

News Bulletin



AGM  **UNA 2006** 

October 24, 25, 26
in Edmonton

See Page 7

*Lorna Richard, a
pediatric nurse at the
Red Deer Regional
Hospital tends to her
daughter, Ashley,
modelling as a patient.*

Rainbow
8th Annual **Gala**

See Page 3



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six times a year for our members

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Message from the President

Heather Smith



Fall is upon us. Very soon we will experience our first minus zero temperatures. But as the weather cools UNA activities start to heat up. The Annual General meeting will take place October 24, 25 and 26. The Demand Setting Meeting for Provincial Negotiations is November 28, 29 and 30. Negotiations are expected to commence in January.

This is a busy time for Local Executives. In addition to preparing for the province-wide delegate meetings, this is also when it is important to organize ward/office representatives. Phone fanouts need to be updated. Members can participate in the process to determine the proposals UNA will take to the bargaining table in January.

There are two very important points when your input is vital. The first, and most crucial, is at your Local before your Local delegates attend the Provincial Demand Setting. The second is the vote when the in-going proposals are ratified in early January.

What are your priorities? Do the proposals address the issues you and your colleagues talk about? Will they make nursing better? The stronger the connection between our expectations and needs and the proposals, the greater our potential is to achieve real enhancements.

This fall is also going to be a political hothouse. The starting pistol will soon be fired to start the official race for the leadership of the Conservative Party. By December someone will be declared the “winner”. There are some significant differences in the philosophies of the candidates. Who will take the helm of the booming Alberta economy (admitted to have been cast adrift by Premier Ralph Klein)? What course will he or she chart for health care, seniors care and other social programs? This is the time when these individuals are susceptible to pressure. Public debate and discussion now can perhaps push them to commit to people-oriented priorities. We shall see.

Over the summer there were a number of media stories that indicate the political decisions of the 1990’s have come back to haunt us. An inadequate number of hospital beds and health care workers have created unacceptable delays, impossible caseloads and intolerable work environments. UNA and individual nurses have been very vocal about the gaps in care that have opened up and are widening. We will keep it up.

While the province is awash with money, our communities struggle with homeless and working poor citizens. Bev Dick and I volunteered at the Edmonton Labour Day BBQ (we were on garbage detail), where some five thousand inner-city unemployed or under-employed lined up for a free meal of hotdogs and hamburgers. As I moved back and forth across the park I had to wonder – is this the Alberta advantage?

Heather Smith

President, UNA



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a child... a wish... a dream come true!

*fire
and
ice*

Rainbow Gala coming up October 11th

The 8th Annual Rainbow Gala, proudly sponsored by the United Nurses of Alberta and West Edmonton Mall will be Wednesday, October 11th.

The Gala is a special community project of UNA Local #301 at the University of Alberta Hospital. All of the Committee are volunteers and work very hard to ensure all the money from the evening goes to the chronic and terminally ill children who are supported by the Rainbow Society of Alberta.

The Gala evening begins with cocktails at 5:30 PM and dinner at 7 PM in the Fantasyland Hotel, Beverly Hills Ballroom. It includes a special fashion show with UNA members as models. A fundraising silent auction, entertainment and dancing round out the evening.

Tickets are \$50 per person or a table of 10 for \$450. For more information or tickets call the Local #301 office at: 407-7453 or see www.rainbowsociety.ab.ca. Bring your friends. The evening is a blast! ♥♥

Rainbow 8th Annual Gala

in support of the Rainbow Society of Alberta

United Nurses of Alberta 1977-2007

UNA's 30th Anniversary

Theme Contest

Next year UNA turns 30 and one part of the preparations for the celebration is choosing a theme for the anniversary. To give everyone a chance for input to the theme the provincial Executive Board has announced a special contest. Entries with a slogan, a short phrase, a concept or an image will all be accepted. The winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate with the UNA Boutique. Send your entry to provincial office by 4:30 pm Friday, February 2, 2007. ♥♥

..don't trust anyone over.. she's not a day over..

CFNU nurses keep Premiers on health care topic

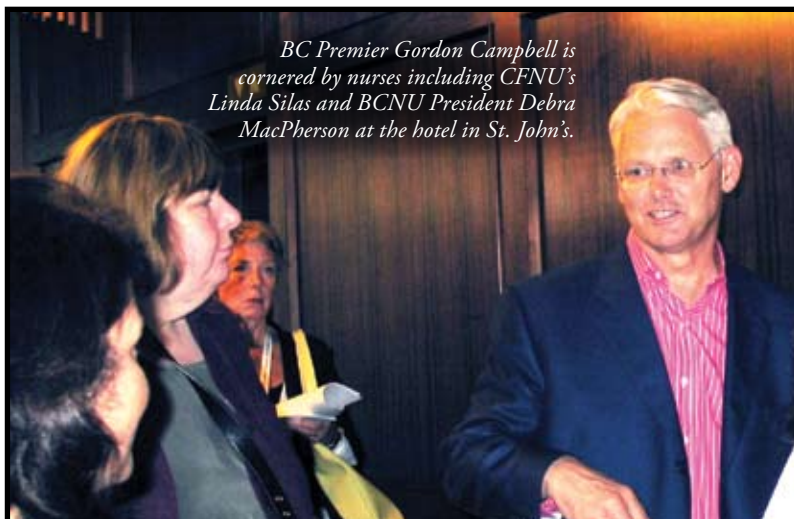
Nurses in St. John's to raise public health care issues were also on hand for the unveiling of an 85 foot petition signed by Canadians who want the federal/provincial child care agreements to continue. The petition is part of the Code Blue coalition campaign, details at www.buildchildcare.ca.



Nurses were on the spot to make sure Canada's Premiers heard about healthcare at their annual "Council of the Federation" meeting held this July in St. John's Newfoundland. The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) organized a nursing delegation and UNA Executive Officers Bev Dick and Karen Craik made the trip to get the direct attention of the Premiers.

A true national pharmacare plan was one of the nurses' leading points but they also focused on the growing nursing shortage.

"A federal/provincial/territorial wait time guarantee is not worth the paper it will be written on, unless they agree to strategies to address the real challenges facing health care like the current and projected labour shortage, new technologies



BC Premier Gordon Campbell is cornered by nurses including CFNU's Linda Silas and BCNU President Debra MacPherson at the hotel in St. John's.



UNA Vice President Bev Dick (left) ambushed Quebec Premier Jean Charest with her camera. Along with Bev are (l to r), Annie Shannon, Vice President of the BC Nurses Union and Linda Haslam-Stroud, President of the Ontario Nurses Association.

and inappropriate use of the health care system”, CFNU President Linda Silas told media in Newfoundland.

The CFNU also organized an earlier conference “The Shock of the Possible: Public Solutions to Health Care” which attracted more than 70 national and provincial health care leaders.

Speakers at the conference included the Honourable Tom Osborne, Minister of Health and Community Services for Newfoundland and Labrador, who opened the event by reminding participants that health care was about care and not guarantees. Dr. Robert Miller, President of the Canadian Association of Radiologists spoke on wait times. Michael McBane, National Coordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition spoke on the need for a national

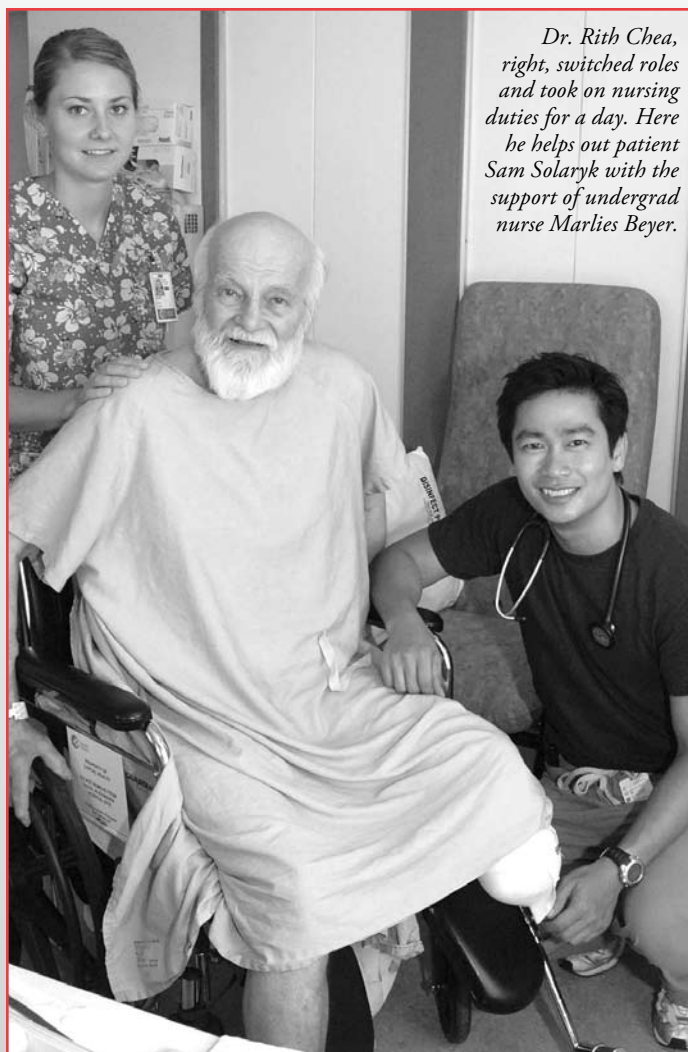
pharmaceutical program, and Dr. Amélie Quésnel-Vallée, Professor at McGill University, spoke on the myth of an aging population increasing health care costs.

“The cooperative experience of sharing risk over the whole population is what has made Canada’s health care system better over time, and this lesson must not be forgotten,” said Armine Yalnizyan, economist and author of the book *Getter Better Health Care: Lessons for (and from) Canada*, which was released at the conference.

“A clear message was that our Canadian public health care system is as sustainable as Canadians want it to be, as long as governments commit to reasonably comparable levels of service for reasonable comparable levels of taxation”, said Linda Silas. 🇨🇦

Doctor tries nursing role

by Karen Karbasewski, Public Affairs Officer
Royal Alexandra Hospital



Dr. Rith Chea, right, switched roles and took on nursing duties for a day. Here he helps out patient Sam Solaryk with the support of undergrad nurse Marlies Beyer.

Dr. Rith Chea, an internist at the Capital Health’s Royal Alexandra Hospital, recently traded in his lab coat for an opportunity to spend the day working on Unit 54 as a “nurse”.

Dr. Chea’s foray into the nursing world is a result of a team-spirit exercise introduced a few months ago. The unit that raised the most money could choose a doctor to make the switch and spend the day toiling under a charge nurse’s direction.

Dr. Chea says he was surprised the unit chose him and welcomed the opportunity to partake in duties typically performed by his nursing colleagues.

“The people who work here are amazing. I value the collegial working environment. The staff is easy going and get along as a family. I realize how hard nurses work and from this experience I get to appreciate it more - there is an incredible time pressure to get things done,” he says.

Dr. Chea’s ‘nursing uniform’ was actually a custom-made t-shirt that had “Ask Me I Will Help” written on the back, and scrub pants. He said many patients found him tasks to do and he even changed his first colostomy bag. “I appreciate how much nurses do to help patients and help us provide great care for them. It is physically demanding work and I’m sure most doctors feel the same way,” says Dr. Chea.

He says the experience has made him realize how much time doctors’ orders for patients can take the nurses to complete.

To win the competition to choose a doctor to toil in the trenches with them, the nurses on Unit 54 raised \$1,937, narrowly beating staff on Unit 51, which came in a close second with \$1,905. With bakes sales, selling homemade cookbooks, tulips and more the medicine units raised a total of \$6,480, which goes toward the purchase of 300 hoodies for the medicine team. 🇨🇦

How to go casual... It's a transfer NOT a resignation

Some nurses resign their regular position and inform their Employer they want to remain as a casual Employee. But, once a resignation is submitted the Employer has no further obligation. Some nurses have discovered they are not employed at all after they resign.

Instead of a letter of resignation, nurses are advised to submit a letter requesting to leave their current position and transfer to casual status. This is DIFFERENT from a letter of resignation and leaves a nurse with more options. 🍷

Huge overtime bills hit Health Regions

How many nurses could you
hire, if you could hire nurses?



In June news stories began to appear about health authorities reporting multimillion-dollar overtime costs because of the shortage of health-care professionals.

The Edmonton and Calgary health regions each paid out between 26 and 28 million dollars in overtime to employees during the 2005-06 fiscal year.

“Overtime isn’t just a financial cost,” points out UNA President Heather Smith. “It also wears down nurses, and is actually one of the reasons we have a shortage, because overworked nurses retire or quit,” she said. “If a large part of that money was put into creating more positions and recruiting to fill them, it could do a lot to cut the need for overtime.”

The Lethbridge-based Chinook Health Region faced more than four million dollars in overtime costs, and other Regions also reported significant bills.

Calgary Health Region said trouble recruiting staff would continue. “As a result of these recruiting challenges, the region expects to see a significant amount of overtime being worked by our staff in order to provide necessary health services to the communities we serve,” said the Region’s statement.

Calgary said it will need to attract some 30,000 nurses and other medical workers to Calgary over the next ten years, about half of them to replace retiring workers. 🍷

Health and Wellness wastes over \$1 million on dud Third Way PR

The Calgary Herald found out through a freedom of information inquiry that Alberta Health and Wellness spent over \$1 million on an advertising campaign to sell the Third Way to Albertans. But when the Third Way died in controversy, the campaign never ran at all.

“It’s clear that the government really wanted to convince Albertans of the Third Way and spent an unbelievable amount of our money try to do so,” Friends of Medicare coordinator Harvey Voogd told the Herald.

The government had spent money with four communications companies doing market research, preparing a magazine on the Third Way to go to every Alberta household and preparing radio and TV advertising. Evans said television ads could still go ahead if the government someday passes legislation.

“At the end of the day, I think we got value for money,” Health and Wellness Minister Iris Evans was quoted as saying. 🍷

AGGM



UNA 2006

October 24, 25, 26
Edmonton

Speakers on nurses, health care, and more at the AGM

Along with the usual discussion about UNA directions, elections and debates, the AGM will also have some special events and guest speakers. Michael Villeneuve RN, BScN, MS, is the Canadian Nurses' Association scholar in residence and a co-author of the recent major paper *Toward 2020: Visions for Nursing*. He will be discussing some of the major areas of change facing the profession.

This year there will also be a special report from the Parkland Institute on health policy issues in Alberta. Parkland's Research Director, Diana Gibson, co-authored Parkland's recent book *"The Bottom Line: The truth behind private health insurance in Canada."* Ricardo Acuna, Parkland's Executive Director will be speaking along with Diana, giving some of the political context.

As well, Jane Sustrik, Heather Wayling and Donica Geddes will present pictures and a short report on their study tour in Nicaragua and Honduras with CoDev Canada.

The new DVD from UNA's 100 Years of Nursing Project will be available with 50 short films on nursing as well as hundreds of stories and photos from the past century. Video clips from the project as well as a short overview movie will also be shown on the big screen.

Well-known Edmonton journalist Janice Johnston is set to impart some "media saavy" to nurses. Janice will be talking about how to work with journalists to get our news out to Albertans. 🍷

Elections at the UNA AGM

Several elections to Executive and Board positions will be taking place at this year's provincial AGM. Chandra Clarke and Heather Smith, both from Local #79, have each been nominated for the position of provincial President.

Secretary-Treasurer Karen Craik has been acclaimed and the 1st and 2nd Vice President positions are not again up for election until next year.

Only three nominations were received by deadline for the four open District Rep positions on the Board for North Central District. Nominated and acclaimed are: Alan Besecker, Tim Grahn, and Keith Lang. Nominations will be open from the floor at the AGM for the remaining vacancy.

There will be an election for the Central District Reps. Two positions are to be filled and four members have been nominated: Marilyn Coady, Diane McInroy, Sandra Zak and Wanda Zimmerman.

South Central District has three vacancies and three people have been nominated and acclaimed: Jacki Capper, Holly Heffernan, and Lois Taylor.

John Terry was again nominated as a South District Rep and as there was only one vacancy he is also acclaimed.

Further nominations and potential elections will be held for several of the Trial Committee positions from each of the Districts as well.

Members should attend their Local meetings prior to the AGM to find out about delegate status to the AGM. As well, Locals will be providing their delegates voting directions on elections and other issues coming up at the AGM. 🍷

Citizen's Watch releases continuing care comments

The Citizens' Watch Network recently released an initial report on feedback about continuing care in Alberta. The report analyzes the confidential feedback of families and frontline workers to the www.continuingcarewatch.com website. The website went up in February and has already received 22 reports from families and four from staff people.

The majority of these testimonies (18) described experiences of residents in traditional long-term care facilities (i.e. nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals), one related to experiences in a group home, one to a personal care home and two related to "assisted living" settings.

Along with the report are two documents of "quotable quotes" from families, frontline staff and government MLAs.

"The report identifies deficits related to ten different categories of care, including medication management, hydration, nutrition and response to changing health status," said Bev McKay, a member of the Citizens' Watch Network. "It also identifies a number of common themes. The powerful stories we received further reinforce the need for urgent corrective measures to protect the rights and well being of dependent and vulnerable Albertans in continuing care. These and many other documented experiences suggest little more than lip service has been directed to meeting the needs of these citizens. A consistent shortage of qualified staff on site was perceived by families to be the key issue impacting the quality of care and quality of life of residents in continuing care settings." 🍷

Citizen Watch

Continuing Care in Alberta

Welcome to ContinuingCareWatch.com



~ Enter ~

What the people said about continuing care:

"In my opinion, this centre was in crisis when my friend was there. I consider this facility to be unsafe for residents who require a high level of care. A resident who is unable to feed, toilet, move around or speak for themselves is at risk in this centre."

"The error in the drug dosage given to my mother was an oversight on the part of everyone involved – her doctor, the pharmacist, nursing staff at the facility."

"Seniors who built this province are receiving substandard, inhuman care all over the province, it seems. Short staffed, short tempered, short on compassion, short on nurses, short on doctors, short on everything."

"It was disturbing to see such substandard care. It was clear to me this centre was incapable of caring for someone with my friend's level of need. I knew I had to get her out of there before they caused her death. I realized she had little time left and I wanted her to live it safely and with dignity."

"We've written letters to MLAs and other government officials, lodged complaints and concerns with Administration, but we feel we're fighting a losing battle. We had hopes when the MLA Task Force was formed, but strongly suspect there'll be little change - and any change that does occur will probably not be to the benefit of residents."

"In this facility, working conditions are poor, staff turnover is problematic and abnormally high."

The UNA Provincial Negotiating Committee

The UNA Districts have completed the elections of representatives to the provincial "NegCom". Each District has an "at" representative, usually from a hospital facility and an "at or out of" representative, most often from a community nursing work environment. 🇺🇦

NORTH DISTRICT

"At" Position:

Sheila Dorscheid (Local #37)

Jan Robinson (Alternate) (Local #17)

"At" or "Out Of" Position:

Arlene Moreside (Local #197)

Donna Denis (Alternate) (Local #207)

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

"At" Position:

Marg Hayne (Local #33)

Sherry Stone (Alternate) (Local #85)

"At" or "Out Of" Position:

Jodi Rutley (Local #229)

Keith Bartels (Alternate) (Local #196)

CENTRAL DISTRICT

"At" Position:

Wanda Zimmerman (Local #31)

Lesla Rice (Alternate) (Local #2)

"At" or "Out Of" Position:

Bernadette Bredin (Local #97)

Olga Pitts (Alternate) (Local #307)

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

"At" Position:

Daphne Wallace (Local #115)

Larry Connell (Alternate) (Local #1)

"At" or "Out Of" Position:

Judith Christie (Local #308)

Sandie Johnson (Alternate) (Local #211)

SOUTH DISTRICT

"At" Position:

Merlin Zobell (Local #66)

Beverley Saylor (Alternate) (Local #120)

"At" or "Out Of" Position:

Judy Brandley (Local #89)

Melinda Skanderup (Alternate) (Local #126)

Heather Smith

President

David Harrigan

Director of Labour Relations

Pippa Cowan

LRO Assigned

PROVINCIAL

UNA Annual General Meeting
October 24, 25, 26, 2006 • Edmonton

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

UNA Demand Setting Meeting
November 28, 29, 30, 2006 • Edmonton

Deadline for Locals to submit proposals
September 22, 2006

Ratification vote on in-going proposals
January 11, 2007

UNA PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

September 26, 27, 28, 2006
November 14, 15, 16, 17, 2006

UNA DISTRICT MEETINGS

North District
December 4, 2006 • Grande Prairie

North Central District
October 12, 2006 • Edmonton
January 5, 2007 • Edmonton

Central District
October 5, 2006 • Red Deer
November 21, 2006 • Camrose

South Central District
December 7, 2006 • Calgary

South District
October 4, 2006 • Lethbridge
December 6, 2006 • Medicine Hat

Nurses' Investment tip: Double your money

Employers matching RRSP contributions up to 2% of annual earnings

Nurses covered by the provincial collective agreements can double their investment with the 2% RRSP matching contribution from Employers. Contribute 2% off each cheque or off some of your income to the RRSP plan and the Employer doubles your money. Nurses can keep the money in the tax sheltered RRSP plan, or withdraw it, and pay the taxes on it this year, next year or a future low-tax year. Check with your payroll or Human Resources to set up your RRSP deduction and double your money! 🇺🇦

know more about **PENSIONS**

Can I make pension contributions for leave time off work?

Nurses in the Local Authorities Pension Plan can purchase a total of five years of pensionable service during their career for time away from work on Leaves of Absence. “Buying back time” is usually a very good investment.

Nurses in the Local Authorities Pension Plan can purchase a total of five years of pensionable service during their career for time away from work on Leaves of Absence.

This “buy back time” includes periods on Short-term or Long-term disability, but does NOT include time on maternity leave.

(Time away from work on Workers’ Compensation is pensionable service and must be paid by the employer and employee, but many nurses don’t ask and the employer sometimes doesn’t offer.)

If the employee elects to purchase the time, the Employer is obliged to pay their share for the first 12 months of LOAs (aggregate total). For the second to fifth years, the Employee is responsible for paying both the Employer and Employee portions.

Part-time employees can also buy back leave time. For example, a half-time nurse could purchase 24 months of employment time, but this would only be 12 months of pensionable service.

The member does face a time limit to purchase back leave time. By April of the year following the year in which the LOA ended, the employee must arrange to pay in the necessary contribution. If the deadline is missed the opportunity is likely lost. ❗

Contribution Rates to Remain the Same in 2007

There will be no increase in LAPP contribution rates for employees paying in to Local Authorities Pension Plans (LAPP) in 2007.

The LAPP Board of Trustees has determined that a contribution rate change is not necessary.

The Board’s review in 2005 showed that the plan was in a deficit position, with enough investments to cover 86.4% of the future costs of pensions. The Board raised contribution rates to deal with this deficit over a 15-year period. Over the last year LAPP funding has improved to cover 89.3% of the future pension costs, so higher contribution rates are not necessary.

The current LAPP contribution rate is 6.75% of pensionable salary up to the “Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings” or YMPE. The employer matches that with 7.75% of pensionable salary. In 2006, the YMPE is \$42,100. Rates are slightly higher on income over the YMPE. On that income, employees pay 9.64% and the employer matches with 10.64%.

If you are interested in more information about your pension, visit www.lapp.ab.ca ❗



Sherry Stone, President of Local #85, Sturgeon Health Centre and member Jopy Haagsma

Correction

Faulty arithmetic on calculating your pension

The last NewsBulletin showed an example of how a pension is calculated. The bottom line of the annual pension amount was correct, but some of the arithmetic in the example was wrong, as was pointed out by several sharp-eyed readers. **Here is a corrected example.**

The pension benefit is defined as 1.4% of salary up to the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE - \$41,100 for 2005, defined each year for the Canada Pension Plan) and a 2% benefit on salary over the YMPE up to the maximum allowed under the Income Tax Act. Generally, the pension is based on the percentage of your five highest income years multiplied by the number of years you were contributing in the plan (your pensionable service).

Suppose you retire at age 65, with full pension, under the following circumstances:

- Retirement date: January 1, 2006
- Highest average salary: \$80,000
- Pensionable service: 20 years
- Estimated Average YMPE for the same years as your highest average salary: \$41,100
- Difference between highest average salary and YMPE: \$80,000 - \$41,100 = \$38,900

The Calculation Formula is:

- 1.4% part: $\$41,100 \times 1.4\% \times 20 \text{ years} = \$11,508$
- 2% part: $\$38,900 \times 2\% \times 20 \text{ years} = \$15,560$

Annual Pension = \$27,068

On top of this you should also receive your Canada Pension Plan benefit, if you are 65 years or over. For more information you can see the website: www.lapp.ab.ca

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CONCERN DEALT WITH

Capital Health announces switch to nitrile gloves

In June Capital Health announced it was making a complete conversion of its non-sterile exam gloves. The Region is moving completely from vinyl or latex gloves to nitrile gloves. Capital Health said it was making the change “to address concerns about the use of latex in the workplace”.

Last year nurses from Local #85 took an Occupational Health and Safety issue about latex allergies all the way to the Capital Health Board. Local President Sherry Stone and member Jopy Haagsma made the presentation. Jopy noted at the time: “With an aging population of nurses exposed to latex for the last twenty some years, we are beginning to see the effects of many years of exposure to latex. Our health is being affected and the financial costs to the health care system are just now being recognized.”

The Local conducted a survey of 172 Employees at the Sturgeon Health Centre to determine how many people in their worksite could be developing sensitivity. Fully 31% of the people reported a history of eczema or other rashes on their hands. Another 18% reported respiratory symptoms and 9% reported hives. The Local's results were within the ranges usually reported in other health care workplaces in Canada and internationally.

The survey results formed part of the Local's Occupational Health and Safety presentation to the Board.

Sherry Stone was pleased with the result of taking the issue to the Board. “I am thrilled that our concerns regarding latex in the workplace have been addressed through our Occupational Health and Safety Committee. This is a very positive step forward and a clear message that when we work together, we can, and do make a difference to the health and well-being of staff and patients. Special thanks to UNA for its support and to Capital Health for really listening to what we had to say.”

plan for your future

UNA WORKSHOPS FOR MEMBERS LEARN HOW TO RUN YOUR UNION!

Members who want to get more active in UNA can learn a great deal at one of the UNA provincial education workshops. Run by UNA's Education Officer, Tim Gough, the full-day workshops provide a wealth of information and hand-on experience with some of the practical skills.

There are several workshops including:

- How to Run a Local (for new Local Executive members)
- Professional Responsibility Committee (PRC) (for new PRC Committee members)
- Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) (for new OH&S Committee members)
- Grievance (for new Grievance Committee members)
- Ward/Office Rep (for new Ward or Office Reps)

Any UNA member can sign up and attend. To be eligible for provincial funding, members must be on the Local Executive (How to Run a Local) or the applicable Local Committee (PRC, OH&S and Grievance) or be a Ward/Office/Area Representative.

Funding includes salary replacement, accommodation, meals (as required) and mileage for out-of-town participants.

Members must register at least one week in advance to attend a workshop. Contact Provincial Office (780) 425-1025 1-800-252-9394 and ask to register in an education workshop. 🇨🇦



UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Professional Responsibility Committee Workshop

September 28, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Lillehammer Room, Olympic Volunteer Centre, Calgary
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: September 21, 2006

Grievance Workshop

October 3, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Alberta Teachers' Association, Room 410, 11010 142 Street.
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: September 26, 2006

Grievance Workshop

October 17, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Innsbruck Room, Olympic Volunteer Centre, Calgary
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: October 10, 2006

How to Run a Local Workshop

November 2, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
UNA Provincial Office, Edmonton 900, 10611 – 98 Avenue
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: October 26, 2006

Treasurer's Workshop

November 3, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
UNA Provincial Office, Edmonton 900, 10611 – 98 Avenue
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: October 27, 2006
Maximum registration = 10

Ward/Office Rep Workshop

November 9, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Oslo Room, Olympic Volunteer Centre, Calgary
1833 Crowchild Trail NW
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: November 2, 2006

How to Run a Local Workshop

November 22, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Lillehammer Room, Olympic Volunteer Centre, Calgary
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: November 15, 2006

Treasurer's Workshop

November 23, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
SARO Boardroom, Calgary 1422 Kensington Road NW
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: November 16, 2006
Maximum registration = 10

Professional Responsibility Committee Workshop

December 12, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Alberta Teachers' Association, Room 410, 11010 142 Street
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: December 5, 2006

Ward/Office Rep Workshop

December 13, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
Alberta Teachers' Association, Room 410, 11010 – 142 Street.
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: December 6, 2006

How to Run A Local Workshop

December 19, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
UNA Provincial Office, Edmonton 900, 10611 – 98 Avenue
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: December 12, 2006

Treasurers' Workshop

December 20, 2006 – 0900 – 1630 hours
UNA Provincial Office, Edmonton 900, 10611 – 98 Avenue
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: December 13, 2006

Karen Craik with George Hitchcow at the CDLC Stampede Breakfast. Wayne Palmer turns flapjacks on the griddle.



Holly Heffernan and Denise Palmer had fun helping out at the Calgary and District Labour Council's Stampede Breakfast event.

Singer-songwriter Maria Dunn performed at the recent 100th Anniversary banquet for the Edmonton and District Labour Council. She was joined by Winston Gereluk for a rousing round of Solidarity Forever! Maria also sang the song she composed for UNA's 25th Anniversary, "Strength in Unity".





Nursing News

Grande Prairie LPN pleads guilty to poisoning co-workers

Sarah Bowes, a 27-year-old Grande Prairie Licensed Practical Nurse, has pleaded guilty to poisoning several of her co-workers with a benzodiazepine sedative.

She pleaded guilty to 12 charges, including administering the drug, using credit cards obtained through crime, and public mischief for trying to implicate someone else.

UNA Local President Kelly Thorburn said staff were generally relieved. "We were concerned there would be a long trial, but not now. We can get on with work. We won't have all the speculation any more, did she do it or not? People can put things behind them."

In early 2004, several staff at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital began reporting flu symptoms, memory loss and exceptional sleepiness. The episodes continued for months. The hospital conducted air-quality and environmental tests, but lab results found nothing unusual. Finally police were called in, but it took nearly two years before Bowes was finally charged. 🐶

On-going negotiations

Nurses with Venta Long-Term Care in Edmonton are in contract talks now and the nurses with Rivercrest Nursing Home also in Edmonton have basically concluded negotiations although a ratification date has yet to be set. 🐶

Hundreds of people turned out for the Edmonton and District Labour Councils annual, free Labour Day barbecue.

Nurses at Extendicare Vulcan and Beverly long-term care get first agreement

Nurses at Extendicare Vulcan, new to UNA, have their first collective agreement. The nurses are part of UNA Local # 143.

Their agreement is almost identical to the standard Extendicare agreement, with some language dealing with implementation dates for benefits, rotations, etc. The expiry date is 31 July 2007. Provincial salaries (extended to 2007) apply.

Nurses at Beverly long-term care in Midnapore in the south of Calgary have ratified their first collective agreement. All the nurses providing direct nursing care, both LPNs and RNs are in the UNA bargaining unit, which is part of UNA Local #213. 🐶

PEI nurses settle new contract

After a stormy round of bargaining, Prince Edward Island Nurses Union finally reached a tentative agreement on a three-year contract.

The agreement provides for an 8.75% wage increase over three years. It also introduces a new maternity/parental leave/employment insurance top-up benefit. The contract also gives compensation for perceptorship/mentorship when a senior nurse partners with a new nurse to assist them in becoming comfortable in their new profession. For the first time, the Union's contract language includes Nurse Practitioners. 🐶

UNA asks Calgary Region to stand up for nurse and to fix the problems after ER miscarriage hits headlines

UNA President Heather Smith recently wrote to the Calgary Health Region suggesting it must come up with a plan to end the Emergency Room crunch in the Region. In a letter to Calgary Region CEO Jack Davis, she also said the Region should stand behind its nurses with a public media campaign.

ER nurses at the Peter Lougheed Hospital felt they had no support from the hospital after the case of a miscarriage made headlines in Calgary newspapers. Many nurses were incensed by the coverage which appeared to put the blame for the incident on to staff. In her letter to CEO Davis, Heather Smith pointed out: "reported remarks by Region officials, and reports that the Region was recommending communications or sensitivity training for nurses, cultivated the impression of unprofessional individual performance."

Local #1 President at the hospital, Linda Harkness, points out that the nurses were assured by their managers that they did nothing wrong.

"It was the Region that dropped the ball, that provided inadequate care. The Emergency was backed up because of a lack of beds."

Nurses in the Peter Lougheed ER have filed 64 separate Professional Responsibility Complaints dealing primarily with understaffing and overcrowding – this year alone.

Heather Smith asked the Region to release their report and recommendations on the incident. She also asked the Region support its staff with a media campaign on the contributions of nurses and the crucial role nurses play. "Nurses working in a precarious environment do not need their efforts to provide care further compromised by diminished public confidence," she said in her letter.





Some of the gang of over 70 union member children who took in the AFL Kids' Camp at the Goldeye Centre at Nordegg this summer. Camp was a "hoot" again this year according to Vice President Jane Sustrik who attended as camp nurse for her sixth year running. UNA was well-represented at the camp, with Christina Doktor from #301 and UNA Staff person Terri Baker also assisting.

left: Jane Sustrik ended up wearing shorts on her head for one evening social.



Newfoundland breaks off talks with nurses

Bargaining has not gone as well in Newfoundland and over the summer the provincial government negotiators put a "final offer" on the table and broke off talks with Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union. "We are extremely disappointed, and even more, insulted that Government has opted to take this approach," says Debbie Forward, NLNU President. The government is looking for rollbacks including a reduction in sick leave. "The bottom line is that, rather than look at real, creative solutions to the high absenteeism rate of nurses, Government would prefer to ignore the problem in our workplaces and take a short-sighted, punitive approach instead," said Forward. 🇺🇦

World Bank publication promotes elimination of worker protection

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions strongly criticized the new edition of the World Bank's publication, *Doing Business*, for including recommendations that governments should do away with labour market regulation and emulate countries that have almost no worker protection rules. The 2007 edition of *Doing Business*, the World Bank's most widely circulated publication, has declared the Marshall Islands to be the world's "Best Performer" for its almost total absence of labour regulation. Last year, the Bank named another tiny South Pacific country, Palau. Marshall Islands and Palau are among the handful of countries not obliged to abide by the core labour stan-

dards (elimination of forced labour, child labour and discrimination, and respect for freedom of association and right to collective bargaining) that are required of International Labour Organization members.

World Bank's online *Doing Business* database explains that it has given top ranking for labour market regulations to these countries because, among other exemplary features, they allow workers to be forced to work up to 24 hours per day and up to seven days per week and require no vacations or advance notice for dismissal. 🇺🇦

Jack Davis income tops \$1m

There was a bit of an outcry when the Calgary Health Region's annual report showed CEO Jack Davis got a 10% raise to \$593,000. But the outcry became louder when it came out a week later that there was an extra \$413,000 in deferred payment for a supplemental executive retirement plan. "We shouldn't have to try to piece this all together. It should be quite transparent," Alberta's auditor general Fred Dunn said. He said that financial statements should become "more readable and more relevant."

Capital Health announced a few days later that its CEO, Sheila Weatherill, is actually making \$793,000 in total pay and benefits rather than the \$621,000 which was earlier given as the official figure. 🇺🇦

Dialysis nurses going motor coaching

Nurses from the Capital Region will be really rolling when they start up a mobile dialysis clinic in a motor

coach next year. Capital Health will be spending \$2.1 million to build a renal dialysis bus —the only one in Canada outside of Quebec. The bus will take the dialysis services to rural communities to help people who now have to travel several hours, three times a week, for treatment. 🇺🇦

California looks to copy Canada's health-care system

California legislators recently voted for a "Canadian-style" health-care system in a bill that would outlaw private care throughout the state. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has, however, insisted he would veto the law.

Senate Bill 840 would have provided free medical, dental, vision and prescription drug coverage to all California residents through a state-run agency.

Canada has been front and centre in the heated debate sparked by the bill. "We've learned from the Canadian system and integrated it into a plan specifically for California," said Sara Rogers, a spokeswoman for Senator Sheila Kuehl, who put forward the bill.

"A universal health-care plan is the only way California can solve its health-care problems," she added, noting that more than six million Californians have no health insurance.

"Gov. Schwarzenegger is abandoning millions of Californians to health insecurity and potential financial ruin from un-payable medical bills," said California Nurses' Association President Deborah Burger, RN. 🇺🇦

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