Canada, Ontario Branch, North Bay** site, nine RPNs; **Hampton Terrace Care Centre**, Burlington, 11 RNs; **Brant Centre Long-Term Care Residence**, Burlington, 11 RNs; and **Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care**, Mississauga, 22 RNs.

ONA issues a **new Guide to Local Action** which provides members with tips on how to deal with media, politicians and the public when action is needed in specific communities.

**ONA launches a Twitter account**. Members are encouraged to follow the **Ontario Nurses** account to get the latest tweets about union activities from the Communications and Government Relations Team.

**October 21:** ONA expresses alarm as the total number of **RN cuts at Peterborough Regional Health Centre rises to 153**. The community has lost more than 200,000 hours of skilled RN care per year, seriously impacting the quality of patient care.

**November 8:** One-thousand registered nurses and allied health professionals gather at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto for **ONA's Biennial Convention**. As a fun **preview of ONA's new media campaign**, members enter the main meeting room via a red carpet, complete with autograph seekers and paparazzi, and pose for personalized MVP 'pro athlete' cards to remind them of the value they bring to the system.

**November 10:** In a televote, incumbent **Dianne Leclair** is re-elected Vice-President for Region 4. Regional Vice-Presidential candidates are acclaimed in four of the five ONA regions: **Diane Parker** (Region 1), **Anne Clark** (Region 2), **Andy Summers** (Region 3), and **Karen Bertrand** (Region 5).

**November 22:** ONA launches the **Value the Invaluable campaign** with two radio ads running across the province. One features Toronto Maple Leafs announcer Joe Bowen giving a high-energy play-by-play of a typical nurse's hectic day. Another has a reporter conducting a "locker room" interview of a nurse who has just completed a "hat-trick" on the delivery unit. With the tagline "**If only registered nurses were valued the way pro athletes are,**" Ontarians are asked to consider the value of the skills, leadership and knowledge that nurses bring to the system.

**December:** The **Value the Invaluable** campaign continues with transit, print, and web-based ads depicting **a framed and signed nurse's "jersey"** (scrubs) and **a "most valuable player card" featuring a front-line nurse**. The campaign receives high praise and a great deal of attention from the public, the media, and ONA members.

**December 1:** The ONA Board of Directors **removes its censure of the Niagara Health System** which has been in place since February 2003, recognizing that in recent years significant efforts have been made by the hospital to address outstanding labour grievances and to dramatically reduce the number of grievances experienced.

**December 14:** ONA welcomes its **first all-nurse practitioner Bargaining Unit**. Nurse practitioners at the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Windsor choose ONA in a *PSLRTA* vote after the work of NP members at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor was transferred to the CMHA.

**December 17:** ONA members contact federal Finance Minister The Hon. Jim Flaherty in support of the **Canadian Labour Congress' plan for a phased-in increase of CPP contributions**.

**December 22:** ONA urges the MOHLTC to **move**

**quickly to implement recommendations in long-term care monitoring** contained in a new report from **Provincial Ombudsman André Marin**. The Ombudsman found a multitude of issues within the Ministry related to the monitoring, inspection, complaint investigation and public reporting of non-compliance functions.

# 2011

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**Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, is President**

**January:** ONA's **Hospital Central Negotiating Team begins negotiations** with the Ontario Hospital Association. The current hospital central collective agreement expires on March 31, 2011.

ONA provides input for the **RNAO's Best Practice Guideline: Managing and Mitigating Fatigue in Healthcare**, which is looking at the best practices to support nurses in addressing fatigue and identifying the implications of nurse fatigue on patient safety, and nurse and organizational well-being.

**January 24-27:** ONA's annual **New Local Coordinators/Treasurers Conference** is held in Toronto, to help Local leaders meet their accountabilities and update their skills.

**January 26-29:** The ONA Board of Directors attends the **40th Annual National Conference of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association** in Hamilton. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud is a guest speaker and First Vice-President Vicki McKenna co-present a session on "Making the News."

**January 29:** ONA Region 3 Vice-President Andy Summers and ONA members and staff join 900 members and 9,000 pensioners from United Steelworkers Union Local 1005 **at a mass rally in Hamilton to help defend pensions** and bring an end to the lockout of Hamilton Steelworkers by U.S. Steel.

**February:** Approximately 40 **RNs from the James Bay region join ONA** as a result of a successful *PSLRTA* vote following amalgamations and the creation of the new Weeneebayko Area Health Authority.

ONA also welcomes as RNs from **OMNI Garden Terrace** in Kanata, **Providence Manor Long-Term Care** in Kingston, and **Willowgrove Long-Term Care Residence** in Ancaster as new members.

ONA interviews members and prepares a submission on **health care needs in rural and northern Ontario** from a nurse's perspective for the government panel looking into this issue.

The ONA Board endorses the **Raise the Rates campaign**. The goal is to connect Ontarians who are supported by social assistance programs and cannot otherwise afford the foods that are required to maintain or improve their health, to the Special Diet Allowance, which provides up to \$250 extra per month.

**February 1:** ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna makes an extensive submission to **the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs** as part of its pre-budget consultations. Among ONA's recommendations: provide annualized dedicated funding for late-career nursing initiatives; continue funding to assure healthy work environments, improve staffing and reduce patient workloads; fund a regulated minimum staffing standard in long-term care homes at 3.5 hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day; implement a policy of wage parity for home care nurses.

**February 8-10:** An IAC **hearing into Sault Area Hospital's hemodialysis unit** is held. The review is called by ONA members citing ongoing professional practice and workload concerns that impact patient care. RNs in the hemodialysis unit say the hospital has been replacing RN positions with RPNs, although patients in the unit have complex conditions that require RN skills.

**February 22-25:** ONA's newly elected **Nursing Home Central Negotiating Team (NHCNT) participates in orientation**. The team reviews the results of the recent **online 'Have a Say' questionnaire** to determine nursing home sector bargaining priorities and begin the process of developing bargaining proposals. The current collective agreement expires on June 30, 2011.

**March:** The Board of Directors approves **central bargaining for of all 10 CCACs** – the first time in ONA history that central bargaining in this sector has occurred.

ONA CEO Lesley Bell participates in a **groundbreaking 10-day mission to southern Africa** to advance nursing unionism. The mission, led by the CNA in partnership with the CFNU, is partially funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. The ultimate goal is to help African nursing organizations have a voice in health care policy.

The **Value the Invaluable campaign continues** with transit shelter ads – also on Google and Facebook – that depict a magazine “sports cover” with a team of RNs celebrating a victory for patients. The ads remind us all to value the priceless health care skills, leadership and knowledge that registered nurses bring to the system. The positive look of the ad is also intended to bolster the morale of the union's members and nursing student affiliates.

Thanks to the lobbying efforts of Local Coordinator/Bargaining Unit President Frances Smith, Local members and the overwhelming support of the public, **The Ottawa Hospital backs down on its plan to forbid nursing staff from wearing “colourful” scrubs** just five days after its initial announcement.

**ONA joins Working Families**, a coalition of the labour movement, with the goal of making voters aware of policies that threaten the well-being of working families across Ontario. As part of the coalition's campaign leading up to the October provincial election, television ads that introduce the values behind Working Families (fair, hardworking, respectful and tolerant) air throughout the province.

ONA is hopeful that the announcement of the **creation of a Labour Relations Secretariat** to explore moving to more coordinated bargaining is an opportunity to improve labour relations in Ontario.

**March 1-2:** At the **March PCM**, the dominant discussions are about collective bargaining in this time of total compensation freezes. A guest from the OFL speaks about how the entire labour movement is watching as ONA enters central bargaining.

**March 7:** The **second phase of ONA's innovative sports-themed Value the Invaluable ad campaign** is launched. The new ads expand on the theme of valuing the heroes of health care – nurses – the way we value pro athletes. A radio ad has two young boys trading collector cards that feature nurses.

**March 7-13:** ONA celebrates **National Social Work (SW) Week** with its SW members throughout Ontario.

**March 21:** ONA wins an important arbitration case that confirms **nurses' right to notice of layoff, bumping rights and early retirement packages in the face of restructuring at Quinte Health Care**. The complaint involved 24 grievances filed by nurses who were permanently redeployed to various units to a central transition pool which had been created by the hospital in an effort to undermine layoff rights under the central hospital agreement.

**March 29:** ONA is pleased that **the Ontario budget** has taken action to ensure health care dollars are going to improve health outcomes for patients, but says that more initiatives are needed to keep RNs on the front lines. Specifically, ONA is concerned that a 1.5-percent increase in hospital operating budgets will not be enough to provide the acute services that patients require.

**March 31:** ONA begins holding **quarterly Human Rights and Equity teleconnects**. Region 3 Vice-President Andy Summers, who holds the portfolio



for human rights and equity, moderates the first teleconnect with Human Rights and Equity Bargaining Unit Representatives, Human Rights and Equity Team members, Bargaining Unit Presidents, Local Coordinators, front-line members and staff on the topic “Understanding *Bill 168: Violence and Harassment in the Workplace*.”

**March 31:** Members of the ONA Board, Local leaders and staff join in an **anti-scab rally at Queen’s Park**. The rally is timed to coincide with the vote on *Private Member’s Bill 45, Labour Relations Amendment Act (Replacement Workers), 2010*, which would ban the growing practice of hiring replacement workers to avoid collective bargaining.

**April:** ONA welcomes the announcement that the government **is again investing \$99.7-million in the New Graduate Guarantee program** in 2011 to help employers create full-time, six-month positions that can be offered to new nursing graduates; **\$8-million annually in the Late-Career Nursing Initiative**, so approximately 1,500 late-career nurses can take part in the program; and \$64-million in 2011-12 for 60,000 new post-secondary seats of which 15 per cent (about \$9.6-million for this year) will be for RN programs.

**April 1:** RNs with the **North Bay Regional Health Centre vote to join ONA as their union** following the merger of the North East Mental Health Centre (NEMHC) and North Bay General Hospital. RNs at North Bay General Hospital had been represented by ONA; RNs at predecessor employer NEMHC were represented by OPSEU.

**April 4:** ONA provides a comprehensive submission to **Ontario’s Rural and Northern Health Care Panel** with 13 recommendations to improve access to health and improve outcomes in some of the province’s most underprivileged areas. Adequate staffing of full-time RN positions in hospitals is crucial, not only to serve the needs of patients but also to ensure that experienced nurses have the time to mentor new graduates and equip them with the range of skills necessary to survive as rural and remote nurses.

**April 5-7:** An Independent Assessment Committee investigates the concerns of RNs nurses at **Lakeridge Health’s Oshawa 36-bed in-patient surgical unit about RN staffing levels**. Since 2009, the RNs have been waiting for their employer to implement the “all-RN skills mix” for this unit that the hospital itself identified was required. But multiple changes to Lakeridge Health’s leadership team have been a major barrier to moving forward.

**April 8:** The **IAC looking into the Renal Hemo-**

**dialysis Unit at Sault Area Hospital issues 30 recommendations** and confirms that RNs have been required to perform more work than is consistent with safe patient care. The IAC also concludes that the professional practice supports and decision-making tools provided by the hospital were insufficient to support the integration of RPNs into the unit.

**April 11:** Approximately 100 **social workers and registered respiratory therapists at Lakeridge Health** who have been without a contract since December 31, 2008 head to arbitration.

**April 12:** The **ONA Board approves a donation of \$5,000** to be directed to the Japanese Nursing Association to support the relief efforts in Japan following the devastating earthquakes and tsunami in March.

**April 20:** ONA welcomes **1,600 new RN members employed at Trillium Health Centre** as they vote overwhelmingly in favour of joining the union.

**April 28:** ONA remembers registered nurses, allied health professionals and thousands of other Ontario workers who have lost their lives or suffered injury as the province marks the **2011 Day of Mourning**.

**May:** On **May Day**, members distribute flyers at a key commuter point near Queen’s Park to promote ONA’s **Value the Invaluable** campaign and stress the importance of voting in the May 2 federal election. The group asks commuters to vote for the candidate most committed to improving our public health care system, including hiring more nurses, improving patient care, developing a comprehensive national drug plan and fighting for a renewed Health Accord.

**May 2-8:** President Linda Haslam-Stroud and CEO Lesley Bell attend the **International Council of Nurses Congress** in Malta, where nurses from around the world meet to demonstrate how nurses promote and contribute to quality and accessible health care, and share their experiences and expertise.

To mark Mother’s Day and the beginning of Nursing Week 2011, ONA releases **new research that focuses on the value of care provided mainly by women** and includes some new wage data and recommendations. Entitled *Valuing the Invaluable: Rethinking and respecting caring work in Canada*, the paper links the growth of the unpaid and paid overtime being worked by RNs to the nursing shortage and the undervaluing of these professionals.

ONA wins a jurisdiction dispute mediation, where **St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton will now assign work in the urology unit exclusively to registered nurses**. ONA took the position that patients in this

unit have very complex needs that require the skills and expertise of registered nurses, rather than less expensive RPNs.

The **claims of ONA members against the provincial government for alleged pension losses** that resulted from the establishment of CCACs and the switch from the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) or the VON pension plan into the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) are resolved with a monetary settlement following mediation.

The **Value the Invaluable campaign wins the Dennis McGann Stroke of Genius Award** from the Canadian Association of Labour Media, as well as a **Grand Apex award** from the editors of *Writing That Works*. ONA's *Guide to Local Action* also wins **CALM's Best Flyer or Brochure award**.

The ONA website is proclaimed "**Best overall staff-produced union website in Canada**" by The Canadian Association of Labour Media.

**May 9-15:** ONA's 57,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals and more than 12,000 nursing student affiliates celebrate **Nursing Week 2011**, with the theme 'Value the Invaluable.' A large range of events and local activities recognize nurses' special contributions to health care.

**May 27:** An arbitrator issues **an award for social workers and registered respiratory therapists at Lakeridge Health Corporation**, which offers wage increases and improvements to benefits. The two-year award provides salary increases of 2.5 per cent retroactive to January 1, 2009 and 2.5 per cent retroactive to January 1, 2010. Additionally, there is a catch-up increase of .25 per cent as of January 1, 2010. The award, which runs from January 2009 to December 31, 2010, also provides increases to evening, night and weekend premiums, parental leave and orthodontic benefits. The approximately 100 members had been without a contract since December 31, 2008.

**June:** Leading up to the **provincial election on October 6**, ONA designs an array of election material, including three buttons and an election pamphlet that provides important questions to ask local candidates on policies critical to quality patient care. The ONA website offers summaries of the three main parties' health platforms and other helpful resources. ONA's key messages to the candidates are to keep RNs working, invest in a culture of safety, and invest in rebuilding public health – all to protect quality patient care.

The Ontario Long-Term Care Association's **It Takes a TEAM to Care campaign** sends a strong message to the government that it must adequately fund long-term care by delivering 20,000 signed postcards to MPPs across the province and sending an additional

7,000 electronically to Premier Dalton McGuinty. The campaign features staff, including nurses – many of whom face layoffs because of government funding shortfalls – who make homes caring and safe for Ontario seniors.

**A report of the Expert Panel reviewing Ontario's occupational health and safety (OH&S) system** is released, reflecting many of the suggestions submitted by ONA. The panel puts a priority on shifting the prevention function from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to the Ministry of Labour. The panel's 46 recommendations include occupational health and safety system integration, training that is pervasive throughout the workforce and education system, collaboration between labour and employers, improved reprisal protection and better health and safety data.

The government announces it is taking **action to regulate the industry that handles non-emergency transfer services** after reviewing Ontario Ombudsman André Marin's final report. Many ONA Local leaders had shared their experiences in non-emergency transfers at the request of the ombudsman's office.

**June 1:** An arbitration award is released setting out the terms and conditions for **a new three-year hospital central collective agreement**. The award provides lump sum payments of up to 1.6 per cent in each of the first two years and a 2.75-per-cent across-the-board increase to all classifications in year three. The award also provides benefit, premium (shift, weekend and responsibility pay) and vacation improvements, including health benefits for retirees. Other improvements include those addressing professional issues, leave issues, health and safety and contract enforcement. The contract expires on March 31, 2014.

**June 1:** A delegation of presidents and directors from **regional trade and industrial unions in China** meets with ONA leaders and staff while on a mission to study the good practices adopted by Canadian unions in safeguarding workers' lawful rights and to promote international cooperation and exchanges.

**June 2:** ONA hosts a contingent from the **Caribbean-Canada Emerging Leaders' Dialogue**, an executive leadership development program.

**June 3:** At ONA's second **Leadership Conference**, 27 new Local leaders discuss the workings of ONA and learn the ins and outs of their challenging roles in order to better represent members.

**June 6-7:** The **June PCM is hosted by Region 1** in Sudbury, garnering considerable attention from local media. Among the guest speakers are NDP Health Critic and Nickel Belt MPP France Gelinias, who outlines the NDP's vision for health care, and Canadian Nursing

Students' Association President Evan Jolicoeur, who says he looks forward to continuing "the very strong and very good working relationship" with ONA.

**June 13-17:** Celebrating the **30th anniversary of the CFNU**, approximately 100 delegates from ONA attend the CFNU Biennial Convention in Winnipeg. A resolution to mount a campaign with like-minded groups to fight against the dismantling of Medicare and the erosion of the *Canada Health Act* through a lobby of all federal political parties is passed.

**June 28:** The **IAC investigating the concerns of Lakeridge Health Oshawa surgical unit RNs** about inadequate staffing levels makes 18 recommendations, including one that calls for an increase in RNs for the unit.

**July:** ONA launches **web-based tools to help members quickly identify and easily communicate with their Bargaining Unit Presidents.**

The **eLearning initiative expands**, offering members access to an ever-growing wealth of free online education covering such topics as Professional Responsibility Concerns, Duty to Accommodate, and Conflict in the Workplace.

**ONA develops a Home Care Network** with home care Bargaining Unit Presidents, holding regular teleconnects on key sector issues and follows in the footsteps of the Community Care Access Centre and Public Health networks.

**July 3:** Members participate in **Toronto's Pride Parade**, demonstrating ONA's unwavering commitment to equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers.

**August:** ONA's lobbying efforts against **planned changes to the province's Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) initiative**, including the elimination of automatic phone calls and visits to low-risk mothers by public health nurses, receives attention from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as ONA leaders and a group of ONA public health nurses are invited to participate in several working groups and on an Advisory Committee.

ONA welcomes **new members from Niagara Health System** (three occupational health and safety RNs), **Maples Home for Seniors**, Tavistock (eleven RNs), **Meaford Long Term Care** (eight RNs), **Lanark Heights Long-Term Care Centre**, Kitchener (ten RNs), and **Ivan Franko Home for the Aged**, Etobicoke (nine RNs).

**September:** In the third arbitration award upholding ONA members' rights regarding layoffs in the workplace, **an arbitrator rules that London Health**

**Sciences Centre cannot refuse to provide early retirement options** to nurses in the coronary care and cardiology units.

ONA's **Provincial Education Coordination Team updates several workshops**, including Disability Income Protection Programs; the Grievance Process; Harassment, Mobbing and Bullying; and Return to Work/Accommodation.

**September 5: Labour Day** sees ONA members across Ontario showing union solidarity and spreading important messages about the labour movement.

**September 6: Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN is acclaimed as President of ONA** and will serve an unprecedented fifth, two-year term. **Vicki McKenna, RN is also acclaimed First Vice-President** and will serve her fourth consecutive term.

**September 13:** ONA leaders and members participate in a massive **Ontario Health Coalition rally** at the provincial legislature to urge politicians to stop hospital cuts and make health care a priority during the current election campaign.

**September 27:** ONA members who work at **10 of Ontario's CCACs give their negotiating team an overwhelming 95-per-cent strike mandate.** If the parties do not reach an agreement during mediation, they will be on strike on October 3.

**October 1:** More than 3,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals working in 10 of Ontario's **Community Care Access Centres vote to ratify a new three-year contract.** The agreement provides 1.2-per-cent lump sum payments in December 2011 and June 2012, and a 2.75-per-cent wage increase in 2013. There were also improvements to professional responsibility, occupational health and safety, benefits and vacation. The new agreement expires on March 31, 2014.

**October 1:** Amendments to *Controlled Acts* regulation under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, which allows for **key changes to practice for nurse practitioners (NPs)** receives final approval from the government. The expanded scope of practice for NPs is expected to improve access to quality care and reduce wait times.

**October 6: Long-time ONA Labour Relations Officer Cindy Forster wins the Welland riding** in the provincial election, and is named NDP Municipal Affairs and Housing Critic and Deputy House Leader.

**October 31:** A disappointing **arbitrator's award for the Nursing Homes Central Collective Agreement** fails to provide improvements that recognize the

tremendous value of approximately 2,200 nursing home members to the frail and elderly. The award, which expires on June 30, 2014, provides lump sum payments of up to 1.4 per cent in each of the first two years of the three-year contract and a 2.75-per-cent across-the-board increase to all classifications in year three, plus some improvements to benefits.

**November:** The provincial government announces that **amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act regarding personal liability insurance will not be proclaimed**, meaning members will continue to be covered by the ONA Liability Insurance Plan in addition to what their employer offers. This is a major victory for ONA and is largely due to the participation by members in a letter-writing campaign to the College of Nurses of Ontario and letters sent via the ONA website to Premier Dalton McGuinty and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews.

At the **November PCM** in Toronto, delegates reflect on the many successes and challenges in all sectors of their union over the past year, including our most active central bargaining year ever and ONA's provincial election strategies. Guest speakers include Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews, CNSA Ontario Regional Director Andrew Bond, and a panel of associate deans from provincial schools of nursing.

**November 6-12:** ONA's Medical Radiation Technologists (MRT) join with their colleagues across Canada to **celebrate National MRT Week**.

**November 8:** The annual **Human Rights and Equity Caucus** boasts 219 participants. Under the theme, "Mental Health and Subtle Discrimination," the day is focused on the needs of ONA members suffering from mental health issues and how we can best represent them.

**November 14:** After four months of contract talks, **Grey Bruce public health nurses and registered nurses enter mediation** and will be in a legal strike position on November 16. The Grey Bruce Health Unit and 38 Public Health Nurses are still far apart on the issues of wages, job security and job posting provisions.

**November 15:** ONA calls on **Toronto City Council to prevent an eviction of Occupy Toronto protesters by police**. "The occupiers of St. James Park in Toronto have a very clear message," says ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud. "Business as usual doesn't work for 99 per cent of Ontarians and it's time to address income disparity, poverty, homelessness, and the need for good jobs for all, in a meaningful way."

**November 16:** ONA's **public health nurses and**

**registered nurses providing care for the Grey Bruce community narrowly vote to accept a contract offer** from their employer.

**November 28:** ONA commends *Canadian Medical Association Journal* editor-in-chief **Dr. Rajendra Kale for his editorial calling for patient-, rather than parking-centered health care**. "Parking fees charged by hospitals can be a barrier to health care and this barrier should be addressed," says Vicki McKenna, ONA First Vice-President.

**December:** The ONA Board approves \$1,000 to **support the National Nursing Games 2012**, a student-led initiative to bring together nursing students from across Canada to compete in a friendly contest of academics, athletics and school spirit. The games will be hosted by the University of Western Ontario in March.

**December 1:** ONA speaks out against the **secrecy of the Grey Bruce Health Unit's unilateral decision to close its Walkerton office**, saying that politicians and the community deserve to see a full accounting of how and why the decision was made and how it impacts local access to public health services.

**December 14:** ONA joins with staff of the **Peterborough County-City Health Unit in criticizing cuts to front-line health promotion and disease prevention services for the community**. The services that will be affected include key programs such as health inspection, nutrition, injury prevention and support for increasing the physical activity of children and adults. The cuts are contrary to statements in the 2010 annual report of Ontario Chief Medical Officer Arlene King who calls for a comprehensive plan that is geared towards health promotion and chronic disease and injury prevention.

# 2012

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Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, is President

**January:** ONA issues a **permanent membership card** which makes it easier for eligible members to take advantage of the full range of entitlements associated with membership.

ONA initiates a precedent-setting **Return-to-Work (RTW) and Primary Prevention Program at all seven sites of the Niagara Health System**, aimed at ensuring workers get back to safe and productive work at the right time after an injury or illness and/or prevent injuries and illness from occurring.

A **New Local Coordinators workshop** is also held to help leaders understand their accountabilities to their members and our union.

**January 9:** ONA RNs at Sault Area hospital call for an **Independent Assessment Committee** to examine their concerns that unsafe RN staffing levels are compromising patient safety. “The hospital has implemented a smoke and mirrors strategy that presents to the public the optics of a less busy ER waiting room,” says ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud. “But they’ve simply moved patients out of the front ER waiting room and into a special internal waiting room called ‘See and Treat,’ where patients wait almost as long.”

**January 10:** ONA releases a **new research paper that calls into question exactly what actions should be taken to eliminate the province’s deficit**. The paper, entitled *Fixing the Fiscal House: Alternative macroeconomic solutions for Ontario*, shows that Ontario is suffering from a structural deficit largely due to low taxation of corporations and high-income individuals. ONA will provide the paper and its economic analysis to the provincial government and is also presenting its findings at the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness town hall meetings across the province.

**January 11:** Registered nurses employed at **Halton Healthcare Services’ Oakville and Milton sites vote in favour of joining ONA**, which adds more than 900 new members.

**January 12:** Local 83 Coordinator **Frances Smith presents ONA’s research to the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness** at a townhall meeting in Ottawa, one of a series being held across the province in response to the Drummond Commission.

**January 13:** An Independent Assessment Committee finds that the concerns of registered nurses about **declining patient care in Peterborough Regional Health Centre’s hemodialysis** unit are valid. The IAC issues a total of 37 recommendations in the areas of nursing leadership, measures and evaluation, communications, staffing levels and skills mix.

**January 24-25:** ONA’s annual **Treasurers Workshop** is held in Toronto, receiving rave reviews from participants.

**January 25-28:** The ONA Board attends the **National Conference of the CNSA** held in Saskatoon. ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud receives an honorary CNSA membership, an award given each year by the CNSA’s national assembly to an individual who has

never been a member of the CNSA, but is recognized for distinguished service and outstanding contribution to the association.

**February:** The **Sault Area Hospital decides to return to an all-RN staffing model on its renal hemodialysis unit**. This is a huge boost to the nurses involved in the recent IAC hearing and could set a precedent for similar units in the province.

**ONA’s website includes updates** such as a section for retirees and those thinking of retiring, more French content, and a *Nursing Week Planning Guide*.

ONA holds a Human Rights and Equity teleconnect on the topic “**Bullying in the Workplace**.”

**February 15:** In its **first analysis of the Drummond Report**, ONA objects to recommendations that private health care operators should provide out-of-hospital services and has major concerns about labour relations recommendations that infer that the arbitration system is not objective. ONA finds some recommendations to be supportive of, such as fully uploading public health funding to the provincial level, improving coordination across the health care system, training more nurses and developing a health human resource strategy.

**February 24:** In a **submission to the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat** regarding proposed initial draft regulations under the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, ONA says that an inspection of a retirement home every three years is insufficient. Inspections should be annual, and the results should be available to the public.

**March:** ONA participates in the **Ontario Human Rights Commission consultation on mental health issues**, and states that nurses afflicted with this disease have difficulty in returning to work based on stigma and stereotypes and that this must be addressed in any policy.

**Linda Haslam-Stroud is named co-chair of the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee**, a government/nursing stakeholder group. The committee and its working groups advocate and advise the government on issues that impact the nursing profession and on matters of policy that promote the health of Ontarians.

**March 6-7:** More than 100 leaders attend the **March PCM** in Toronto which features Provincial Chief Nursing Officer Debra Bourne as well as reports on professional practice wins and Local political action events.

In a significant win for members, an arbitrator accepts a number of **ONA revisions for a new Acclaim medical form** introduced by Revera Long-Term Care Inc. for sick pay and return to work/accommodation. The initial form had led to the filing of nearly 40 grievances by ONA and other unions.

ONA welcomes new members from: **St. Elizabeth Health Care**, Thunder Bay; **Saint Luke's Place**, Cambridge; **Specialty Care Case Manor**, Bobcaygeon; **Regional Municipality of Durham at Hillsdale Estates**; and **Blackadar Continuing Care Centre**, Dundas.

**March 23-24:** Nursing students from across Canada converge on London, Ontario to take part in the **2012 Nursing Games**, a friendly two-day contest of athletics, academics, skills and bonding. Members of ONA attend at the games, offering networking opportunities with these potential 'leaders of the future.'

**March 27:** ONA questions whether the **2012 provincial budget** will affect patient care, saying that a total funding increase of two per cent for our hospitals is less than the government had committed to and expresses concern that hospitals may be cutting nurses to balance their budgets. ONA notes that there is a modest funding increase in community care, but it doesn't specifically increase the number of nurses in that sector.

**March 28:** Concerned about misinformation regarding health spending, hospital cuts, access to long-term care and home care and privatization, the Ontario Health Coalition holds a **Legislative Lobby Day at Queen's Park**. More than 100 volunteers, including several ONA members, attend Question Period and participate in lobby meetings with MPPs from all three political parties.

**March 29:** ONA welcomes 1,250 new members as RNs at the **London Health Sciences Centre University Hospital vote 'yes'** to joining their 2,000 Victoria Hospital colleagues as ONA members.

**April:** Hundreds of ONA members respond to **ONA's online campaign urging the government to rescind changes to interest arbitration in the health sector**. ONA is calling for Schedule 30 (containing negative changes to the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act*) in *Bill 55* to be removed, and for the government to consult with stakeholders about whether any changes are necessary.

**April 19: Public health nurses working for the Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit hold a strike vote** following the breakdown of negotiations with The Corporation of Norfolk County. The nurses' contract expired June 30, 2011. They have been in negotiations since October and they will be in a legal strike position on April 21.

**April 21: Public health nurses providing care for the Haldimand-Norfolk community go on strike, the first strike of ONA members in a decade.** ONA

President Linda Haslam-Stroud says, "The public health nurses are very aware of the impact a strike may have and are deeply concerned about withdrawing the valuable services they provide to their community; however, these nurses deserve to be respected and offered a fair collective agreement for the care they provide." The media and public are supportive of the nurses.

**April 23:** ONA's **Value the Invaluable** campaign returns, urging Ontarians to appreciate the value of nurses. Two "sports-themed" advertisements run on radio stations across the province.

**April 27:** ONA members across the province remember RNs, allied health professionals and other workers who lost their lives on the job during **Day of Mourning** events.

**April 29:** The now week-long **strike of Norfolk public health nurses receives fair coverage in local media and the community continues to be very supportive**. There is also great support from local seniors, other health care workers, nurses from across Ontario and Canada, and other unions including the United Steelworkers, SEIU, CUPE and Ontario's teachers.

**May:** President Linda Haslam-Stroud joins international nursing leaders at a meeting of **the Public Services International in Switzerland** to discuss the impact of global austerity measures on health care and best practices.

**ONA supports the 'Partners for Mental Health' campaign**, a new initiative aimed at creating a national social movement to position mental health prominently in the attention of the public, governments and employers.

**May 1:** ONA and Norfolk County reach a **tentative agreement to end the 12-day-old public health nurses' strike in Haldimand-Norfolk**. In a media release, ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud thanks the community for its overwhelming support of the nurses.

**May 3: Nursing Week 2012** is marked by ONA members across Ontario with speaking events, site visits from ONA leaders and other special events that remind nurses to celebrate the unique value they bring to health care.

**May 4:** The **Queens Gardens long-term care residence** announces it is laying off and **reducing its RN hours by more than 30 per cent** – something that is not allowed under its own accountability agreement with the Local Health Integration Network. ONA will be

seeking more disclosure from Chartwell and grieving the layoff notices, and will expect the LHIN to respond to these cuts.

**May 16:** The **Long-Term Care Task Force on Resident Care and Safety**, on which ONA was a participant, releases its final report. ONA urges the government to implement the recommendations – for the homes, the government and other partners such as the LHINs and CCACs to act – despite economic challenges.

**June 6-7:** The **June PCM** is held in Niagara-on-the-Lake and offers education on return to work issues.

**June 15:** ONA warns that **Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) is not telling the community the whole story** as it cuts a total of 18 full-time RN positions in the Medical-Surgical units and Complex Care Integrated Program. ONA says that BCHS management is spinning the changes as positive for patient care and urges the community of Brant to speak to their MPPs against these cuts.

**June 15:** Ontario nurses urge MPPs from all parties to **completely strike Schedules 28 and 30 from Bill 55, the 2012 omnibus budget bill**, noting that the government did not receive a mandate from voters for such sweeping changes. Schedule 30 would gut the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act*.

**ONA also expresses concern about Schedule 28**, the proposed *Government Services and Service Providers Act, 2012*, which would erode the authority of elected, local representatives to democratically decide how important services like health care, education, electricity, and official identification documents are delivered and could lead to a large-scale sell-off of public services, including hospitals.

**June 20:** ONA is outraged to learn that as of September 30, 2012, **the contract between VON for Canada and the North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC will expire**, resulting in layoff notices for 17 RNs and RPNs who have been providing home care services throughout the Muskoka area. Effective October 1, 2012, **the contract will be granted to a for-profit organization**, Closing the Gap Healthcare Group.

**June 20:** The **IAC called in by RNs at Sault Area Hospital's new Emergency Department** supports claims that RN staffing levels are insufficient to meet the needs of the large geographic area served by the hospital, and that patient care has been compromised. The panel makes 35 recommendations which include the addition of one RN scheduled to work a 12-hour shift and the addition of a Unit Aide position to provide non-nursing duties to “enable the nurses to focus on patient care needs.”

**June 20:** ONA commends MPPs on the Finance Committee who **thoughtfully debated and amended the provincial budget**. The revised 2012 budget passes, without changes to arbitration legislation governing hospital workers, without more corporate tax cuts, and with an increase in tax rate for those with incomes of \$500,000 per year. However, Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance, indicates his intention to bring back the arbitration provisions that were deleted from the 2012 budget when the legislature resumes sitting in the fall.

**July:** ONA begins planning in earnest for the **2012 Biennial Convention** and launch of its **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations**.

# Appendix

## ONA Presidents:

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1973-75	Jean Lowery, RN*
1976	Berenice Hicks, RN*
1977	Lois Fairley, RN*
1978	Sharon Thompson, RN*
1979	Sandra McAllister, RN*
1980	Heather Dolan, RN
1981	Debra Cooper-Berger, RN
1982	Ethyllynn Phillips, RN
1983	Joy Leacock, RN
1984	Mary Anne Fish, RN
1985	Rose Briscoe, RN
1986	Donna Alexander, RN
1987	Gloria Lynn, RN
1988	Monica Leslie, RN
1989	Pat Bethune, RN
1990	Lesley Bell, RN
1991	Eileen Davidson, RN
1992	Mary Jane Christianson, RN
1993-94	Ina Caissey, RN
1995-96	Jane Cornelius, RN
1997	Barb Wahl, RN (Acting)
1998-99	Barb Wahl, RN
2000-01	Barb Wahl, RN
2002-03	Barb Wahl, RN
2004-05	Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN
2006-07	Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN
2008-09	Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN
2010-11	Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN
2012-	Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN

## Chief Executive Officers:

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1974-1986	Anne Gribben, RN
1986-1993	Glenna Cole-Slattery, RN
1993-2012	Lesley Bell, RN

\*Also a founding member of ONA



# ONA Milestones 1973- 2012

## Do You Have a Correction or Update?

If you have corrections or updates to this ONA Milestones document, please let us know.

Please e-mail your comments to [CGRintake@ona.org](mailto:CGRintake@ona.org), or complete this form and send it to us at Ontario Nurses' Association, Communications and Government Relations Team, 85 Grenville St., Ste. 400, Toronto, ON M5S 3A2.

Comments:

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How can a researcher confirm this information?

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Local: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail contact: \_\_\_\_\_

If no e-mail, please provide a mailing address in case we have questions.

Thank You!



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