



Media Release

Second Expert Nursing Panel Report Underscores Urgent Need to Improve Nurse Staffing and Retention at Kingston Hospital

KINGSTON, ON, January 26, 2024 – For the second time in as many years, an independent expert nursing panel has made dozens of sound recommendations to Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) to improve patient care and working conditions for nurses and health-care professionals.

“It is unprecedented that an employer is brought in front of an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) not once, but twice in such a short period of time,” says Erin Ariss, RN, Provincial President of the Ontario Nurses’ Association (ONA). “ONA registered nurses have raised concerns with their employer for years, with zero action from the hospital. It is well past time for this employer to work collaboratively with ONA to address and resolve these issues once and for all.”

This most recent [IAC Report](#), released earlier this month, makes 99 unanimous recommendations for the Cornell 10 Medicine Unit, including the urgent need to employ the number of registered nurses and registered practical nurses required for safe nurse-to-patient ratios; ensuring there are enough resources to support and bolster recruitment; including nurses in education decisions; and many concrete recommendations related to communications, leadership and staffing.

The IAC report notes that although there is a provincial, national, and global nursing shortage, the hospital should not use this messaging as its first response to nurses’ concerns. “We all know that there is a nursing shortage,” says Ariss. “This employer should stop making excuses and instead focus on improving working conditions to help retain and attract nurses. Implementing the recommendations in this report would be an excellent way to improve nurse retention efforts.” IACs are considered to be a last resort in resolving practice issues. This report virtually mirrors the December 2022 [IAC report](#) from the Mental Health and Addiction Care Program at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC). “Nurse staffing and retention efforts as well as communications must improve immediately to support quality care,” Ariss explains. “We are ready to work together with KHSC to enact the recommendations the nursing expert panel has made to support nurses and health-care professionals in providing the best patient care possible.”

ONA is the union representing 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as more than 18,000 nursing student affiliates, providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics, and industry.

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To arrange an interview:

Media@ona.org



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