

The Official Publication of the Ohio Nurses Foundation

OHIO NURSE

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President's Message

Reflecting on Our Progress, Moving Forward Together



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

It's hard to believe we're more than halfway through 2025. This year has tested us — but it hasn't stopped us. Across Ohio, hundreds of nurses and allies have continued to rise up, organize, and demand real change to protect those on the front lines of care.

Right now, the most urgent crisis inside our healthcare system is one that hospital executives continue to ignore: deliberate understaffing and escalating workplace violence. Nurses are being pushed past the breaking point — working in unsafe, trauma-filled environments where we're assaulted more often than law enforcement, where there are no real staffing standards, and where employers seem more focused on cutting corners than saving lives.

Let's be clear: this isn't just about short staffing. It's about safety. Every shift we work without the support we need puts patients at risk. And every incident of violence that goes unaddressed sends a message that our safety doesn't matter. That is unacceptable — and the responsibility lies squarely with hospital leadership. Nurses are not machines. We are educated, trained, and compassionate professionals — and we're done being exploited by those who don't understand or respect the realities of patient care.

At the same time, we are continuing to fight off devastating Medicaid cuts at the state and federal levels. If passed, these cuts would strip care from thousands of Ohioans, force rural hospitals to shut down, and destabilize entire communities. We've been raising our voices against this threat since the introduction of the so-called "Big Beautiful Bill," and we must keep up the pressure. When we fight, we win.

To every nurse reading this: if you're struggling, you are not alone. These are incredibly difficult times, and there is no shame in needing support. The [988: Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) is free, confidential, and available 24/7 by call or text.

Let's keep standing together — not just to survive, but to change the system. To demand safety, accountability, and respect. To protect each other. And to build a future where every healthcare worker is empowered — and every patient receives the care they deserve.



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

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Health Policy & Advocacy

Legislative Priorities for ONA: Summer/Fall 2025



Catharyne Henderson, BSN RN-BC - ONA Health Policy Council Chair

With the passage of Ohio's biennial state budget, ONA acknowledges several important developments. Notably, the budget includes a provision prohibiting Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) from acquiring hospitals, an outcome ONA strongly supports as a safeguard against the financialization of healthcare and the degradation of care quality in pursuit of profit. However, the Medicaid provisions are deeply disappointing. When paired with the enactment of federal Medicaid cuts under the recently passed "Big Beautiful Bill," the budget sets Ohio on a path toward significant healthcare instability. These funding reductions are expected to trigger devastating consequences after the 2026 midterm elections, including hospital closures, reductions in services, and worsening health outcomes, particularly in rural areas and among vulnerable populations.

In this context, ONA is monitoring several priority bills that are likely to see action during the fall legislative session. These bills touch core issues of workplace safety, employment protections, clinical training, and access to equitable healthcare, all of which shape the landscape in which nurses live and work. ONA is prepared to negotiate amendments

and advocate for changes over the summer recess to ensure legislation aligns with the interests of nurses, patients, and communities.

HB 277 – Healthcare Worker Classification and Overtime Exemption

House Bill 277 proposes a major shift in how Ohio classifies healthcare professionals who accept work through digital staffing platforms. Under the bill, these individuals would be deemed independent contractors—not employees—so long as certain criteria are met, such as the ability to accept or decline shifts, lack of minimum hour requirements, and freedom to work with multiple entities. While framed as a measure to increase flexibility, the bill would strip nurses and other healthcare workers of fundamental labor protections, including access to overtime pay, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and the right to unionize or collectively bargain.

ONA has outlined serious concerns with the bill, particularly its sweeping definition of “online platform,” which is so broad it could be interpreted to classify nearly all staff as independent contractors. This would not only erode worker protections but also destabilize the healthcare workforce by encouraging facilities to bypass their responsibilities as employers. ONA has communicated these concerns directly to the bill sponsors and anticipates ongoing negotiations over the summer to mitigate the harm this legislation could cause if enacted in its current form. We remain committed to protecting nurses' and health professionals' rights and ensuring safe, stable care environments for patients across Ohio.

HB 338 – Assault Penalties for Correctional Staff

ONA recommends amending HB 338 to include hospital-based nurses assaulted by individuals in police or correctional custody. As introduced, the bill increases penalties for assaults within DRC facilities but fails to protect health workers in hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric units who routinely treat detained individuals. This is a dangerous omission. Equal protections should be extended to nurses facing the same risks outside of correctional walls.

HB 281 – Immigration Enforcement in Hospitals

ONA strongly opposes HB 281, which mandates cooperation between hospitals and federal immigration enforcement. The bill jeopardizes patient trust, deters care-seeking among immigrant communities, and undermines the nurse-patient relationship. By turning hospitals into extensions of federal surveillance, the legislation compromises both public health and professional ethics.

HB 319 – Clinical Teaching Subsidy Reform

While HB 319 aims to reform physician training subsidies, it entirely excludes nursing and allied health programs. ONA opposes this one-sided funding model unless amended to create an equitable, interprofessional clinical teaching fund. In its current form, the bill exacerbates clinical site competition, ignores faculty shortages in nursing education, and overlooks Ohio's broader workforce needs.

SB 154 – Electronic Monitoring in Long-Term Care

ONA opposes SB 154, which would expand electronic surveillance in long-term care resident rooms. Though positioned as a patient protection measure, it promotes a culture of distrust and surveillance that undermines staff morale and privacy. True quality care stems from adequate staffing, training, and trust—not constant monitoring.

HB 376 – Unemployment Compensation Reduction

ONA opposes HB 376's proposal to reduce unemployment benefits from 26 to 20 weeks. The change would strip critical economic support from displaced workers, especially nurses affected by hospital downsizing or closures. In a state already facing a nurse shortage, weakening protections for unemployed healthcare workers is both shortsighted and harmful.

HB 268 – Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQE)

ONA supports HB 268 with amendments. The bill modernizes the process for individuals with criminal convictions to reenter the workforce but currently excludes many health professionals from relief. ONA recommends adding case-by-case discretion for healthcare licensure boards and enhanced transparency to ensure that workforce reintegration efforts do not bypass nursing and allied health professionals.



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SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR HANDLING ICE AGENTS OR A RAID FOR HOSPITAL AND CLINIC EMPLOYEES

i What the law says about law enforcement in hospitals and other healthcare facilities

On Jan. 20, 2025, the Trump administration rescinded a policy memo that protected certain areas—such as healthcare facilities and schools—from immigration enforcement. As a result, ICE officers and agents are allowed to conduct enforcement actions in formerly protected areas.

Do's and Don'ts for patients and their families if ICE authorities come to their homes

- ➔ **Do not open the door.** ICE authorities cannot come in without a signed warrant. Tell them to pass the warrant under the door before you open it.
- ➔ **Remain silent.** ICE can use anything you say against you in your immigration case, so claim your right to remain silent! Say, "I plead the Fifth and choose to remain silent."
- ➔ **Do not sign.** Don't sign anything ICE gives you without talking to an attorney.

It's important to remember that members of our immigrant community still have basic constitutional rights. There are important steps that can be taken to support patients and families in all formerly designated protected areas. These steps include:

- Identify any applicable federal, state and local laws that protect immigrant communities.
- If policies don't exist, develop a written response policy and preparedness plan in advance for when there's an interaction with an immigration enforcement officer at or near the hospital or healthcare facility.

i Establish a written policy identifying areas of the facility as private and not open to the general public. All private areas must be clearly marked.

For example, your waiting room may be open to the public, but individuals must be invited to enter into examining rooms, offices and records areas. Alternatively, the waiting room may be open only to patients and those accompanying them, while the public must remain in areas outside the building.

i Designate a specific person or multiple people as responsible for handling contacts with law enforcement officials.

Train all other staff to inform immigration or other law enforcement officials that only the designated individuals are authorized to review a warrant or to consent to their entry into private areas, and to decline to answer any questions.

i If immigration agents ask permission or attempt to enter a private area, the designated person should state explicitly that they do not consent to entry without a judicial warrant.

If the agents indicate that they will get a warrant, contact a lawyer and try to have that person present for the search.

i When presented with a judicial warrant, the designated law enforcement contacts should review the warrant for validity.

A warrant is not valid unless it is signed by a judge and states the address of the specific premises to be searched. If the immigration agents have a valid judicial warrant, they can enter into the private areas and question anyone present. Remind all patients and other people present that they have the right not to answer any questions.

i Have staff role-play their responses during a practice immigration raid on the clinic, so that they are prepared to respond confidently in a stressful situation.

- ➔ **Document the encounter.** Take pictures, video and notes. Write down badge numbers, the number of agents and exactly what happened.
- ➔ **Fight back!** Get a trustworthy attorney, contact a local immigrant rights organization and explore all options to fight your case. If detained, you may be able to get bail—don't give up hope!

For more resources and information, contact:

- ➔ **AFT**
www.aft.org/immigration
- ➔ **National Immigration Law Center**
www.nilc.org
- ➔ **United We Dream**
www.unitedwedream.org
- ➔ **Center for Law and Social Policy**
www.clasp.org

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ONA Continuing Education (CE)

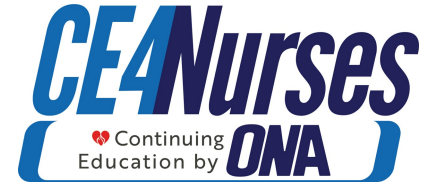
ONA's CE Courses: Investing in Nurses, Elevating Patient Care

LGBTQ+ Health and Why It Matters: Continuing Education Offering

Inclusive, affirming care is not just good practice — it saves lives. This vital CE session explores the unique health needs and disparities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, and why culturally competent, trauma-informed care must be a

priority in every healthcare setting.

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how systemic bias, stigma, and healthcare discrimination impact physical and mental health outcomes — and what nurses can do to bridge the gap. We'll cover terminology, best practices for inclusive communication, and the power of allyship at the bedside and beyond.



Why it matters:

LGBTQ+ patients are more likely to delay care due to fear of mistreatment. They're at increased risk for mental health challenges, chronic conditions, and violence — yet often feel invisible or unsafe in healthcare spaces. As nurses, we have a duty to change that reality.

Whether you're new to this work or looking to deepen your practice, this CE will equip you with tools to advocate for equity, dignity, and trust in patient care.

Free CE Courses

ONA Position on Safe Nurse Staffing in Ohio Hospitals: 2025 Official White Paper

1.0 Contact Hour – Learn how other states are addressing staffing and explore ONA's proposed framework for Ohio.

ONA Survey of All Ohio Nurses: 2024 Staffing Findings

1.0 Contact Hour – Hear directly from thousands of nurses about the reality of Ohio's staffing crisis.

[Access Your Free CEs Here](#)

ONA periodically offers courses that are free to everyone. Click [here](#) for other free courses anytime.

Need help? Contact ONA's Continuing Education team at education@ohnurses.org

The Ohio Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. (OBN-001-91)

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Don't Miss Your License Renewal Period

RNs and APRNs' renewal deadline is October 31, 2025

RN and APRNs' license renewals began July 1. **All RNs and APRNs in Ohio must renew their license by October 31, 2025.** This includes single-state and multistate licenses. All renewals must be completed online at <https://elicense.ohio.gov/>.

Renewal reminder emails will be sent out by the Ohio Board of Nursing to the email address on file with eLicense. To ensure you receive any reminders or other communication from the Board, be sure the email address on file is correct.

For RNs renewing their Ohio license, 24 contact hours must be earned during the current licensure cycle of November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2025, including at least 1 contact hour of Category A, meaning a course “directly related to Chapter 4723 of the Revised Code and the rules of the board as described in rule 4723-14-03 of the Administrative Code” (Ohio Administrative Code 4723-14-01). APRNs are also required to complete 24 hours of CE for each APRN license held.

The 24 contact hour requirement applies to most RN renewal applications, but there are differences for those who have held their Ohio license for less than one year, for those who are renewing for the first time after passing their NCLEX, and for those who are not renewing, but rather attempting to reactivate an inactive or lapsed license. Nurses should be familiar with Ohio Administrative Code 4723-14 to determine their exact requirements.

RN License Renewals Are Always Odd Years

License renewal for RNs and APRNs is always in odd numbered years. After this year's renewal, 2027 will be the next renewal for Ohio RNs and APRNs. Once renewed, the license is valid for 1 licensure period, which is November 1 – October 31 of odd years. For example, when RNs and APRNs renewed in 2023, that renewal gave the ability to continue practicing November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2025. These licensure periods are the same for APRNs. Both the RN and APRN license follows these licensure period dates.

ONA offers many CE courses online at <https://ce.ohnurses.org/> which are free for ONA members. ONA offers a Category A course specifically about license renewal and CE requirements. It is available free to ONA members by clicking [here](#).

Don't Be Charged with a Late Fee

There is a late fee for RNs renewing September 15 through October 31. **To avoid the late fee, renew on or before September 14th.**

Do not Lapse

If an RN does not renew online prior to October 31, 2025, the license will become lapsed as of November 1, 2025. A nurse with a lapsed license cannot practice, and doing so will be considered practicing without a license.

Multi-state License

Nurses who want to convert to a multistate license (MSL) during renewal may do so. You will still need to complete the required items for MSL conversion and pay the additional fee.

Questions

For questions about renewal periods or determining CE hours, email education@ohnurses.org or visit the Ohio Board

Ohio Nurses Foundation



2025 Convention Auction

The Ohio Nurses Foundation is excited to host another silent auction during the 2025 Convention, Monday, October 20- Wednesday, October 22, 2025!

Back by popular demand, this event was a standout success at the 2023 Convention, and we're thrilled to bring it back for a great cause. All proceeds from the silent auction directly support the Ohio Nurses Foundation's annual nursing scholarships, which empower the next generation of nurses to achieve their educational and professional goals.

A key measure of success for this fundraising event has always been the generous contributions from our silent auction donors. Each year, health professional advocates help us make a meaningful impact by donating items for the auction. These donations not only benefit the Ohio Nurses Foundation (ONF) but also serve as excellent promotional opportunities, offering visible support and/or product placement to a wide and engaged audience.

We received some truly amazing items last time, and we're hoping to continue that tradition, and maybe even up the ante this year! Please consider donating a fun gift basket filled with goodies or any fantastic prize of your choosing. Every contribution makes a difference!

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please reach out to Michelle Donovan at mdonovan@ohnurses.org.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Ohio Nurses Foundation. Here's another successful Convention and fundraiser!

"Support Nursing" Ohio License Plates



The Ohio Nurses Foundation needs your help in our continued quest to support our profession by providing annual nursing scholarships. How can you help? By purchasing a SUPPORT NURSING Ohio license plate. Proceeds from the license plates help fund annual scholarships. To purchase a specialized plate, click the link below, choose organizational plates, and click Ohio Nurses Association. If you are having trouble locating the Support Nursing plates, email mdonovan@ohnurses.org.

If you already have a Nursing License Plate you will receive a renewal letter in the mail two months before your birthday.

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