



May 21, 2021

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier's Office  
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
[premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

**Re: The immediate exemption of nurses and other health-care workers from Bill 124**

Dear Premier Ford,

RNAO calls on you to immediately exempt nurses and other health-care workers from Bill 124: An act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario's public sector.

For over 14 months, this province has been under siege from COVID-19 and its variants. Ontarians have turned to health-care workers to secure their health and safety and to save their lives. Health-care workers – in particular nurses – have remained steadfast in their commitment to all citizens of this province in spite of their own fears, in spite of their own exhaustion, in spite of the risks to their own health and safety and that of their loved ones. And when policy mistakes have been made, and another wave of COVID-19 has been allowed to crest, nurses remained at their posts and cared for Ontarians.

Words of appreciation have been uttered by public officials over the course of this pandemic, but meaningful and tangible signs of appreciation have been sparse. Indeed, throughout this pandemic, this government has kept in place legislation that forcibly suppresses the compensation of the very health-care workers that it calls "heroes." Health-care workers that fall under Bill 124 will emerge from this pandemic not just exhausted and burnt out, but also with a loss of income in real terms. This is profoundly and patently unfair and, consequently, puts Ontarians and the effective functioning of our province's health system at risk.

Premier, as you know, Ontario entered this pandemic with the lowest RN-to-population ratio in Canada, an issue raised over and over by RNAO. The lack of respect for nurses implicit in Bill 124 is informing the decision of many of our colleagues to leave our magnificent profession not just post-pandemic, but now. Indeed, [our survey indicates](#) a potential departure rate of registered nurses (RN) and nurse practitioners (NP) of 15.6 per cent in the immediate aftermath

of the pandemic. Such a departure rate threatens the effective functioning of Ontario's health system.

Premier, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to immediately exempt nurses and other health-care workers from Bill 124. Anything else will result in dire consequences for Ontarians, as nurses will continue to exit the health system now and post-pandemic, making long wait times for procedures and surgeries even longer than already expected.

Yours with regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doris Grinspun", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD,  
LLD(hon), Dr(hc), FAAN, FCAN, O.ONT.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)

Cc:

Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care  
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance  
Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development  
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Leader of the Official Opposition, New Democratic Party of Ontario  
Sara Singh, MPP, Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition, Seniors Critic, Home Care and Long-Term Care Critic, New Democratic Party of Ontario  
France G elinas, MPP, Health Critic, New Democratic Party of Ontario  
Catherine Fife, MPP, Finance and Treasury Board Critic, New Democratic Party of Ontario  
Peggy Sattler, MPP, Labour Critic, New Democratic Party of Ontario  
Steven Del Duca, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party  
John Fraser, MPP, Ontario Liberal Party  
Mike Schreiner, MPP, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario