

United Nurses of Alberta NewsBulletin



UNA sent a large delegation of nurses to the Canadian Labour Congress national convention in Vancouver early in May. The huge event of representatives from across Canada feature major speakers including the freshly elected new leader of the official opposition, Jack Layton.



Flying the UNA flag

**UNA members representing
nursing at major events.**

UNA nurses braved the snowstorm at the annual Day of Mourning rally in Calgary April 28th. For the second year running, the Calgary event at the outdoor memorial to workers who were injured or died on the job, took place in rain/snowstorm. The rally took place during the Alberta Federation of Labour convention held in Calgary, more news inside.

Message From the President

Published by the United Nurses of Alberta six times a year for our members

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As you will see from the contents of this NewsBulletin it has been a busy spring. Besides the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) conventions attended by many UNA members, more than 150 UNA members will be attending the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) Biennium in Winnipeg this June.



“Regularization” is happening in almost every Local across the province.

Regularization arises from the 2010-2013 provincial collective agreement. The intent is to review additional shifts worked by casual and part-time employees to determine if regular positions can or should be created. This is a huge undertaking, requiring a lot of work by our Local Executive and their unit/office representatives over the next several months. The payback is obvious - more stable predictable staffing that will benefit nurses and patients, residents and clients.

The cost of creating new positions is not an acceptable justification not to do so. This is also a win for nursing managers who previously have been stymied in their attempts to justify augmentation to staffing. Of course even when there is agreement on raising the number of regular positions, it is not going to be a fast resolution. Close to two hundred positions are already posted on the Alberta Health Services (AHS) web site. We know we already have significant issues with workforce supply, so Locals will be identifying current deficits at a time that AHS is trying to expand capacity, such as the new South Health Campus in Calgary.

Obviously there is not going to be a “quick fix”. Again it’s all about retention and recruitment. Hiring nurses into full-time and higher full-time equivalents. Keeping all our new graduates in the province and transforming unhealthy workplaces. We’ve been here before. Hopefully this time employers and the government will stay the course and work with us.

On a different subject, this is UNA Communications Officer Keith Wiley’s last NewsBulletin. Keith is moving to British Columbia in July. I think of Keith’s participation in our health care coalitions and his strategic advice in our

fight-back against privatization. I consider the transformation of our NewsBulletin and communications that have occurred under Keith’s watch. I recently had the great pleasure of presenting Keith the Public Interest of Alberta award to acknowledge his decades-long work in the fight to preserve and enhance health care through the Klein years up until today. Keith is an activist extraordinaire and a man with a social conscience as big as all Alberta. As we say goodbye, I thank Keith for all his work with UNA and for UNA.

It is going to be an interesting summer as the political twists and turns continue to unfurl about what did or didn’t happen during the Klein years, the Duckett revelation of queue-jumping combined with a Conservative leadership race. It is also going to be a very challenging summer for our members in Slave Lake as the community starts to rebuild after the devastating fires in May. It will be a busy time for our Local Executive with Regularization and supporting members who have been denied vacation and try to provide safe care without adequate staffing. Hopefully we have some good weather and the opportunity to share it with family and friends.

Heather Smith - President, UNA

Join Together Alberta launches campaign to reform Alberta's broken revenue system.

Leaders from community groups, social services organizations, and unions, including United Nurses of Alberta, joined together to launch the second phase of the Join Together Alberta campaign on May 26. The launch unveiled the Our Alberta Declaration, which calls on the Conservative government to reform the broken revenue system and properly fund vital public services. The campaign is encouraging all Albertans to sign the pledge.

Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan, a co-chair of the campaign, called on the provincial government to recognize that the biggest problem facing Alberta is not a spending problem, it is a revenue problem. "Why should we be skimping on the services and programs that we need to build a stronger foundation for the future of our province and its citizens? The truth is: there is no good reason," McGowan said. "We need to talk about higher royalty rates for the development and sale of our collectively owned natural resources."

...continued on page 4 ▶

Launching the new Join Together Alberta campaign. (left to right) Gil McGowan, President of the Alberta Federation of Labour, Bill Moore-Kilgannon, executive director of Public Interest Alberta and Sharon Armstrong, Vice-President of the Alberta Teachers' Association.



Thank You Keith Wiley

outgoing UNA Communications Officer



It's been a great time," says outgoing UNA Communications Officer Keith Wiley who is leaving UNA after 12 years. "What a privilege to work with this union that is so committed to serving members, and to the greater public good." He said he will never forget the nail-biting suspense of provincial bargaining, or the great public campaigns to fend off for-profit health care. "When nurses work through their union to protect the health security of all of us, it's something to be really proud of," he said. 🇺🇦



UNA Communications Officer Keith Wiley received a Public Interest Alberta Award for his decades-long work to protect public health care in Alberta. Keith is pictured receiving the award with UNA President Heather Smith, his daughter Gillian and wife Jacqueline.



UNA's Bev Dick signs on to the Our Alberta Declaration at the campaign launch. See the back cover of this NewsBulletin for how to sign on to the Declaration.

...continued from Page 3

The campaign launched at an important time for public services. Cuts to the provincial education budget are threatening children's education and could see the lay off of over 1200 teachers across the province.

"Nurses are worried about this. We realize education is absolutely essential... it's a social determinant of good health. If your education suffers your health suffers. They are absolutely linked," said UNA 1st Vice-President Bev Dick at the campaign launch. "All of these public services are connected. Education needs stable, predictable funding the same way health does."

"In September, Alberta's school boards will be \$100 million dollars short of the money they will need to maintain the quality of education that we enjoy today. Up to 1,200 teachers across the province will be looking for work this summer elsewhere, because their job in Alberta has disappeared," said Sharon Armstrong, Vice-President of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

According to the Parkland Institute, Alberta collects only 4.63 per cent of GDP in taxes compared to the aver-

age for all other nine provinces of 10.49 per cent. Alberta's health and education spending is the fourth lowest among provinces at \$650 per person below average and it would require an additional spending of \$2.25 billion to bring Alberta up to just the average.

"This campaign is going to mobilize people from various public service sectors and citizens across Alberta who care deeply about the fabric of our communities. Albertans know that our public services and communities are worth fighting for, and this campaign is going to help make that loud and clear to all political parties," said Public Interest Alberta's Bill Moore-Kilganon.

Join Together Alberta phoned 250,000 Alberta homes asking citizens to participate in the campaign and held a telephone town hall that allowed people from all over the province to join an interactive show, similar to radio call-in show, to talk about solutions to Alberta's revenue problems. There are also seven town hall meetings planned across Alberta in the month of June. 🍷



For more information about the campaign, visit <http://www.jointogetheralberta.ca>, 'LIKE' the campaign on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/JoinTogetherAlberta>, and follow the campaign on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/JoinTogetherAB>

CNA launches expert commission to show way forward for Canadian health care

UNA's Heather Smith is a prominent commissioner

The Canadian Nurses' Association has launched a national expert commission, which they are calling The Health of Our Nation The Future of Our Health System, to make recommendations on evolving health services.

UNA President Heather Smith has been named to the national expert panel, along with Senator Sharon Carstairs, Thomas d'Aquino, Judith Shamian and others.

The Commission is being co-chaired by Marlene Smadu and Maureen McTeer. Running until June 2012 the commission will make policy recommendations to support the transformation of Canada's health system.

"I am pleased to join in and help bring forward the best ideas for improving and expanding our public health system," Heather Smith said about the commission. "Nurses have an important part to play in ensuring our system really works to enhance the health security of all Canadians, wealthy or poor."

Marlene Smadu a past president of CNA and current vice-president of the International Council of Nurses, is an accomplished nurse educator, researcher and government advisor. Maureen McTeer is a health law expert and author, as well as adjunct professor, Faculty of Common Law, University of Ottawa. A diverse roster of Canadian thought leaders with complementary backgrounds, experience and expertise will round out the Commission.

The Commission will consult with nurses, other health-care leaders and the

public to weigh evidence and advice on how to accelerate a positive transformation of Canada's publicly funded, not-for-profit medicare system.

"By paying attention to supports and services in communities that are effective in providing care, we can ease health system bottlenecks, improve the health of Canadians and reduce costly hospital stays," said Smadu. "Similarly, investing in health promotion and illness/injury prevention makes more sense than spending big dollars to cure conditions that could have been avoided altogether."

According to McTeer, "the Commission will address several key questions: How do we shift and re-align health services to make better use of existing resources, including the skills of registered nurses? How can we reduce duplication and maximize teamwork to make our health system smarter and more effective? ♥"



You can read more about the CNA "Health of Our Nation" activities on their website: http://www.cna-nurses.ca/cna/default_e.aspx



Like UNA on Facebook.



Join thousands of Alberta nurses who are connected to UNA on Facebook. Join the discussion and invite your friends.

<http://www.facebook.com/UnitedNurses>



UNA members can join the **e-Update** list to have important news and information sent directly to their email inbox. Send an email to nurses@una.ab.ca with your name, member number, and the subject line "e-Update" to be added to the list.

Please Remember **not** to use your employer provided email.



Darlene Kulhawy (l) and Lisa Barta of the Local 33 executive are both on the PRC committee that pursued important staffing improvements in labour and delivery.

PRC gets boost in nurses in caserooms at Lois Hole Hospital

“The people on the unit, made sure the information was gathered on a weekly basis. That’s where the statistics came from and they were useful,”

Darlene Kulhawy

Nurses at Local 33 were pleased when their careful Professional Responsibility Committee documentation of caseroom staffing concerns resulted in the creation of 15.04 new full time equivalents (FTE) nursing positions.

Local President Darlene Kulhawy said the process took months, but the nurses definitely feel vindicated. They pursued what they needed and are getting it.

“A lot of hard work on the part of the unit nurses. They collected a lot of information,” she said.

And the nurses had filed a large number of Professional Responsibility forms as well.

Labour and delivery at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton moved to the new building at the Lois Hole Hospital in May 2010. After the move the bed numbers and activity increased steadily but staffing did not. The nurses’ statistics

showed high bed utilization rates and documented significant understaffing.

The new facility was also a much larger surface area for staff to cover, which proved to be a problem.

Working with their Local, the nurses showed that they were consistently working short-staffed and had an average of 33 overtime shifts per week.

“The people on the unit, made sure the information was gathered on a weekly basis. That’s where the statistics came from and they were useful,” Darlene Kulhawy said.

The Local took the PRCs to top management in the fall of 2010 and were offered 6.2 FTE of new nursing hours. But they decided it was not enough and got set to go right to the Alberta Health Services Board. Finally, in March just before the Board meeting, they received another call and an offer of a further 8.84 FTE increase in the staffing.



Besides the nurses staffing, the management is increasing the number of support staff, services aides and unit clerks.

It is taking time to provide the training and experience to bring the new nurses fully up to speed, but Darlene Kulhawy says when all the staffing is in place it will make a huge difference.

Agency nurses have started on the unit to help fill in. They are expecting five of them to join their unit while the training on the unit for new staff occurs.

“We like to look at this process as filling the “potholes”, and it is temporary until I believe the end of September.”

PRCs get big staffing boost at Alberta Hospital Edmonton

Nurses from Local 183 in Edmonton also pursued over 25 PRCs and the result has been some important staffing increases. The mental health in-patient units are going from three to four nurses on day and evening shifts, as a result of the concerns the nurses documented.

Local President Jamie Suchan says it is an increase of 1.8 FTE's for each of three units.

The process took some time.

“We started the PRC process in April 2010 and the announcement was just made,” Jamie Suchan says. “So a little over a year.”

“We were able to resolve this at the PRC committee level, through cooperation and collaboration of the Joint PRC Committee,” Jamie says. “This increase addresses increased acuity concerns and safety concerns, and the fact that we are always at capacity.”

AFL Convention draws 400 unionists, covers lots of territory

UNA had a strong delegation at the Alberta Federation of Labour convention in Calgary at the end of April. Besides joining in on the April 28, day of mourning, convention delegates took part in many other events as well. A rousing speech from the secretary treasurer of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO prompted affiliates to donate more than \$50,000 to the group's Defence Fund. They heard an inspiring talk on how to organize campaigns by Harvard University Professor Marshall Ganz, presented via Skype. And they even went for a picnic in the park, a picnic to support a drive by workers to keep Calgary's parks public.



Kathleen Hamnett (Vice President with Local 115 at the Foothills Hospital) poses with speakers at the AFL Convention, Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians and Paul Moist the national president of CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees).



The UNA delegation at the AFL Convention joined in at a rally at the Calgary International Airport supporting Canadian Auto Workers members who are negotiating a new agreement.



The Pride and Solidarity Committee holds up their banner at the AFL Convention.

“The extra, unplanned hours represent a major stressor in nursing,” Heather Smith points out.

Member survey shows shortage still nurses’ top concern

The shortage of nurses has been a long-standing concern in Alberta. In April, UNA conducted a survey of 1,500 nurses which shows they still are working many extra hours, extra shifts and overtime.

UNA’s randomized telephone survey showed that most weeks, 75% of the province’s nurses work over and above their scheduled hours. 64% of full-time nurses and 81% of part-time nurses reported working additional hours, and not just extra half hours. Fully 55% of them are working 6 or more extra hours each week. Some of these hours are overtime, but many are extra shifts paid at regular rates.

“The extra, unplanned hours represent a major stressor in nursing,” Heather Smith points out.

Over 15% of nurses work 6 or more hours of paid overtime in an average week, which represents a significant cost for Alberta’s health system.

“We hope our new process of converting extra hours into regular positions (“regularization”) will help cut down on this and put nurse staffing on a more regular footing. It can make it more

sustainable – financially and physically for nurses,” Heather Smith says.

But the union also points out that more nurses are needed now. Sixty-eight per cent of nurses report that their regular workplace schedule is one or more nurses short of what they believe they need to be safe.

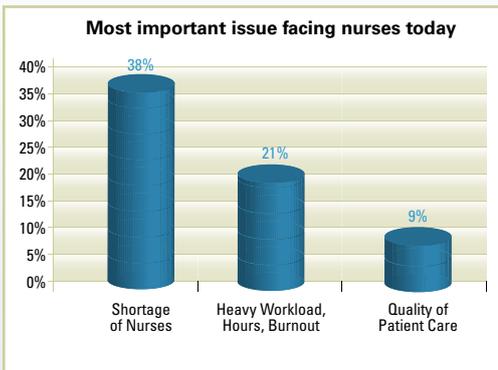
“Alberta will still have to educate and recruit far more nurses to keep care levels up to a high and safe standard,” Heather Smith says.



Top three issues according to nurses

When nurses are asked to name the top issue facing nursing today the focus is clearly the shortage of nursing staff and time. Whether they identify it as the nursing shortage, as heavy workload or as concern about patient safety, what they need is the same: more nurses working with the patients and clients.





Only about one-third working full-time

Overall the breakdown of full and part-time nursing positions has not changed much. Only about one-third of Alberta nurses work full-time. The survey also showed about one-third of nurses working part-time or casual would consider moving to full-time "if the right conditions came up."

"Nothing's changed much. We still have thousands of nurses retiring over the next few years," Heather Smith points out.

"The good news is that overall nurses are less insecure and more satisfied with their jobs, than in the last couple of years," Heather Smith says. "We feel like we've turned a corner and we are working with employers to improve the nursing situation as much as we can," she says.

The perspective of new nurses

Nurses who have been working for less than five years have a slightly different view of the profession. They are more likely to recommend nursing as a career and they want more information and are slightly more interested in getting involved with their union.

The UNA survey also shows a slightly higher percentage/proportion of junior nurses are working casual and full-time. In general they are a bit more interested in increasing their hours. ♥

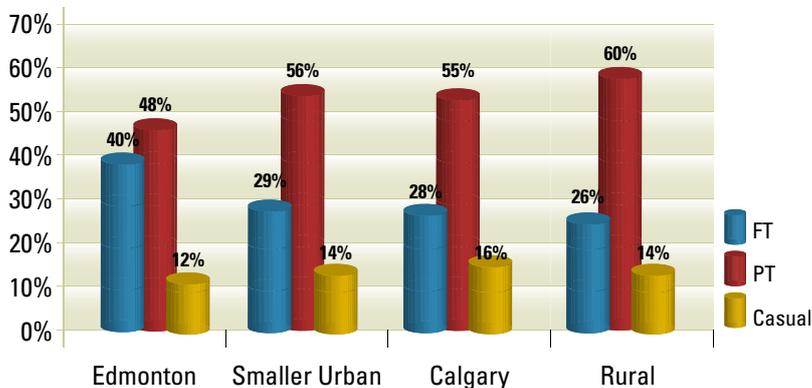


UNA Board Member Christina Doktor stood in solidarity with striking Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) member Lil Kamensky at a June 8, 2011 picket line in Edmonton.

UNA Board Member Tanice Olson, Local 1 President Diane Lantz and Secretary Susan Fisk with striking CUPW workers in Calgary.

Nurses surveyed were asked to identify what kind of schedule they work. 75% of the province's nurses work above their scheduled hours.

% Full-time, Part-time, Casual by Work Location



UNA sent a large delegation of nurses to the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver in May. Panel discussions, presentations from experts and lots of the usual debate highlighted a feel-good convention. The event came just after the federal election and the NDP's climb to its new position as the official opposition.

Talking politics at the CLC

Politics was a big topic at the Convention and one panel discussion looked at labour's involvement in politics. Former BC NDP Premier Mike Harcourt, Vision Vancouver city councillor Andrea Reimer, and lobbyist Robin Sears answered delegates' questions on how labour should best approach politics. "We should be proud to make a point and take a side," Reimer said.

The panelists agreed that directly lobbying politicians is important. But they said that is only the first step. They emphasized the need to mobilize voters. Harcourt said, "the labour movement is most effective when you reach out beyond just talking to yourselves."

Naturally, the online social media came up often in these discussions of politics and communication. One session focussed entirely on these new communication channels, facebook, blogs and twitter. 🍷

Who's that shaking up the place? It's UNA nurses of course!

UNA's delegation at the national labour convention.



Work Stress — burnt out and fed up!

Stress has been called the plague of modern civilization. Workers are facing increasing pressures at work, at home and in the community. This has led to an increase of physical and mental disease and disability.

Stress is not a diagnosis, it is a workplace hazard.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety describes stress as: “The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands and the control an employee has over meeting these demands.



What are the health effects?

Our bodies react to stress by preparing for defensive action. Hormones are released to quicken our pulse, increase respiration, and increase blood sugar, cholesterol and fatty acid production and tense muscles. Other body functions such as protein synthesis, immune and allergic response systems slow down. This is called the general stress response or the “fight or flight” response.

In workplaces where we experience constant or repetitive stressors, the repeated, prolonged responses of the body leads to various illnesses.

Early symptoms of stress:

- poor memory, indecision
- irritability
- reduced or increase appetite
- headache
- skin rashes
- insomnia

Chronic effects of stress:

- ulcers
- migraines
- ulcerative colitis
- coronary heart disease
- stroke
- trigger diabetes
- anxiety, anger, self-blame, hostility, depression, withdrawal
- increased susceptibility to infectious disease

Stress: Physical conditions

- noise (60 db and up)
- temperature
- poor ventilation
- inadequate equipment

Stress: Work organization

- too much work
- overly demanding work
- management styles
- repetitive and boring work
- incentive or quota systems
- role uncertainty and role conflict
- shift work
- technology
- violence and abuse

Stress: Social circumstances

- layoff and unemployment
- discrimination
- job mobility 🇨🇦

What can you do to fight stress?

Take care of yourself — seek medical attention and take sick leave if you are not fit to work

Support your fellow workers who take sick leave as a result of the mental and physical effects of stress

Report sources of stress to your local OH&S representatives — fill out a UNA OH&S form

Assist your local OH&S representatives to identify, assess and eliminate or control workplace stressors 🇨🇦

Find out more about

Occupational Health &

Safety on the UNA website:

www.una.ab.ca/resources/ohs/



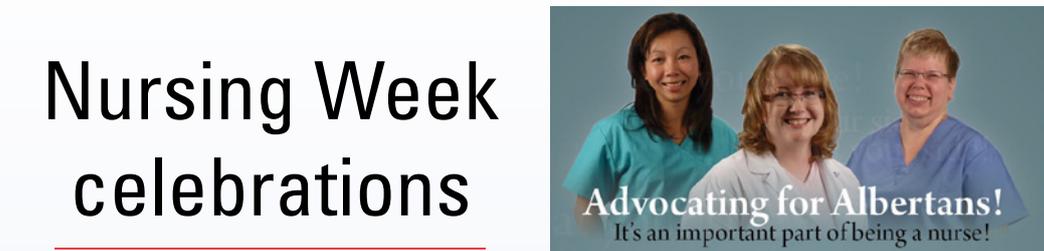
Nurses at Local 196 Celebration



Manager Mary Richardson getting her corsage pinned on by Orissa Shima, 1st VP Local 85.



UNA Local 196, Edmonton Community Nursing



Nursing Week celebrations

UNA nurses held special celebrations for Nursing Week across Alberta. Provincially, UNA published a special Nursing Week poster and ran radio ads on many Alberta radio stations.

“Nurses provide care in our homes, in our communities, in nursing homes, in correction facilities and in hospitals. From the youngest babies, to our oldest most vulnerable seniors, nurses are there to help,” United Nurses of Alberta President, Heather Smith, said in the radio ad. (the radio ad can still be heard on the UNA website: <http://www.una.ab.ca/news/archive/mp3s/UNAnursingweekradio2011.mp3>)



Members of the Local 85 Exec. Sherry Stone, President, Orissa Shima, 1st VP, Sharon Lloyd 2nd VP, Brenda Venesia, Secretary, and Brenda Kerr, Treasurer.



Local 196 Members, Trudy McConnell (l) and Michelle Christiansen (r)

“Why do you love Nursing?”

Some of the responses from nurses at the Local 85 Sturgeon Hospital Nursing Week celebration.

I Love Nursing because:

- ♥ if I can make someone smile it makes me happy.
- ♥ I love that we have UNA at our side.
- ♥ I love that there is never a dull moment.
- ♥ I love to help people.
- ♥ I love the mentoring and sharing.
- ♥ I love the caring.
- ♥ I love to see people get better and go home.
- ♥ I love the flexibility that allows me quality time with my children .
- ♥ I love meeting people
- ♥ I love being a caregiver.
- ♥ I love to make others feel better
- ♥ I love making someone’s day
- ♥ I love the challenge.
- ♥ I love to comfort those at the end of life and assist them with a peaceful death.
- ♥ I love problem solving.
- ♥ I love the variety and that each day is never the same.
- ♥ I love caring for others
- ♥ I love being part of a team
- ♥ I love those babies
- ♥ I love making a difference.
- ♥ I love the people contact
- ♥ I love that Nursing keeps me informed, love the learning, the challenge and the rewards.
- ♥ I love the ever changing environment of the workplace
- ♥ I love to give back to my community

Keeping track of your big assets: **YOUR PENSION**

Anurse's Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) is likely one of their most valuable assets. It's important to keep track of it, to know when you can retire, how much you can expect from your pension, and all the pension decisions you need to make.

LAPP and Alberta Pension Services have great online services where you can get information.

Get the most out of the Plan and register for mypensionplan, a secure website for members. At this site you can use the pension estimators to estimate your pension income and plan for retirement.

And if you need more information, there are all the contacts you need to get your questions answered. 

Track your biggest asset online:

www.lapp.ab.ca/

www.mypensionplan.ca



<http://www.lapp.ab.ca>

plan for your future

Chelsey Croft is a student at Grant MacEwan in Ponoka. Chelsey has already been working a practicum and was delighted to attend her first UNA Local meeting.

Amy Price is a student at Grant MacEwan in Edmonton. Here she is with her proud mother Karen Price, who nurses at Daysland Health Centre and is in Local 186.



Scholarships

Danielle Hennessey is also in her first year in the Grant MacEwan nursing program in Edmonton. Her mother came with her for the presentation. Marilyn Hennessey is a member of Local 33, nursing at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton.



Faces & friends

News about the people of United Nurses of Alberta.



Long-time Local 301 President BettyAnn Emery (Center) at a retirement tea held in her honour at the University of Alberta Hospital. Standing to her left are UNA Member Marion McKenzie, and new Local 301 President Marie-Therese Mageau.

Sarah Craigen, President of UNA Local 30 in Peace River underwent a dramatic transformation to help cancer history! Sarah shaved her head to raise \$1,000 as part of "Reach for the Cure" but her supporters surpassed that by far and contributed over \$1600.

"It feels like my hair was worth it," Sarah said. "I was committed after the first donation, but I was worried about anybody caring."

"I have never dyed my hair, figuring that there are those who don't GET to have silver hair. Now I'm ready to share it—it is long enough to donate for wig making."

Sarah also said she wanted to contribute to fighting cancer because she lost her father, brother and sister-in-law and others in her family to the disease. She also said: "I do it in celebration of my mum and others who have had cancer and are happily still here!"

UNA member fights education cuts

Edmonton nurse Vanessa Sauvé is on her children's school council and they decided to fight back on the budget cuts that are laying off teachers and crowding more kids in classrooms. On Sunday, May 29 Sauvé and her crew organized a highly successful rally protesting the cuts in front of the Legislature.

The called it "Don't drop the ball on Alberta's Future". Vanessa Sauvé said they wanted:

"To make sure the government doesn't drop the ball on education. We heard the cuts coming, we realized our children were going to be placed into larger classrooms. It would significantly impact their education."

A short video of Vanessa Sauvé announcing the rally is on UNA's YouTube at www.youtube.com/UnitedNursesAlberta.



David Climenhaga, new UNA Communications Officer

David Climenhaga has been hired as a new Communications Officer. David has most recently been Communications Director of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. A veteran journalist and blogger, David has worked for a number of media outlets including senior writing and editing positions at the Toronto Globe and Mail and Calgary Herald. He holds a Masters Degree in Journalism from the Carleton University School of Journalism in Ottawa.



Converting overtime and extra shifts into nursing jobs

“Regularization” project now underway

UNA Locals across the province are now working with managers to determine how overtime, extra shift and extra casual nursing hours can be converted into regular nursing jobs. This “regularization” project is a first time front-line staff nurse work through their union and have a say in nursing staffing.

On-line videos guide “regularization” process

We have made two new videos that outline the regularization process. I’ve given a short explanation of what it’s all about and how some of it will proceed. In the second video we outlines how to use “preliminary data” to choose the best units to begin the process with.

We hope to have a third video, on further steps in the process, very soon.

See the videos on UNA’s Youtube channel and on the website at: <http://www.una.ab.ca/news/archive/UNAVideosaboutRegularization> 🍷



IENs get former experience recognized

Some employers in Edmonton had refused to recognize the previous experience of Internationally Educated Nurses who had to complete courses before getting their Alberta licenses. The employer has now agreed to pay these nurses the extra pay that the their place on the salary grid.

RNs who did not have their experience in another country recognized for the purposes of their starting salary should contact UNA about correcting this.

The back pay could be very significant, in the thousands of dollars in some cases.

Every circumstance will be different so nurses should contact their LRO if they believe their previous experience was not taken into account for their starting salary on the grid. 🍷

New Joint Communication coming out Called in on a non-work day – it’s at least 3 hours pay

UNA and Alberta Health Services are issuing a new Joint Communication on how employees are paid when they are called on non-scheduled days. An arbitration award issued in January ruled that being called in gets an employee at least three hours of pay.

In some cases, employers were paying nurses for only the actual time, as little as one hour, when they called them in for N95 mask fit-testing or in-service education.

The Joint statement also points out that in-services or other meetings, including disciplinary meetings, should be reasonably scheduled within employees’ usual working hours when possible.

If employees are called in for less than three hours, the employer can assign them work for the balance of that three hour slot, if it is appropriate. Nurses called for any type of meeting, including a disciplinary meeting, must get the 3 hours pay. But, in the case of discipline, assigning work in the same three hour slot, would likely be inappropriate.

Examples:

- An employee is required to attend on an unscheduled day or on a Designated Day of Rest: 2 x the basic rate of pay for the 3 hour minimum (or longer if the event is longer)
- If an employee volunteers – or agrees when requested – to attend on an unscheduled day, the 3 hours is paid at straight time, the basic rate of pay.

The Joint Communication will include other examples as well.

All UNA/AHS Joint Statements are quickly accessible on the UNA website in the Collective Agreements section: www.una.ab.ca/collectiveagreements/jointstatements/



Join Together Alberta



is asking Albertans to sign on to the Our Alberta Declaration for a prosperous, equitable and sustainable future.

the **OUR ALBERTA** *declaration:*

Alberta is a place of limitless possibilities. We have abundant and valuable natural resources. We have some of the best infrastructure in North America. And we have a young, well-educated, hard-working and creative population.

Albertans can afford to dream big. We can aspire to be more than we are and more than we have been.

Unfortunately, our current provincial government doesn't seem to understand the scope of our province's potential. Nowhere is this lack of vision or imagination more evident than in the approach that has been taken to the funding of Alberta's vital public services: including our schools, our post-secondary institutions, our social and disability services and our health care system.

Despite unparalleled economic growth – and the prospect of even more to come – the Alberta government is trying to convince Albertans that we cannot afford to continue funding what we have, let alone build better services for the future.

Over the past several months, for example, despite Alberta's thriving economy, lay-off notices have been issued to staff in many school divisions, with many more likely to come. Universities, colleges and technical schools have also been forced to make deep cuts – even as our provincial population and economy continue to grow.

We, the undersigned, are individual Albertans and representatives of Alberta organizations who do not accept the argument that Alberta can no longer afford high-quality public services.

We believe that our provincial government can – and, indeed, must – do better in terms of using our province's vast resources to lay the foundations for a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future.

We believe that our public services – everything from education and health care to municipal and social services – are part of the fabric of our communities and provide a vital foundation for our economy.

We believe there is no good reason for our government to be contemplating cuts, freezes and roll-backs to any of these vital public services at a time of obvious prosperity.

If there is a problem in Alberta – and we think there is – it is not a problem of over-spending on public services, but rather a problem caused by years of ill-conceived tax and royalty cuts. These cuts have left the province with an inadequate and unreliable revenue base.

Together, we call on the provincial government to stop preaching austerity when it is clearly unwarranted. Further, we call on the government to recognize the fundamental role that public services play in the lives of individuals, families and the broader economy. And, finally, we call on the government to fix the real problem: Alberta's broken system for revenue generation.

Sign the declaration now at www.JoinTogetherAlberta.ca