

## ON HEALTH CARE

January, 2005

### **ONA PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN BRINGS ATTENTION TO PROVINCIAL NURSING SHORTAGE**

As long as there continues to be a shortage of nurses to deliver the care that patients of this province need, the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) will do everything in our power to alert the public to the seriousness of this situation.

As such, ONA has launched a "Still Not Enough Nurses: Act Now! Patient Can't Wait" campaign to highlight the fact that urgent changes are needed to add more nurses to our health care system. The campaign builds on ONA's very successful "Not Enough Nurses: Your Tax Cuts at Work" campaign of 2001.

As the largest provincial nurses' union in the country, representing 50,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, community agencies and industry throughout Ontario, ONA knows of what it speaks. And because of that, ONA believes it has an obligation to ensure the public knows that excessive workloads for nurses are leading to stress, absenteeism and increased workplace injury and illness, which could prevent them from providing quality patient care.

While the government has announced that approximately 638 new registered nursing jobs have been created, this doesn't come anywhere close to the 8,000 new nurses it promised. This is particularly alarming since studies predict there will be a shortfall of at least 15,000 registered nurses in Ontario by 2008.

The campaign's launch was timed to coincide with the conclusion of regularly scheduled hospital bargaining talks between ONA, which is negotiating on behalf of 45,000 members in the hospital sector, and the Ontario Hospital Association, which represents 136 participating hospitals. Those talks are proceeding to mediation/arbitration next month.

ONA has produced promotional materials, including posters, buttons and bumper stickers, bearing the "Not Enough Nurses" slogan. As well, postcards, signed by ONA members and the public, will be given to Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman, demanding the government acts to fund the promised 8,000 nursing jobs now because patients really *can't* wait.

Additional information can be found on the ONA web site at [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org). As a new member of the Ontario Federation of Labour, ONA asks you to support our important campaign because the voice of thousands will be hard to ignore. And the patients of this province desperately need our help.

**Information provided by the Ontario Nurses' Association**

**P L E A S E   P O S T**