



♥ A Union of Nurses &
Health Professionals

February 2026



To view the full newsletter in its original digital format
[click here](#) or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code?
Visit <https://n.hnlnc.co/s/38z3Gs6J>

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Advocacy	3
ONA Pushes Ohio State to Remove the Wexner Name From Campus Facilities	3
OSU Protest of the Wexner Name	5
ONA Lobby Day – April 30, 2026	7
Unfair Labor Practice Charge Filed After Hospital Retaliates Against Nurse Organizers	8
Follow ONA	9
ONA In The News	9
Recent Media Stories	9
Recognitions	10
ONA Celebrates Black History Month	10
Celebrating U.S. Army Nurse Ruby Bradley	14
Events	14
Healthcare Heroes Night + Red Out with the Columbus Fury	14
Wellness	15
Caring For Your Mental Health	16

ONA Pushes Ohio State to Remove the Wexner Name From Campus Facilities

We've called on Ohio State to remove the Wexner name from all campus facilities — including the new University Hospital. The full statement is below:

February 17, 2026

Dr. Warner, President Carter, and Members of the Board of Trustees:

As nurses and health professionals — and as mandated reporters — we are trained to recognize abuse and to act. We are legally and ethically obligated to protect children and vulnerable people when harm is suspected. That obligation does not disappear when reporting the abuse is uncomfortable, politically inconvenient, or tied to powerful names.

It compels us to demand the removal of the Wexner name from The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and all campus facilities.

Jeffrey Epstein trafficked and sexually abused underage girls. Not “young women.” Not “participants.” Children. Girls who were groomed, exploited, assaulted, and discarded by adults with wealth, status, and influence. Many were recruited as teenagers. Many were manipulated into believing abuse was opportunity. The psychological, physical, and emotional damage of that exploitation does not fade with headlines. Survivors carry it for a lifetime — in their health, their relationships, and their sense of safety in the world.

Publicly available records document Leslie Wexner's relationship with Epstein and raise serious concerns that cannot be brushed aside as historical footnotes. When an institution dedicated to healing carries the name of someone so closely associated with a man who systematically preyed on children, survivors see that name every day. For many, it is not neutral. It is retraumatizing. His name has been publicly referenced in connection with investigations surrounding Epstein's network.

And The Ohio State University does not have the luxury of pretending it has not been here before.

Richard Strauss abused student-athletes and other young male students for years while employed by the university. Many of those survivors were barely out of adolescence. They were young men placed in positions of vulnerability within athletic and medical settings, they were told to trust. Survivors have described how warnings were ignored or minimized. The institutional failure to intervene allowed abuse to continue. That was not simply an administrative failure — it was a profound betrayal of young people placed in the university's care.

The university's own commissioned investigation detailed breakdowns in leadership, oversight, and response during that era. Gordon Gee was part of the university's leadership structure during the period examined in that report. Seeing him now publicly defend Leslie Wexner while survivors — including the young men abused under Strauss — continue to seek accountability sends a chilling message about whether meaningful change has occurred.

When institutions respond to credible concerns by defending legacy rather than centering survivors, it mirrors the same patterns that allowed abuse to flourish in the past. Covering up, minimizing, delaying — these choices compound

harm. They retraumatize survivors. They reinforce the belief that power protects itself.

If there is no affirmative commitment to remove the Wexner name, we will hold an informational picket on February 22 at noon (*see event recap in this newsletter*) at Phyllis A. Jones Legacy Park to stand visibly and unapologetically with survivors — during the opening of the new University Hospital, a moment that should represent healing but remains overshadowed by the controversy and pain attached to the Wexner name.

The removal of Leslie Wexner's name from athletic facilities — including the football practice facility inside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center — is not symbolic. It is about acknowledging the young male athletes abused by Strauss. It is about recognizing that sports spaces were part of where institutional failure occurred. It is about sending a clear message that the university will no longer allow powerful names to overshadow the pain of those young men.

Additionally, the university must address the naming of the Labor and Delivery waiting area in light of reports that Dr. Mark Landon received payments from Epstein. Regardless of the stated nature of those payments — and while investigations proceed — the optics and impact matter. Survivors matter more than prestige. Children who were harmed matter more than donor relationships.

This is about young girls who were preyed upon by powerful adults.

This is about young men who were betrayed.

This is about lifelong trauma.

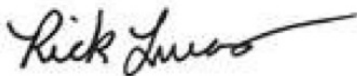
And this is about whether a public institution of higher education and healthcare has truly learned that protecting reputation at the expense of the vulnerable is indefensible. What side are you on?

We see survivors. We treat survivors. We understand the depth of harm abuse inflicts on children — and the decades it can take to heal.

Do you?

Ohio State must remove the Wexner name and demonstrate — not with words, but with action — that it stands with survivors and not with the systems that failed them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Lucas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rick Lucas BSN, RN, CCRN

ONA President & Executive Director

**Sent on behalf of the leaders of OSUNO, OSUTNO, OSRTO, OSTA, OSCST, OSUES, OSUBMTCNO and the Anesthesia Techs*

**ONE-YEAR
RN TO BSN**

ONLINE COURSES
LOW TUITION
MONTHLY START DATES

APPLY FREE



WGU

Earn Your RN to BSN Online in 1 Year | Low Tuition & Monthly Starts

Advance your nursing career with WGU's accredited RN to BSN program. Designed for working nurses, our 100% online curriculum offers the flexibility to balance work, life, and school. Affordable tuition and monthly start dates. Apply free and graduate in as little as one year.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

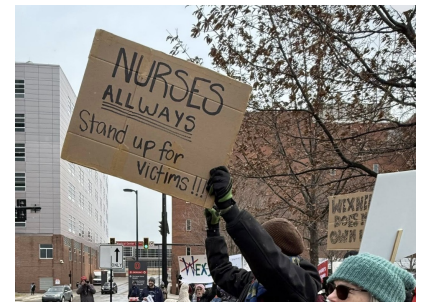
Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/8TxSyHPb>

OSU Protest of the Wexner Name

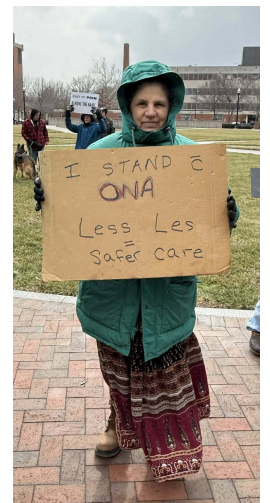
Health professionals, community members, and survivors stood together to demand that the Ohio State University remove the Wexner name from its medical center and facilities.

We made it clear:

Survivors must be centered, and accountability must be action, not empty statements. This is not the end. It's part of ongoing advocacy for integrity in our healing spaces.



To learn more about the OSU survivors and how to take action, visit <https://survivorsofosu.com/>.





To view the other 14 images in this gallery [click here](#) or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/8JvKbqKv>

**OSU — REMOVE
WEXNER'S NAME**

**FROM THE MEDICAL CENTER —
AND ALL CAMPUS FACILITIES**

**STAND WITH
SURVIVORS.**

+

**DEMAND
ACCOUNTABILITY.**





You're used to changing patients' lives. Now, it's time to change yours.

Take the next step in your nursing journey at COTC! Our BSN program offers classes online and admits every term. Learn from experienced instructors in a competency-based format. No tests. No better choice.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/gy9ry8tH>

ONA Lobby Day – April 30, 2026

April 30, 2026 | Columbus, OH

ONA members are encouraged to save the date for ONA Lobby Day on April 30, 2026, at the Ohio Statehouse.

Lobby Day will include:

- Advocacy trainings and presentation of a report on Moral Injury to prepare members for effective legislative engagement,
- Meetings with key committee members on ONA priority legislation, including HB 521 and HB 535, and
- Opportunities for members to request meetings with their own state representatives and senators to discuss these bills and other critical issues, such as GLP-1 coverage, privacy protections, and additional concerns impacting nurses and health professionals.

[Find More Info Here](#)



ONA remains committed to advancing policies that protect healthcare workers, strengthen patient safety, and ensure accountability at both the state and local levels. We appreciate the continued engagement of our members and look forward to working together as the General Assembly returns to session. If you would like to become more involved, please reach out to Kelli Hykes, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy at khykes@ohnurses.org to discuss upcoming opportunities.



Graff & McGovern, LPA

Attorneys & Counselors at Law 604 E. Rich Street, Columbus, Ohio
43215. Contact us today at 614-228-5800.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/jkxV4omn>

Unfair Labor Practice Charge Filed After Hospital Retaliates Against Nurse Organizers

Columbus, OH — Hospital executives at Mount Carmel East and its owner, Trinity Health, have made their priorities clear: maximize profits, silence workers, and cover up unsafe conditions, no matter the cost to patients.

On February 17, the Ohio Nurses Association (ONA) filed multiple unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board against Mount Carmel East after hospital leadership fired nurse Ashley Lantto for attempting to organize her coworkers around serious patient safety concerns, chronic understaffing, and a deteriorating workplace culture. Lantto and her colleagues had raised alarms about call lights going unanswered, falls that occurred when patients were afraid to ask for assistance, medications and pain control delayed due to short staffing, and emergency room patients boarding in hallways for days because inpatient units lacked sufficient staff.

Shortly after firing Lantto, MCE also terminated her husband—an employee of four years with no disciplinary record—in what nurses describe as a retaliatory act meant to intimidate staff and silence concerns.

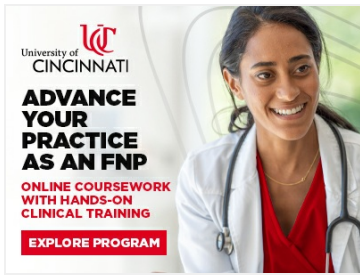
Mount Carmel East and its owner, Trinity Health, have a history of union-busting and putting profits over people, and this latest episode follows a familiar pattern of denying problems, discrediting workers, and punishing those who tell the truth.

“This nurse did exactly what every patient expects of a licensed professional entrusted with their care—she spoke up when something was wrong,” said ONA President Rick Lucas. “Retaliating against a nurse for raising patient safety concerns isn’t just unlawful—it sends a chilling message to every nurse and health professional who sees a risk and wonders whether it’s safe to say something. We saw, very publicly at Mount Carmel West, what happens when staff are not safe to speak up. When fear replaces transparency, patients pay the price. No nurse or health professional should ever have to choose between protecting their license and protecting their patients.”

The unfair labor practice charge seeks accountability for the unlawful firings and calls attention to Mount Carmel East’s refusal to address the real issues nurses have raised. Nurses emphasize that organizing is about improving care, protecting patients, and creating a workplace where staff can raise concerns without fear.

Asked what message she has for Mount Carmel East nurses and health professionals who remain on the job, Ashley Lantto says, “Do not let them keep you from talking about unionizing or keep you from talking to each other. When you feel isolated, you are more likely to take the bad conditions that they are providing.”

Patients deserve honesty. Nurses deserve respect. Mount Carmel East: ***it’s time to do better.***



Flexible MSN-FNP Program for Working Nurses at UC College of Nursing

Earn your MSN-FNP through online coursework combined with precepted clinical training. Expert faculty and dedicated support guide you from application to graduation.

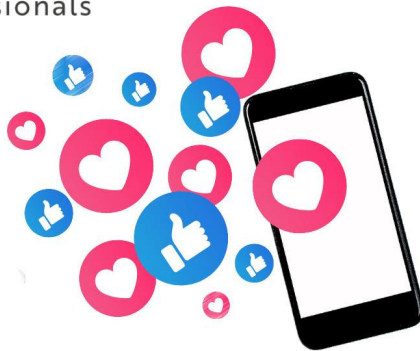
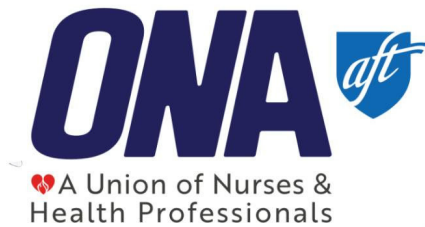


[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/byceaSrs>

Follow ONA

Follow ONA on all of our social media platforms.



[ONA Facebook](#)

[ONF Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[X](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Bluesky](#)

ONA In The News

- [The Columbus Dispatch - Ohio State nurses' union calls to remove Wexner's name from health system](#)
- [ABC 6 - 'It's time for change,' nurses call for removal of Wexner, Landon names at OSUMC](#)

- [WOSU Public Media - Ohio Nurses Association calls on Ohio State to remove Les Wexner's name from campus buildings](#)
- [WBNS 10 - Ohio Nurses Association calls for removal of Wexner's name from Ohio State campus, medical buildings.](#)
- [WTOL 11 - Nurses union holds rally amid calls for removal of Wexner's name from Ohio State campus, medical buildings](#)
- [WKBN 27 - WHIO TV Ohio Nurses Association calls for removal of Les Wexner's name from Ohio State buildings](#)
- [WDTN 2 - Ohio nurses' union push to remove billionaire's name from hospitals](#)



University of CINCINNATI
ADVANCE YOUR RN PRACTICE
 FLEXIBLE RN TO BSN BUILT FOR WORKING NURSES
 EXPLORE PROGRAM



Advance Your RN Career with UC's RN to BSN Program

Build on your nursing experience with a flexible RN to BSN from UC's College of Nursing. Gain evidence-based skills, leadership confidence, and support from application through graduation.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/jVPrVqd>

Recognitions

ONA Celebrates Black History Month

ONA is celebrating by featuring the trailblazing work of Black nurses who helped make the field what it is today.

Estelle Massey Osborne



Estelle Massey Osborne was a pioneering nurse and educator and the first African American to earn a master's degree in nursing.

Her work as a teacher, consultant, and leader helped lift racial barriers in nursing education and opened doors for many Black nurses into academic and leadership roles.

[Learn more about Estelle Massey Osbourne here.](#)

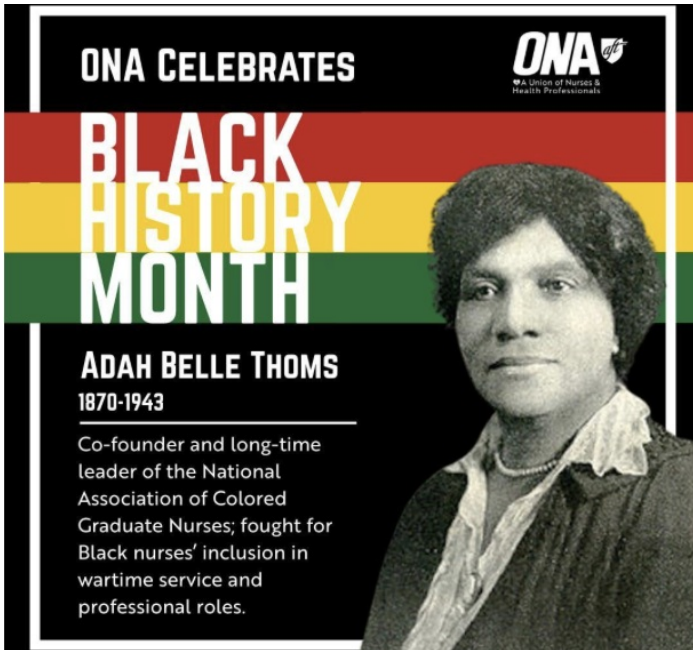
**Courtesy of NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing*



Click the image above or scan the QR code to learn more.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/kEkcoy88>

Adah Belle Thoms



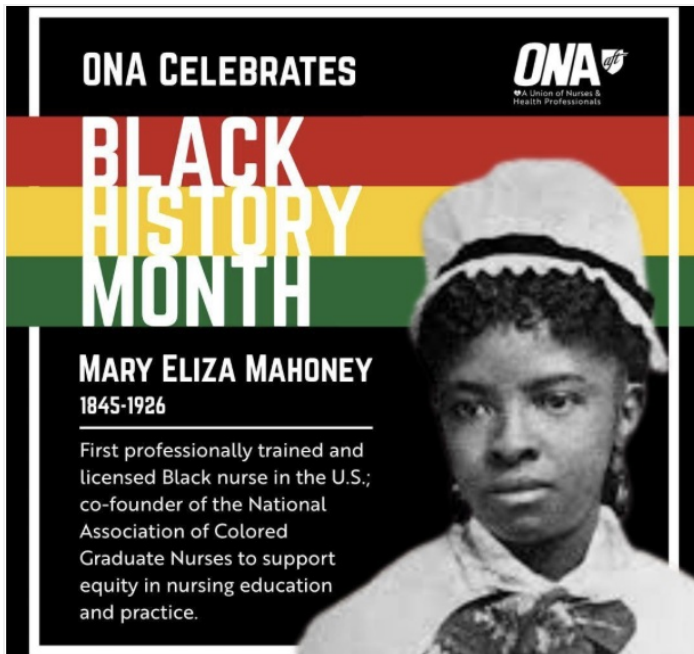
Adah Belle Thoms was a pioneering nurse, educator, and organizer who helped found the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and served as its president.

She fought for Black nurses to serve in the Red Cross and U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War I, breaking down barriers in professional nursing and service.

[Learn more about Adah Belle Thomas here.](#)

**Courtesy of African American Registry*

Mary Eliza Mahoney



Mary Eliza Mahoney was the first professionally trained Black registered nurse in the United States in 1879.

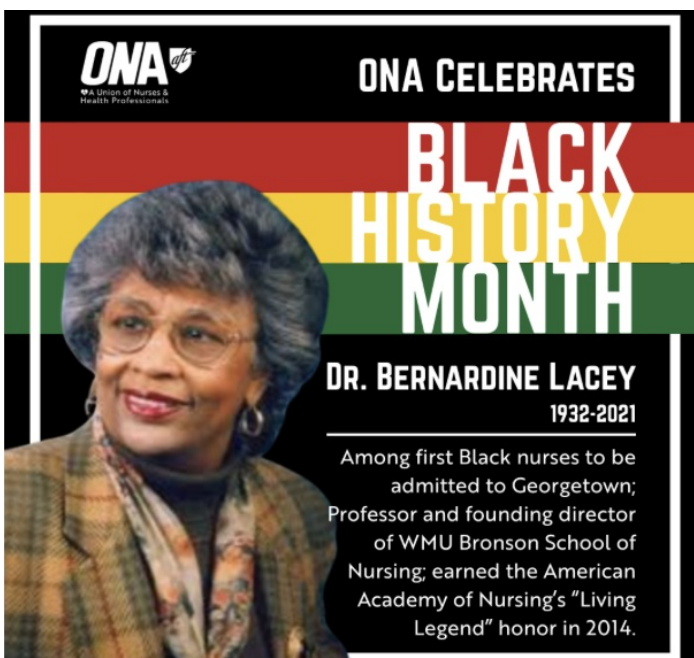
At a time when both racism and sexism barred opportunity, she set a standard of excellence that still defines nursing today. Her legacy lives on in every Black nurse who leads, advocates, and cares, often while pushing a healthcare system to be better than it was built to be.

[Learn more about Mary Eliza Mahoney here.](#)

**Courtesy of the National Women's History Museum*



Dr. Bernadine Lacey



Dr. Bernardine M. Lacey, a visionary nurse leader whose career broke barriers and shaped nursing education and health equity.

From being one of the first Black nurses admitted to Georgetown's nursing program to founding Western Michigan University's School of Nursing and earning the American Academy of Nursing's "Living Legend" honor, her work spanned clinical practice, teaching, advocacy, and leadership.

[Learn More about Dr. Bernardine M. Lacey here.](#)

**Courtesy of Western Michigan University*



Earn nursing degrees that open doors — fully online.

Ohio State's accredited nursing programs help working nurses elevate practice, expand opportunities, and make lasting contributions to patients and communities.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/AbbJs67A>

Celebrating U.S. Army Nurse Ruby Bradley

U.S. Army nurse Ruby Bradley's determination to help her patients is incredible, even under the worst conditions imaginable, and is truly awe-inspiring.

Treating and feeding patients as a POW. Surgeries with kitchen knives. Smuggling food to children. Staying until the last wounded soldier was safe. Her grit lives in every nurse today who shows up every day for their patients, no matter the odds.

[Learn More About Ruby Bradley here.](#)



Events

Healthcare Heroes Night + Red Out with the Columbus Fury

February 27, 2026 7 PM, Columbus, OH

HEALTHCARE HEROES NIGHT

PRESENTED BY  MOUNT CARMEL
A Member of Trinity Health

\$15 off select tickets for Ohio Nurses Association Members!

COLUMBUS FURY vs **INDY IGNITE**

RED OUT

FRI. FEB 27TH
INDY IGNITE
7PM

Join us with the **Columbus Fury**, a professional volleyball team, on Friday, February 27, as we celebrate our incredible nurses and health professionals.

Plus, help us turn Nationwide Arena red in recognition of **American Heart Month!**

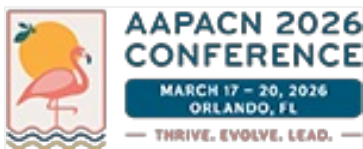
Join us, wear red, and let's pack the house with the Columbus Fury while honoring all health professionals who care for our communities every day!

[Purchase Discount Tickets Here](#)



Click the image above or scan the QR code to learn more.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/NrxVGbqq>



Drive measurable results for your organization — register today!

Join top facility leaders at the AAPACN 2026 Conference, March 17–20, in Orlando, FL, for an energizing experience designed to sharpen skills and exchange insights into operational efficiency, stronger metrics, and better resident care. Invest in results that matter. Register today.



[Click here](#) to learn more or scan the QR code.

Having trouble with the code? Visit <https://n.hnlnk.co/s/uujjk2L5>

Caring For Your Mental Health

In healthcare, you give so much of yourself: long hours, emotional moments, and the weight that isn't always visible. Stress, exhaustion, and burnout are real, but you don't have to face them alone.

A small act can make a big difference. A quick message, a genuine check-in, or a simple "I'm here for you" can lift someone's day more than you know.

Need someone to talk to?

Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7, free, and confidential.

Looking for more support?

The AFT Trauma Counseling Programs & Services are here to help: aft.org/benefits

Remember: your well-being matters. Caring for yourself is just as important as caring for others.



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/>