



# RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers  
autorisés de l'Ontario

## **RAISE MINIMUM WAGE TO \$14 PER HOUR OPEN LETTER FROM ONTARIO'S RNs TO PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE**

January 27, 2014

Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Room 281  
Main Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne,

Ontario's nurses urge you to increase the minimum wage in the next provincial budget, to \$14.00 per hour.

The minimum wage has been frozen, since 2010, at \$10.25 per hour. Nurses know this has had a serious, negative impact on minimum wage workers in Ontario. With rising cost of food, rent and electricity, a worker employed full-time on the minimum wage, now has an income that is 19 per cent below the poverty line. It is unacceptable to us that someone working hard at 40 hours a week, on minimum wage, should still be living in poverty in a province as affluent as Ontario. The province's 534,000 minimum wage workers deserve much better.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) has a long and proud history of supporting increases in the minimum wage as a means of ensuring paid work is a pathway out of poverty. As nurses, we witness in our day-to-day work the indisputable link between poverty and ill-health, and we know that a living wage for minimum wage workers is sound healthy public policy. Indeed, an investment in Ontario's low wage workers is a positive and strategic investment in the health and well-being for the province as a whole.

Low income has also a huge impact on health outcomes and overall well-being. A study of health outcomes in Hamilton neighbourhoods revealed a 21-year difference in life expectancy between a high-income and a low-income neighbourhood that were five kilometres apart. This reality cannot be ignored as it comes at a high cost to Ontarians in the form of increased health problems, more emergency room visits, as well as higher hospital admission and re-admission rates.

Premier, the next provincial budget must include an increase in the minimum wage. We join the broad-based community movement, which is calling on you to raise the minimum wage to



# RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers  
autorisés de l'Ontario

\$14.00 per hour and index it to the rate of inflation. It's time for our government to make a real difference in the lives of minimum wage workers.

Warm regards

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT.  
Chief Executive Officer, RNAO

Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, RN, MN  
President, RNAO

cc. Hon. Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance  
Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health & Long-Term Care  
Hon. Ted McMeekin, Minister of Community & Social Services  
Tim Hudak, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party  
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party