

The Official Publication of the Ohio Nurses Foundation

# OHIO NURSE

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January 2025

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# President's Message

## Advocacy and Solidarity Earn Major Victory for Ohio's Nurses and Health Professionals

House Bill 452 Becomes Law in 90 Days



**Rick Lucas, BSN, RN, CCRN - ONA President and Executive Director**

We are excited to start 2025 with a momentous win thanks to the passing of House Bill 452. The Healthcare Workplace Safety Act is a great first conquest requiring hospitals to do more to address violence toward nurses and health professionals, but our work is far from over in the fight for safety and legally enforceable minimum staffing standards in all Ohio hospitals.

Unfortunately, House Bill 285, The Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act, did not make it out of last year's General Assembly but the action and advocacy will continue this year. ONA will be introducing a new staffing bill like HB285. While we don't have the details of that bill to share right now, updates will be shared on ONA's social media channels, website, and in the *Ohio Nurse*. In the meantime, we need your help! ONA is asking for advocacy champions to make our workplaces safer and strengthen the healthcare system for everyone.

More information is below on what HB452 means for nurses and health professionals and how to become an advocacy champion to ensure healthcare in Ohio is safer for everyone.

Also, in this edition of the *Ohio Nurse*, find out when your nursing license is due for renewal; how to identify human trafficking victims in healthcare; when our next Nurses & Health Professionals Lobby Day event is; and how to sponsor the 2025 Nurses Choice scholarship.



♥ A Union of Nurses & Health Professionals

**YOU CARE FOR EVERYONE ELSE. WE CARE FOR YOU.  
IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE. LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE TOGETHER!**

<https://ohnurses.org/members/>



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## Health Policy & Advocacy

### ONA Members Lead the Way: HB 452 Signed into Law



Catharyne Henderson, BSN RN-BC - ONA Board Member



On January 8, 2025, Governor Mike DeWine signed Ohio House Bill 452, The Healthcare Workplace Safety Act, into law. This historic legislation is a major victory for nurses and health professionals who have long advocated for safer

workplaces in Ohio hospitals. The passage of HB 452 represents the power of collective action and the tireless efforts of the ONA members who fought for this critical bill.

## What HB 452 Means for Ohio Hospitals

The Healthcare Workplace Safety Act introduces comprehensive measures to tackle workplace violence in hospitals. These include:

- Security Plans: Hospitals must develop security plans that address high-risk areas, such as emergency and psychiatric departments, based on thorough risk assessments.
- Team Input: At least 50% of the planning team must consist of direct patient care employees, ensuring frontline caregivers shape the solutions.
- Training Requirements: Security personnel must receive training in de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed care, and appropriate use of restraints.
- Incident Reporting: Hospitals must establish a system to document and analyze workplace violence incidents using the data to refine prevention strategies.
- Annual Review: Hospitals are required to annually review and update their safety plans in collaboration with designated teams.

Rick Lucas, BSN, RN, CCRN, ONA President and Executive Director, highlighted the importance of this legislation: "The passage of HB 452 is a testament to the strength of solidarity and advocacy by nurses and health professionals. By standing together, we have taken an important step toward creating safer workplaces where healthcare providers can focus on delivering quality care without the constant threat of violence."

## Collective Advocacy in Action

From the first hearing to the final signature, ONA members demonstrated the strength of their collective voice. Catharyne Henderson, BSN, RN-BC, ONA Health Policy Council Chair, emphasized the grassroots advocacy efforts that shaped HB 452: "Each step of this legislative process was an opportunity for nurses and health professionals to share their stories and inform lawmakers about the urgent need for safer workplaces. It's incredibly rewarding to see those efforts reflected in the final bill."

ONA members testified at every stage, providing compelling evidence of the need for change. Their personal stories highlighted the urgency of addressing workplace violence and informed lawmakers about practical, meaningful solutions.

## Nurses and Health Professionals Leading the Way in Hearings

ONA members were active participants in committee hearings in both the Ohio House and Senate. They advocated for key provisions, such as ensuring at least one staff member trained in de-escalation practices is always present in high-risk areas. Their persistence ensured HB 452 was designed with real-world solutions in mind.

Jacinta Tucker, MSN, RN, ONA Board of Directors Vice-President, reflected on the collaborative approach: "This bill is the product of collective advocacy, persistence, and teamwork. It's a reminder of what we can achieve when we unite for a common cause."

ONA also appreciated the leadership of State Representatives Andrea White (R - Kettering) and Rachel Baker (D - Cincinnati), who championed this bill from its introduction to its passage. Representative Baker, a nurse, and ONA member, brought invaluable expertise and firsthand knowledge of the challenges healthcare professionals face. "Their bipartisan collaboration and commitment to workplace safety were instrumental in the passage of HB 452," said Rick Lucas.

## A Vision for the Future

While HB 452 is a significant milestone, the fight for safer workplaces is far from over. Nurses and health professionals continue to face challenges like unsafe staffing levels and gaps in workplace safety policies. ONA Board of Directors Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara McGhee, BSN, RN, CNOR, underscored this point: "Our work doesn't stop here. We will keep advocating for safer staffing, holding employers accountable, and pushing for legislative improvements to protect our colleagues and our patients."

The ONA is committed to supporting nurses and health professionals as they work with their employers to implement the safety plans required under HB 452. These plans must include input from frontline caregivers, ensuring that those who understand the risks firsthand shape the solutions.

### Get Involved: Join the Advocacy Team

The ONA is calling on all nurses and health professionals to continue building on this momentum. By joining the ONA Advocacy Team, you can help push for the changes needed to protect nurses and health professionals and improve patient care. Visit [ohnurses.org/codered](http://ohnurses.org/codered) to learn more and find out how you can make a difference. No prior experience is required—just a commitment to your profession and your patients.

As Rick Lucas reminds us, "This victory is a reminder of what we can accomplish when nurses and health professionals unite and use their collective voice. Together, we'll keep building a safer and stronger future for healthcare in Ohio."



## ONA Continuing Education

## 2025 is the Year to Renew Your Nursing License

It's that time again! Ohio RNs and APRNs must renew Ohio licenses in 2025. This will include single-state and multi-state licenses. Ohio Board of Nursing will open the online application process in Summer 2025. In the meantime, nurses can prepare for renewal by making sure continuing education requirements for this licensure cycle are met.

For RNs renewing their Ohio license, 24 contact hours will need to be earned during this licensure cycle, including at least 1 contact hour of Category A (cycle is November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2025). As Spring approaches, now is a great time to be on the lookout for conferences and events where needed contact hours can be earned!

For those who enjoy learning independently, ONA offers many continuing education courses online at [ce.ohnurses.org](http://ce.ohnurses.org)

For those who enjoy in-person events, check out ONA's [event webpage](#) and watch for event announcements on ONA's social media.

## Human Trafficking: Are You Identifying Its Victims in Healthcare?

About 90% of victims are seen while trafficked yet go unidentified. Can you recognize these individuals in the clinical setting?

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Francine Bono-Neri, PhD, RN, APRN, PNP, FAAN, Writer for The Nursing Beat

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. It is a month dedicated to raising awareness on human trafficking (HT) with the ultimate goal of prevention. Although discussed on news networks and social media, as well as being portrayed in Hollywood films, HT is very different from how these outlets depict it. It is not white van abductions nor chains and ropes, but rather psychological manipulation and trauma-bonding.

HT is happening in plain sight, as its victims walk amongst us, yet goes grossly undetected due to a lack of understanding of its true nature and how to identify it. It is a global humanitarian crisis which exploits human vulnerabilities, sparing no age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. HT is an evil that infiltrates all nations and generates [hundreds of billions of dollars annually](#)—estimated to be the approximate revenue of Google, Nike, and Starbucks *combined*.

### Human Trafficking Defined

Also known as modern-day slavery, HT is an exploitation-based crime against a person for labor or services using force, fraud, or coercion. Although sex and labor trafficking are the two most widely recognized forms of trafficking, there are a number of other forms. These include, but are not limited to: domestic servitude, organ trafficking, forced criminality, forced surrogacy, child soldiering, and forced marriages.

Through technology-driven digital communication and connectedness, perpetrators harness these platforms to perpetrate these crimes. With exposure for a countless number of buyers to an unlimited number of victims, labor or sex can be ordered online as easily as a pizza from Dominos.

### Vulnerabilities

Victims of HT have one commonality: a vulnerability which can be exploited. Preying upon these vulnerabilities, traffickers seek out voids or weaknesses and psychologically manipulate their victims into believing they can fill them.

Victims are lured by false promises and, in turn, are exploited. Some of those vulnerabilities include:

- Age, including minors and older adults
- Sexual orientation/LGBTQIA+
- Unstable housing, homelessness, “couch surfing”
- Involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Lack of education
- Socioeconomic challenges
- Substance use/addiction
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Mental or physical disabilities
- Social media use and online gaming (such as Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft)

## **Human Trafficking and Healthcare**

Although HT is primarily viewed as a law enforcement or social services issue, victims of HT are accessing healthcare at exponential rates. The [literature shows](#) that approximately 90% of survivors reported being seen by a healthcare professional (HCP) during their exploitation, yet most were never identified nor offered services. These individuals are coming in contact with the healthcare sector for diverse emergent needs and mental health concerns but remain completely invisible to us.

Unlike an illicit drug or arms trade—in that once that product is sold, it’s gone—humans can be sold over and over again, leading to significant physical ailments and complex trauma. That healthcare encounter is an opportunity to disrupt the cycle of victimization by treating and responding to victims, and mandatory reporting in cases involving minors.

Yet, as victims remain grossly unidentified, these healthcare encounters are missed opportunities—an opportunity which we may never get again with that client, if we continue to diagnostically overshadow or label them.

## **Healthcare Professionals’ HT Preparedness**

[Studies show](#) that licensed HCPs are not educated on HT and anti-trafficking measures with approximately 80% reporting lack of knowledge on identification skills and lack of confidence in response to these victims.

[One study highlights](#) the significant education gap that exists in prelicensure RN programs across America with 91.4% of participants reporting minimal to no HT content being taught.

## **Red-Flag Indicators of HT**

Although there are many diverse clinical findings, the following lists some cues that are most commonly associated with trafficked individuals:

- Suicidality
- Substance use/overdose (mechanism of control used by traffickers and/or a coping mechanism for victims)

- STI/STD, UTIs (especially if occurring frequently)
- Ectopic pregnancy, multiple pregnancies/abortions
- Neonatal abstinence syndrome
- Domestic violence/intimate partner violence
- Signs of abuse (multiple bruises in various stages of healing)
- Delay in seeking treatment
- Nonfatal strangulation
- Multiple cell phones/multiple hotel keys
- No ID or not in possession of ID (when developmentally appropriate)
- Tattoos of \$ symbol, crowns, profane language (forms of branding)
- Controlling/domineering companion who is unwilling to leave client alone

## Nurses Can Make a Difference

Nurses comprise the largest number of constituents of the healthcare professions. We are ideally situated to identify, treat, respond, and act as mandated reporters in cases involving minors—but only if we are properly educated. Remaining ill-prepared is causing us to fail an entire vulnerable population.

As nurses, we are voted [the most trusted](#) healthcare professionals. It is our ethical duty to become properly educated and ensure that our current and future colleagues do the same. By incorporating HT content into prelicensure programs as well as continuous reinforcement through professional development, not only does this break the cycle of further victimization for that individual once identified, but it prevents other victims from falling prey to exploitation.

## Call To Action

- Become comprehensively educated on HT and raise awareness on the pervasiveness and magnitude of these crimes.
- Go to the [Nurses United Against Human Trafficking website](#) and become educated, equipped, and empowered with its comprehensive anti-trafficking training. Share what you learned with your colleagues and encourage them to do the same.
- If you are a nurse educator, integrate essential content such as how to identify the red flags of HT and how to appropriately respond using a trauma-informed approach.
- Advocate for the integration of HT content into prelicensure nursing curricula to better prepare our future colleagues for practice. Additionally, advocate for mandatory continuing education and professional development on this topic for all licensed HCPs.

## Conclusion

Nurses play a critical role in identifying, treating, and advocating for victims of HT. Unfortunately, this population of

victims too often remains unrecognized due to the existing gap in education on this topic.

These victims must be promptly identified and appropriately treated with trauma-informed care, but without proper education these victims will continue to go unidentified. Nurses are ideally positioned to intervene and disrupt the cycle of HT's horrific victimization.

#### **Recommended Resources:**

- Nurses United Against Human Trafficking
- <https://www.nursesunitedagainsthumantrafficking.org>
- <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
- <https://endsexualexploitation.org/>
- <https://www.missingkids.org/home>
- <https://polarisproject.org/>

## **Save the Date**

## **2025 Nurses & Health Professionals Lobby Day**

The new year is underway, and the 2025 Nurses & Health Professionals Lobby Day will be here before we know it! This year's event will be held during Nurses Week on Thursday, May 8, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Ohio Statehouse's atrium.

Lobby Day is your chance to have your voice heard and stand with your fellow nurses and health professionals to advocate for safe staffing and other critical issues impacting the quality of care you provide and the nursing profession. Together, we will address Ohio's chronic nurse staffing crisis, which threatens patient and staff safety.

At Lobby Day, you'll have the unique opportunity to meet with Ohio's legislators and demand solutions to these lifesaving issues. Don't miss this opportunity to advocate for yourself, your colleagues, and your patients!

Registration will open soon on the ONA website, so stay tuned for more details. Until then, save the date, spread the word, and be ready to make a difference at the Ohio Statehouse on Thursday, May 8!

**CELEBRATE, COLLABORATE,  
AND ELEVATE YOUR  
EXPERTISE!**

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## Ohio Nurses Foundation

# Ohio Nurses Foundation's 2025 Nurses Choice Virtual Event

Scholarships Winners Will be Announced

The Ohio Nurses Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Ohio Nurses Association and is a 501(c)(3) charity founded in 2002. Since 2002, the Foundation has awarded over \$125,000 in scholarships and grants to Ohio students and nurse researchers.

The Nurses Choice is the ONF's main fundraiser, where nurses and friends of nurses alike celebrate and support the future of the Ohio nursing profession.

This year, we will continue to break the virtual program into shorter prerecorded video segments focusing on the scholarship recipients and the sponsors who introduce them. The 2025 scholarship winners and sponsors will be shared on ONF and ONA Facebook pages throughout Nurses Week (May 6-12).

The Foundation relies on the generosity of its sponsors and donors to fund scholarships year after year. If you would like to support nursing education, please consider being a 2025 Nurses Choice sponsor (see 2025 Nurses Choice Sponsorship Opportunities). To donate, mail a check/money order to the Ohio Nurses Foundation, Attn. Rick Lucas, 3510 Snouffer Road, Columbus, Ohio 43235.



## 2025 NURSES CHOICE SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION

### PLATINUM-\$750

- Pre-recorded scholarship presenter announcing one scholarship/winner.
- A combined thank you postings with other platinum sponsors on the ONF/ONA's social media platforms (over 40,000 followers).
- Hyperlinked sponsor logo displayed on the ONF website.

- ½ page ad in *Ohio Nurses Review*.
  - A thank you listing within *Ohio Nurse*.
  - A thank you listing within *Ohio Nurses Review*.
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## GOLD-\$750

- Hyperlinked sponsor logo displayed on the ONF website.
  - A combined thank you postings with other gold sponsors on the ONF/ONA's social media platforms (over 40,000 followers).
  - Hyperlinked sponsor logo displayed on the ONF website.
  - A thank you listing within *Ohio Nurse*.
  - A thank you listing within *Ohio Nurses Review*.
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## I LOVE NURSES-\$75 (Individual Donor)

Perfect for businesses, family, and friends who wish to recognize special nurses in their lives.

- A thank you listing within *Ohio Nurse*.
  - Donors have an opportunity to share stories about their special nurse. With the donor's permission, we will share their stories on our social media platforms.
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For more information contact Michelle Donovan at [mdonovan@ohnurses.org](mailto:mdonovan@ohnurses.org).

Register your support at [ohionursesfoundation.org](http://ohionursesfoundation.org).