

# AFL: Securing the future for a century

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## United Nurses of Alberta NewsBulletin



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# National Expert Commission: Leave no Canadian behind

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I finished this article for this News-Bulletin while I was attending the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) biennial convention in Vancouver. This was a significant convention for me because, now that our report has been formerly presented to CNA, it is also the conclusion of my participation with the National Expert Commission (NEC).

The message from the commissioners ends with these words: “This report distills what we have learned into practical, evidence-based recommendations about how nurses – working collectively and collaboratively – can take action to transform the way we deliver health services in Canada to ensure the ongoing health and wellness of all Canadians.”

I encourage you to go to the CNA website to review the report, which has a multitude of multimedia tabs you can activate for further information and research. There is also a story on the report on page 6 of this magazine.

The theme of the report is the changes needed to ensure “no citizen or vulnerable individual is left behind.” Its recommendations include a call for real primary health care, plus expanding our public medicare care umbrella to cover comprehensive palliative care, home care, pharmacare and address the determinants of health.

A core conclusion of the Commission, a foundation of all its other recommendations, was the understanding that effective national health programs are about more than just health care. To improve overall health, and reduce the cost of treatment, we have to as a country also address the things that lead to good health.

This summer edition of the NewsBulletin comes at a historic moment for union members in Alberta, including members of the United Nurses of Alberta. In June, the Alberta Federation of Labour celebrated its 100th birthday.

Today, after a century of struggle, the AFL remains an important defender of the rights of all working people in Alberta and a vital advocate for social equality. United Nurses of Alberta has been a proud member since 2001.

On June 11, I had the opportunity to attend a ceremony at Edmonton City Hall where Mayor Stephen Mandel proclaimed “Alberta Federation of Labour Centennial Celebration Week”. We can all be very proud of the work done on our behalf by the AFL.

However, as AFL President Gil McGowan told the June 11 ceremony, the work of the union movement is not finished and workers and their unions continue to face attacks across Canada and throughout North America.

Elsewhere in this edition of NewsBulletin, you can read of the latest developments in Wisconsin, where the Republican governor has led a concerted attack on the rights of public service unions. We should all be deeply concerned about the spread of these kinds of ideas.

But this summer we also feel optimism and pride in the accomplishments we are celebrating, and the future accomplishments we will achieve through the power of our unity and determination.

In solidarity,

*Heather Smith*  
Heather Smith, President, UNA

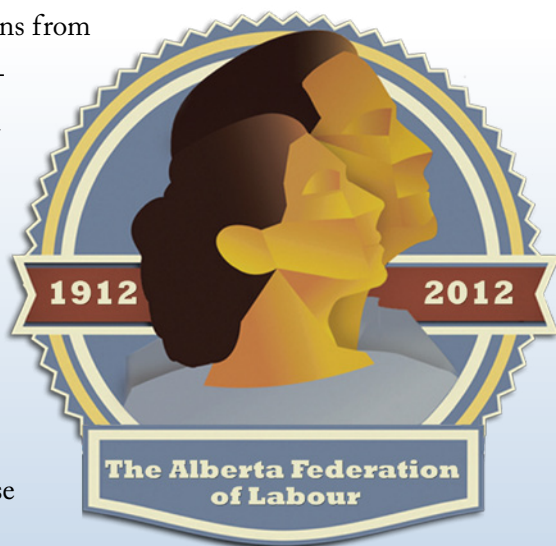
# AFL's 'Party of the Century'

**M**ore than 3,000 Alberta trade unionists – including dozens from the United Nurses of Alberta – got together at Fort Edmonton Park Saturday, June 16, to celebrate the Alberta Federation of Labour's 100th year with "the party of the century."

There was a parade, of course, performances by such well-known musicians as Maria Dunn, Terry Morrison, Lionel Rault and Souljah Fyah, activities for kids like face painting, pony races, sack races and crafts, plus a great dinner and the traditional beer tent for the grownups.

A short convention of the AFL Saturday afternoon conveyed a sense that while labour has accomplished a lot in 100 years, there is a lot more to do.

*continued on page 4*



President Heather Smith and Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel.

The parade at Fort Edmonton Park





*“The trade union movement is a foundation of democracy and you prove it!”*

– Reg Baskin, Former AFL President



Scenes from the celebration, including UNA President Heather Smith speaking (at right), Executive Board Member Denise Palmer and First VP Bev Dick (above), and the Notre Dame de Bananes choir and former AFL presidents (below).



“You in this room can take credit for creating the middle class,” participants were told Saturday afternoon by Reg Baskin, who was president of the AFL from 1973 to 1977. “The trade union movement is a foundation of democracy and you prove it!”

But as Baskin warned the night before at a celebratory dinner and evening of storytelling for current and former members of the AFL Council, “You’d better protect it!”

Gil McGowan, current president of the AFL said, “the struggle continues as we see moves to drive down wages under the federal government’s Temporary Foreign Worker program, to restrict Employment Insurance payments to laid-off workers and to keep people in the workplace until the age of 67 under proposed changes to Old Age Security rules.”

In all, seven former AFL presidents attended the centennial festivities, bringing messages of hope and solidarity.

“This was a great party, but a serious occasion too,” said UNA President Heather Smith. “Alberta’s union members should be very proud of what they’ve accomplished, but we understand that our work is never really done and we face serious challenges in the years ahead.” 🍷


 NEGS  
2013

# Locals choose delegates in preparation for November's Demand-Setting Meeting

**U**nited Nurses of Alberta's province-wide Demand-Setting Meeting will take place Nov. 27-29 in Edmonton, soon after our union's Annual General Meeting.

At District Meetings across the province, UNA members have now completed the process of electing representatives to the provincial bargaining committee.

Two members from each district will join the UNA Provincial Negotiating committee.

A complete list of the UNA Provincial Negotiating Committee representatives is on the back cover of this edition of News-Bulletin.

As for the Demand-Setting Meeting, it will be one of the key moments in the 2013 round of provincial negotiations. It's where members' bargaining proposals that have been submitted by UNA's Locals – which have then been reviewed and considered by the Negotiating Committee between Sept. 24 and 28 – are put to the membership's elected delegates.

A general membership vote to ratify the proposal package put forward by the Demand-Setting Meeting will occur in January 2013. If the package is ratified, formal negotiations with the employer will likely commence in February 2013.

This lengthy process ensures proposals taken to the bargaining table have the democratic support of UNA's membership.


About 700 UNA members – elected voting delegates of each of the union's Locals that are involved in provincial bargaining – are expected at the meeting in Edmonton. There will be about 800 delegates at the AGM, which is scheduled to take place a month earlier on Oct. 23-25.

UNA considers collective bargaining as one of its key jobs and is proud of its successes at the bargaining table over the years – greatly improving wages, benefits and workplace conditions for all members.

In 2013 as in all previous years, our policy is that members set the bargaining priorities and get to ratify the results of the negotiations that follow.

No UNA agreement takes effect before the members whose working lives it affects have the opportunity to vote on it in a democratic vote.

UNA's Provincial Agreement must be approved by a majority vote of both eligible individual members and Locals.

The current agreement was ratified in 2010 and expires on March 31, 2013. 

*The Demand-Setting meeting is one of the key moments in the 2013 round of bargaining between UNA and Alberta Health Services*

# 'Call to Action' says nurses can provide better care at lower cost

A nursing call to action



The health of our nation, the future of our health system

National Expert Commission  
Health, Social Care, Prevention and Research

*“Registered Nurses are a powerful force for change, and they can lead health care transformation,”*

*- Maureen McTeer, National Expert Commission Chair*

A fundamental shift is needed in the way Canada’s health care system is funded, managed and delivered – one that will include an expanded role for nurses that will result in better care for patients and significant cost savings.

That was the conclusion of the much-awaited report of the independent National Expert Commission of the Canadian Nurses Association. The 50-page report, A Nursing Call to Action, was released June 18 during the biennial CNA national convention in Vancouver.

The goal of the commissioners was “to invigorate individual nurses and the nursing community ... (to) focus on the goals of better health, better care and better value for Canadians,” said Commission Co-Chair Maureen McTeer, a well-known health and equality lawyer, and author.

Her Co-Chair was Regina nursing expert Dr. Marlene Smadu, and the commission’s 16 members included UNA President Heather Smith.

“Registered Nurses are a powerful force for change, and they can lead health care transformation,” McTeer said on June 18.

The Nursing Call to Action put forward a nine-point plan that calls for a more patient- and family-centred health care system with a strong focus on health promotion and prevention in Canadians’ homes and communities.


“Community based care that uses teams of health professionals, drawing on the skills and experiences of nurses, is a model Canada can use to create a more sustainable health care system for the future,” Heather Smith said.

And Dr. Smadu said the commissioners agreed Canada needs “to address many of the non-health system factors like poverty, food insecurity and lack of access to clean water and housing that persist and diminish the health of our nation.”

Instead of the physician-led health care system of the past, the report urged a “nurse-led, proactive, targeted model of comprehensive chronic care with a physician as a member of the team.”

The report cited many examples of effective nurse-led programs, including a chronic disease management clinic in Calgary where nurses in leadership roles reduced by a quarter the number of required hospital admissions and by half the time patients had to stay in hospital.

The report also said research shows links between higher nurse staffing levels and “reduced hospital-related mortality, hospital-acquired pneumonia, unplanned extubation, failure to rescue, bloodstream infections acquired in the hospital, and length of stay.”

To find a full copy of the report, Google “Canadian Nurses Association” and visit the organization’s website. 





# UNA backs AUPE strikers at Edmonton nursing homes

President Heather Smith and other UNA Members with AUPE President Guy Smith on the picket line at the Hardisty Care Centre in Edmonton

United Nurses of Alberta has thrown its support behind members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees who are on strike at two Edmonton-area nursing homes.

More than 100 Licensed Practical Nurses, Health Care Aides and other health care staff walked off the job May 19 at the Hardisty Care Centre, a private, for-profit facility run by a B.C. company.

The UNA Executive Board voted at its May meeting to donate \$5,000 to the strikers, and UNA members joined the AUPE strikers on their picket line at the Edmonton long-term care facility on May 31.


On June 5, the Hardisty employees were joined by about 80 more AUPE members at the Revera Riverbend Retirement Residence, another for-profit facility.

In both cases, AUPE says, its members are paid much below the industry standard – in some cases as much as 30 per cent.

“These are important labour disputes because all unions need to resist the efforts by private, for-profit employers to pay their workers significantly less than the fair rates paid in other collective agreements,” UNA President Heather Smith commented.

She noted that the nursing home employers are subsidized by Alberta Health Services so that they can pay their employees appropriate salaries.

Smith said: “Allowing these employers to pay their employees significantly less so they can profit off the public subsidies hurts everyone – patients, their families and health care workers at all kinds of worksites.”

UNA members who are required to continue working in the facilities have been advised not to do AUPE members’ work and to take their breaks away from the facilities. 

*“These are important labour disputes because all unions need to resist the efforts by private, for-profit employers to pay their workers significantly less than the fair rates paid in other collective agreements.”*

– Heather Smith, UNA President

# There is much to learn from Wisconsin recall defeat: Smith

*“We need to act consistently on behalf of all working people, not just those of us lucky enough to hold a union card.”*

- Heather Smith, UNA President

Union supporters and worker rights activists in Canada and the United States have important lessons to learn from the failure by a coalition of progressive groups in the state of Wisconsin to unseat Republican Gov. Scott Walker in a June 5 recall election.

Opponents of Walker’s radical attack on union organizing rights had succeeded in forcing a new election for governor under the state’s recall law. More than 900,000 signatures were collected on recall petitions, far more than the required 25 per cent of the state’s eligible voters.

Still, outspent by more than eight to one by the governor’s corporate backers, who poured more than \$50-million US in to their fight against the recall campaign, progressive Wisconsinites could not push Walker’s Democratic Party opponent over the top. They did push out one Republican state senator, giving the Democrats a thin majority in the state’s upper house at least until the November general election.

“We feel great sympathy for the progressive activists in Wisconsin who worked so hard for a positive result in the recall vote,” said UNA President Heather Smith. “We will continue to support them as they fight on, because we know that all union members, their families and working people generally face a powerful attack from corporations and wealthy individuals who benefit when working people cannot bargain effectively.”

At the same time, she said, unions in both countries need to broaden their message to ensure that they are advocating for all working people, and not just dues-paying union members.

“We will not succeed if we act only as autonomous local unions,” Smith said. “We need to act consistently on behalf of


all working people, not just those of us lucky enough to hold a union card.”

“We need to be about more than just contracts and collective bargaining, but also do a better job fighting for such public benefits as fair pensions for all, public health and seniors care,” she said.

“This means we need to go beyond just simple electoral politics, and to put our efforts into a broader and more consistent defence of public services,” she added.

The Wisconsin activists recognize this need, Smith noted. Stephanie Bloomingdale, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Wisconsin branch of the American Federation of Labour who addressed UNA’s last Annual General Meeting, said in a letter signed with the group’s president, Phil Neuenfeldt, that “going forward we are going to continue to advance an agenda for the 99 per cent.”

The June 5 recall election “will be a springboard for a national discussion on Citizens United and the corporate takeover of American democracy,” they said.

The June 2 vote in Wisconsin was only the third recall election of a governor in U.S. history. 

Stephanie Bloomingdale, Secretary-Treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, at the 2011 Parkland Institute Fall Conference.





# UNA marks Nursing Week

with ad campaign and local celebrations

While union members throughout Alberta marked National Nursing Week with low-key celebrations, UNA used the occasion to take a message about the important work done by nurses to the people of the province.

A UNA advertising campaign that started just before nursing week, which this year ran from May 7 to 13, included billboards and other outdoor advertising venues near facilities where UNA mem-

bers work carrying the message to the public that Alberta's nurses are "at your side, on your side."

In addition, the 10-week campaign included radio advertisements, ad placements in more than 100 community newspapers throughout Alberta and on-line ads on news websites where Alberta decision makers are likely to be reading.

In all, the campaign delivered more than 22 million "impressions" – advertising industry jargon for the number of times the audience has an opportunity to view the message.

"The goal of our advertising campaign was to remind Albertans that by working to improve access and extend delivery of public-sector health services, this province's nurses are at their side and on their side," said UNA President Heather Smith.

UNA Locals also organized such events as Local 33's Cupcake Day at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, at which members wore traditional nursing caps, and Edmonton Zone Community Local 196's community health banquet.

In Wainwright, Local 38 members held a dinner for more than 50 current and retired nurses, with talented fiddle players from among the membership and a motivational speaker who challenged members to turn off their cell phones one day a week and actually talk to people. The dinner was organized this year by the hospital's ER staff. 🍷

## Notice of New Grad Survey

Nursing graduates hired in Alberta between April 1, 2010, and March 31, 2012, may be contacted to participate in a survey about their experience in the workplace.

The survey is being supported jointly by UNA, Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, the Department of Health, and the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA). RNs chosen to participate in the survey will be notified by CARNA in August 2012.

Only Registered Nurses will be contacted. Future surveys may expand to include Registered Psychiatric Nurses. 🍷



# Alberta workers have two years – yes, two years – to report a workplace injury

By Dewey Funk  
UNA OH&S Officer



Something always amazes me when I ask members how long they think they have to make a Workers Compensation Claim. The common answer is 72 hours.

I have brought this up with employers and they know the correct answer, but their official answer is typically that they want their employees to report the injury right away.

Here's the correct answer from the Workers Compensation Act:

## Time limit for claims

*26(1) Subject to subsection (2), the Board shall not pay compensation*

*(a) to a worker unless the worker reports the accident to the Board within 24 months after the date of the accident or the date on which the worker becomes aware of the accident, or*

*(b) to a dependant unless the dependant reports the accident to the Board within 24 months after the date of the death of the worker.*

*(2) If a worker or dependant does not report an accident within the time prescribed by subsection (1), the Board may nevertheless pay compensation if it is satisfied that there are reasonable and justifiable grounds for the accident's not being reported within the prescribed time or that the claim is a just claim and should be allowed despite the failure to report within the prescribed time.*

In other words, as an employee you have up to two years to report a workplace injury. *Yes, two years!*

The employer has 72 hours to report the workplace injury after they become aware of the injury.

Doctors have 48 hours to report the workplace injury after they have seen the injured worker.

Why is this so critical for you to know?

Well, ask yourself what happens if you are off work for three days when you realize you can't get out of bed because of that back strain caused from helping a patient?

You still have the ability to file a WCB claim. It's not too late to file the claim. You don't have to go on sick leave or take a personnel day off.

You want the injury filed, as then the injury is life attached not incident attached. What happens if you need further medical attention in the future, two or three years down the road? Should the treatment you need be medically attributed to the original claim, WCB will reopen the claim.

As a union, when we go the bargaining table we constantly hear how employers cannot give more benefits because of the costs. When workers don't report workplace injuries or illnesses to the appropriate provider – for example, WCB – then these costs/premiums are attributed back to sick leave unfairly and the worker is then subsidizing the employer's WCB costs. 🇨🇦

**Work Healthy, Play Safe!**





# Nurses should lead from the front

## CFNU president tells Prairie Labour School

Nurses across Canada need to take a page from UNA's book of ideas and "go beyond acute care," the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions told participants in the CFNU's Prairie Labour School, June 3-5 in Canmore.

As UNA did with its Beyond Acute Care conference in Edmonton last February, Silas told the approximately 160 nurses from across the Prairies that attended the school, nurses need to "lead from the front" and be prepared to talk about issues that go beyond health care technicalities.

For example, she said, "Let's be real! Taxes pay for democracy. Taxes pay for our communities. So we have to talk about it. ... How as leaders will you make sure no one is left behind?"

The two-day biennial school aims to assist members of the three Prairie nursing unions to face the challenges confronted by health care professionals in their workplaces and help them create solutions for the future that will build on the rights nurses have already won through collective action and solidarity.

"Our right as nurses to advocate for better patient care through our collective agreements is more important than ever," said UNA Second Vice-President Jane Sustrik, who played a key role in organizing the conference. "These three seminars, which were each attended for a half day by all participants in the school, will help make nurses better advocates."

With about 70 participants from the United Nurses of Alberta, 50 from the Manitoba Nurses Union and 40 from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, the school's UNA organizers took care to ensure a good mix from all unions in each of the three classes offered in 2012.

**Balancing Professional Responsibilities and Union Opportunities** – taught by Education Officer Deb Stuart and Labour Relations Officer Leona Barrett from the Manitoba Nurses Union. This course explained how being a nurse and a union activist is not incompatible.

**Nurse-to-Patient Ratios** – taught by union organizer Lisa Kremmer of the New South Wales Nurses Association in Australia and SUN Executive Director Donna Trainor. This course discussed ways nurses can work to improve patient safety and quality of care.

**Life After the Labour Movement: Are Unions Still Relevant?** – taught by long-time union activist Winston Gerekuk of the Alberta Labour History Institute. This course explored the rights workers have won through their unions and the threats workers face today and in the future.

The three Prairie CFNU member unions rotate responsibility for the biennial school. 🇨🇦



*These three seminars, which were each attended for a half day by all participants in the school, will help make nurses better advocates.*

Linda Silas, CFNU President



# AHS agreement with UNA clarifies employee requirements with regard to **overtime**

## Exercise bikes have potential for more than personal power

**W**hy not harness human energy to power a fitness gym?

In 2008, a private gym in Portland, Ore., began using energy produced by its clients to help power the facility.

It worked. The Green Microgym is still in business, using small electricity generators attached to exercise machines, plus more traditional efficiency measures such as low-power lighting, fans, TVs, equipment motors, and solar panels on the roof. Employees also remember to switch off lights when a room's not in use.

At the time, gym was believed to be the first in the world to integrate such equipment and eco-philosophy into its business model.

By 2010, founder Adam Boesel boasted the approach was generating 36 per cent of the facility's electricity through human and solar power, saving 37,000 kilowatt hours compared to the expected output of a traditional gym. ♡

green  
corner

Green Corner is brought to you  
by UNA's Education, Communication  
and OH&S Committee.

**I**n June 2011, Alberta Health Services issued letters addressing the "Transition of Existing Multiple-Position Employees within the UNA Bargaining Unit - Multiple Casual Employment Relationships."

Although the letters correctly advised that the Multi-Employer/UNA Collective Agreements did not permit employees to hold more than one employment relationship with AHS, UNA grieved the employer's statement that employees were "required to advise [their] manager/supervisor prior to accepting any shifts that will result in an overtime payment."

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*The responsibility will be on the employer to determine, from the employee or otherwise, whether an offered shift will attract a premium or overtime pay.*

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UNA met with the employer and the parties agreed the Collective Agreement clearly states: "The responsibility will be on the employer to determine, from the employee or otherwise, whether an offered shift will attract a premium or overtime pay."

AHS and UNA agree that the employer may ask whether a shift will attract a premium or overtime and the employee should answer whether to the best of their knowledge they are entitled to a premium or overtime.

However, it is also agreed that the employee will not be held accountable if they respond in good faith but incorrectly assess their entitlement. ♡



# United Way shows the way from poverty to prosperity

## Did you know? ...

By Holly Heffernan

**F**rom Poverty to Possibility is the second of three pillars United Ways across Canada are focusing on for community investment strategies.

About 140,000 Calgarians live in poverty. Once in the cycle of poverty, it is extremely difficult to overcome without a strong network of supports. That's why United Way's community investment plan has many programs, collaborations and initiatives working together toward a solution.

Did you know that as of 2011, there were more than 38,000 renter households in need of affordable housing in Calgary? United Way is committed to ensuring access to immediate supports for families and individuals in need. Our programs help those in poverty to stabilize, avoid or move out of that cycle of poverty by providing basic needs, help to secure affordable housing, financial literacy skills and vocational training.

In 2011, United Way of Calgary and Area invested \$4.6 million into Shelter and Supports, Financial Literacy and Training, and Employment Skills and Training. This generated estimated savings to society of \$29.3 million. For every dollar United Way invests in these areas, we are saving society \$6!

Did you know that 23,165 households in Calgary have been classified as living in extreme poverty and are spending more than 50 per cent of their income on shelter? In Calgary, United Way has funded programs and initiatives, to help people move from Poverty to Possibility, such as:

- Family resource centres that provide access to community resources for low-income families, such as groceries or low-cost recreation activities
- Free savings circle program where low-income individuals and families can "earn while they learn" about money management
- Delivery of nutritious and affordable meals to seniors, those recovering from surgery or illness and the disabled

- A hot soup program in high-risk elementary schools and lunches for the working homeless

United Way also collaborates with agencies, donors and other partners to have greater impact in the community.

For example, working with the Edmonton Public Library, free tax clinics are provided for low-income families and individuals. The ID Outreach Program helps low-income and other at-risk groups attain proper government identification needed to open a bank account, rent an apartment or other things most of us take for granted.

A \$10 donation to United Way provides lunch for 17 working homeless people or healthy lunches for a week for a child who would otherwise go to school hungry; \$50 will provide a counselling session for a low-income family or diapers and formula for a young mom struggling to feed her infant; \$365, just \$1 per day, will provide rental space for peer support meetings for 6 months or 10 pairs of running shoes for children and youth going back to school. 🍷



**For more information, visit:**

[calgaryunitedway.org](http://calgaryunitedway.org)  
(Calgary)

[myunitedway.ca](http://myunitedway.ca)  
(Capital Region)

[caunitedway.ca](http://caunitedway.ca)  
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[lethbridgeunitedway.ca](http://lethbridgeunitedway.ca)  
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[utdway.ca](http://utdway.ca)  
(Medicine Hat)

[gpunitedway.org](http://gpunitedway.org)  
(Grande Prairie)

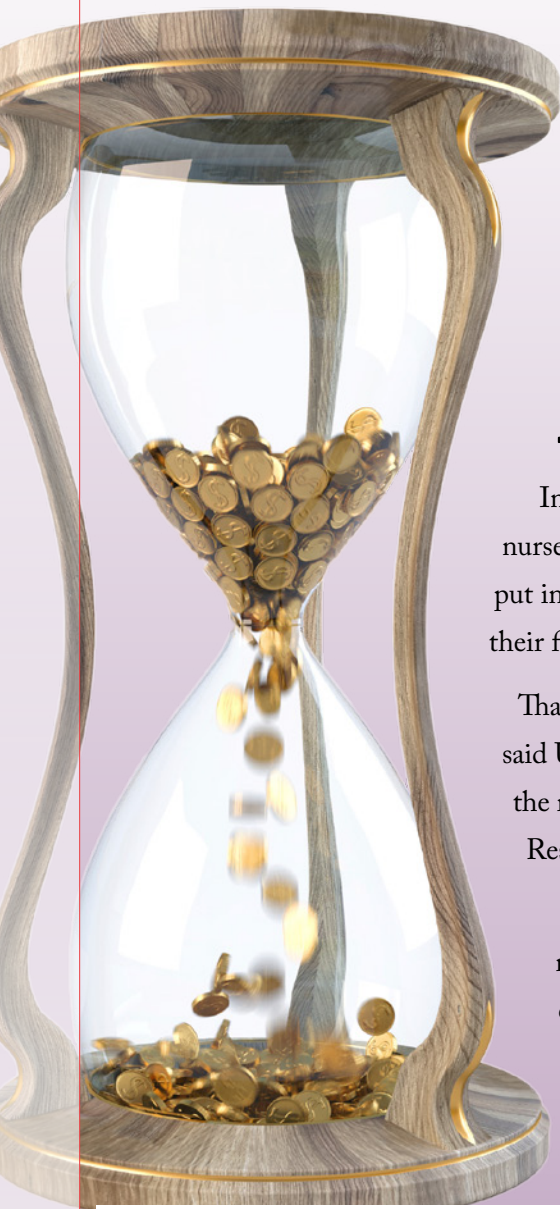
[fmunitedway.com](http://fmunitedway.com)  
(Fort McMurray)

**To find other Alberta and Canadian United Ways, please visit**

[unitedway.ca/get-involved/give/](http://unitedway.ca/get-involved/give/)



# Nurses 'donate' tens of thousands of free hours each year: survey



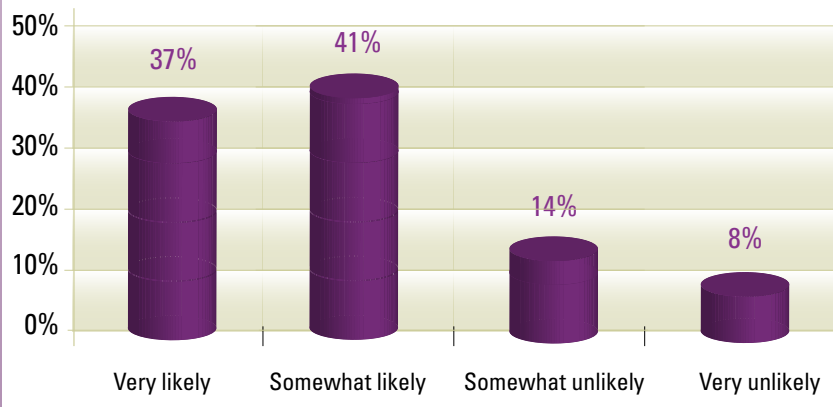
**A**lberta nurses continue to contribute tens of thousands of hours of work without compensation, according to estimates based on a new survey of 1,500 United Nurses of Alberta members.

In April 2012, UNA's annual survey of more than 1,500 randomly selected nurses showed 43 per cent of respondents working regular positions said they had put in at least 15 minutes of extra work before or after their shift on every one of their five most recent shifts.

That alone translated into 700 hours of extra work over the five most recent shifts, said UNA Research Officer Judith Grossman, who oversaw the union's report on the results of the survey, which was conducted over the telephone by Viewpoints Research Ltd.

Determining how much of that was unpaid is more complicated, Grossman explained, and requires assumptions about how many nurses submitted claims for overtime. "But since members have also indicated they submit claims for this type of overtime 30 per cent of the time, we estimate that this adds up to a 'donation' of at least 8,000 hours of free work by all UNA members in the same short time period."

**How likely would you be to recommend nursing as a career?**



Four out of five UNA members are very likely or somewhat likely to recommend nursing as a career to someone they know (78%).

Eight out of 10 UNA members, both full time and part time, reported putting in at least 15 minutes of extra work during at least one of their five previous shifts, the survey results showed.

"In general, home care nurses were the most likely to put in extra time, but an average 82 per cent of all types of nurses surveyed indicated they worked at least 15 minutes extra time before and after shifts, during at least one of their five previous shifts," Grossman said. "Nurses working in public health units were the least likely to claim for overtime."



UNA President Heather Smith said the 2012 statistics should be cause for concern, because other results show clearly that overwork and burnout continue to be problems for Alberta nurses, as in past years.

“This adds up to tens of thousands of hours of unpaid work throughout Alberta each year,” she said.

“The shortage of nurses and the heavy workload continue to be rated by our members as the most important issues facing nursing today,” Smith added. “Our employers need to know the true level of work being done by our members in order to address these serious understaffing issues, and the only way that will happen is if nurses claim the overtime they have worked.”

Nevertheless, Grossman said, while many nurses expressed concern about understaffing and overwork, the number of members who would recommend nursing as a career was very high – with 37 per cent of respondents saying “very likely” and 41 per cent saying “somewhat likely,” for a total of 78 per cent indicating they would recommend nursing as a career.

“This is a strong indicator of satisfaction with the role of nurses and the importance of our profession, despite the pressures caused by management decisions in our workplaces,” Smith said.

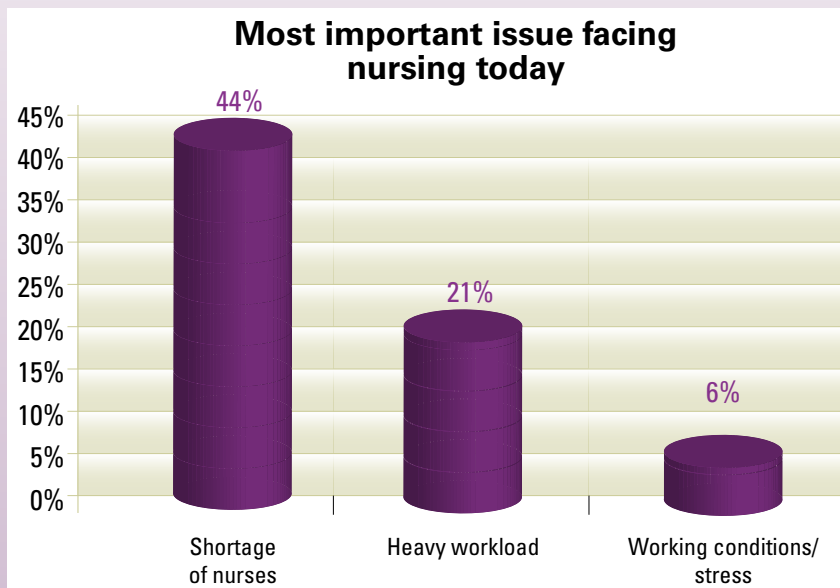
For the first time, the annual survey asked nurses about their experience with the Professional Responsibility Committee Process, Grossman said.

Just under half the respondents, 47 per cent, said they had filled out a Professional Responsibility form, while 52 per cent said they had never done so, she added.

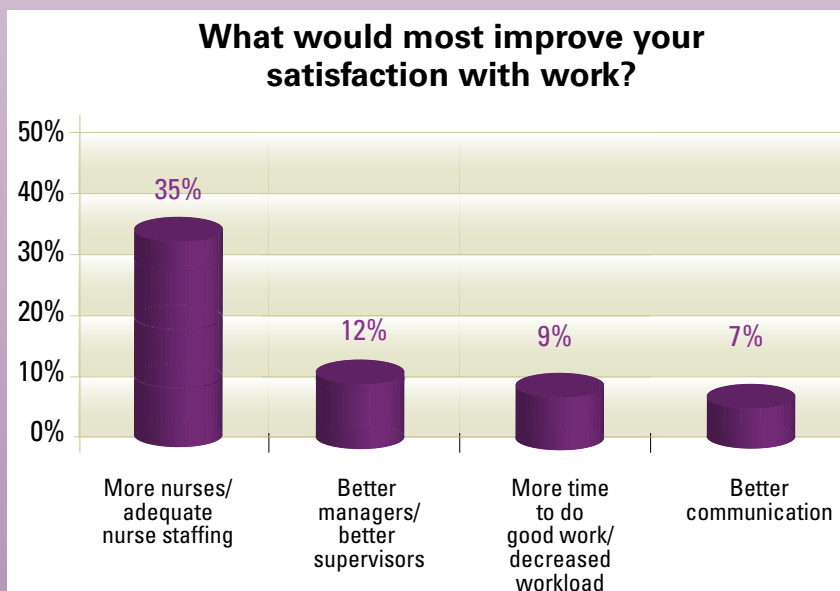
Nurses were also asked to answer questions about their experience of abuse at work. While two-thirds agreed physical abuse was not a problem in their workplace, 59 per cent cited bullying and 60 per

cent identified intimidation as a current problem in their workplace.

“UNA is determined to work with our employers to reduce bullying and intimidation in our workplaces,” President Smith said. “These survey results will assist us in achieving that goal.” 🍷



*As in past years, members identified the most two most important issues facing nursing today as a shortage of nurses and the heavy workload*



*Asked what one thing they believed would most improve their satisfaction with their work, 35 per cent of respondents said more nurses/adequate nurse staffing would make the greatest difference. Respondents also listed better managers, more time to do good work and better communications.*



# Central Zone members warned to watch for e-People errors

*Members who encounter any of these problems are requested to inform their*

*UNA Labour Relations*

*Officer, even if they also inform the AHS*

*Contact Centre.*

**W**ith Alberta Health Services' e-People payroll system set to be rolled out July 23 in the Central Zone, UNA members are advised to watch their payroll information carefully for problems that have been common in other zones where the system has been introduced.

The broad range of problems experienced by UNA members to date includes:

- No pay cheque at all
- Being paid incorrect amounts
- No payment for PD days
- Being "migrated" to the wrong position
- Incorrect payment for new hires at the grad nurse rate
- RRSP contributions discontinued (both employer and employee contributions)
- Incorrect seniority dates
- Incorrect vacation accruals
- Incorrect shift premium payments
- Incorrect mileage payments
- Incorrect vehicle allowance
- Continued deductions of LAPP contributions and health premiums for employees who have moved from regular to casual status.

## AHS now posting Edmonton ER wait times on line

**A**lberta Health Services is now posting wait times for Edmonton Emergency Rooms on line.

The estimated wait times for patients, updated every two minutes, will give Capital Region residents the ability to decide which ER to go to, AHS says.

However, AHS continues to advise people that they should go to the nearest ER or call 911 if they need immediate medical assistance.

Edmonton is the second part of Alberta with the public service, AHS said. The online wait-times website went online in Calgary last July.

AHS says the public response has been positive. Over 10 months, the Calgary page has had approximately 30,000 visits. The tool is also available in a mobile app for iPhones and Android devices.

However, AHS warns, "wait times can change significantly and immediately, without warning and therefore are not guaranteed." 🍷

In addition, members in other zones have had to call the HR Contact Centre in British Columbia to get a "ticket number" so that Human resources can "escalate" its attempt to resolve their issue. The Contact Centre has continued to communicate directly with employees once an individual grievance is filed. (UNA filed a grievance for the employer's failure to recognize the union.)

Members who encounter any of these problems are requested to inform their UNA Labour Relations Officer, even if they also inform the AHS Contact Centre.

In addition, note that car allowance and mileage reporting procedures may change under e-People. 🍷



# UNA President recognized for her outstanding contribution to labour relations

By Dave Cournoyer, UNA Communications Staff

Labour relations experts from Canada, the United States, and Australia gathered at the Canadian Industrial Relations Association (CIRA) Conference held May 29 to 31 at the University of Calgary.

At the conference, UNA President Heather Smith was awarded the Gérard Dion award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the field of industrial relations. Each year, the CIRA presents this award in honour of Gérard Dion, a labour relations academic and founding member of the CIRA.

Accepting the award, Smith described the relationship between nurses and nursing employers as having moved “light-years” since she became involved with the UNA.

“We have raised the bar significantly higher in terms of expectations of nurses and employers,” said Smith.

“Industrial relations is a collective undertaking with good people working with you and for you with a shared goal of a respectful workplace that looks at prevention and proaction rather than reaction,” said Smith.

Speaking of the people who have affected her, Smith told the conference delegates “as a young Local president I had the great fortune of having a great mentor in the head of personnel for the Edmonton General Hospital. His name was Bob Gross.”

“As an employer, he taught me an incredible set of standards and expectations in terms of what a respectful relationship should be between an employer and a worker representative,” said Smith. 🍷

*CIRA is a national network that brings together industrial relations specialists from both labour and management, as well as from government and universities, to promote, discuss, research and educate in the field of work and industrial relations.*

CIRA President  
Larry Haiven  
presents the award  
to Heather Smith



# UNA honours Aboriginal members for their contributions

*“Many UNA members are of Aboriginal heritage and our union recognizes and honours the huge contribution First Nations, Métis and Inuit Canadians have made to our country’s culture and communities.”*  
 -Heather Smith, UNA President

The United Nurses of Alberta marked June 21, National Aboriginal Day, by honouring the contributions of Aboriginal Canadians to our union, our province and Canada.

“Many UNA members are of Aboriginal heritage and our union recognizes and honours the huge contribution First Nations, Métis and Inuit Canadians have made to our country’s culture and communities,” said UNA President Heather Smith on National Aboriginal Day.

“We are particularly proud that our union represents nurses employed by the Blood Tribe Department of Health in Stand Off, near Cardston, and by Aakom

Kiyii Health Services of the Piikani First Nation at Brocket,” she noted.

The Canadian Nurses Association’s National Expert Commission identified several urgent health needs within Aboriginal communities. “Our governments need to recommit our country to addressing the health needs of our Aboriginal people,” Smith said.

National Aboriginal Day was proclaimed by then Governor General Romeo Leblanc in 1996 and takes place each year throughout Canada on June 21. It provides an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about Aboriginal people and to show their respect for their contribution to Canada. 🍷

## UNA to seek mediation in bargaining with Blood Tribe

Negotiations continue at various stages between UNA and employers other than Alberta Health Services.

UNA Local 416 has filed for mediation in negotiations for a first collective agreement with the Blood Tribe Department of Health. Outstanding issues are hours of work, named holidays CARNA registration, term of agreement and salaries

Also new to UNA and negotiating their first collective agreement are employees of the Aakom Kiyii Health Services at the Piikani First Nation, also members of Local 416.

Meanwhile, bargaining has just commenced between UNA Local 61 and the Victorian Order of Nurses in Edmonton. Negotiation teams are in mediation at Edmonton’s Chinatown Care Centre and Devonshire Care Centre, where members are represented by UNA Local 417. 🍷



Che Scott, Karen Three Persons and Sandra Scout of UNA’s Blood Tribe Department of Health Bargaining Committee met in the lead-up to negotiations.





Report from Director  
of Labour Relations  
David Harrigan

## *Alberta Health Services agrees to consider internal job candidates without degrees*

Inconsistent treatment by Alberta Health Services of nurses without bachelor's degrees applying for jobs in community health has been resolved through an agreement between AHS and the United Nurses of Alberta that should allow nurses without a degree but transferable skills to apply.

But UNA members who are in this position need to be aware of the agreement, and should be prepared to insist on their right to an interview if they are told the absence of a degree means they can't apply for a job they believe they are qualified to hold.

Over the past several months, UNA members with diplomas have complained that human resources staff members in different AHS zones have treated these kinds of applications differently.

In some zones, nurses without degrees were told they could not apply. In others, nurses were allowed to apply if they showed they had transferable skills. This situation arose most often with applications for community health nursing positions.

Some postings indicated a degree was a required. Others said a degree was preferred, but that transferable skills would be considered.

As UNA members will know, some nurses without degrees are highly qualified to hold such jobs because of their long experience and high skill level.

As a result, UNA filed a grievance that argued treatment of nurses throughout AHS must be consistent.

This principle was established in a 1989 arbitration of a dispute between UNA and the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary in which a Registered Nurse with a diploma and strong recommendations

from supervisors was denied a position despite her seniority because she did not hold a bachelor's degree. In that case as in the recent circumstances, the requirement was not applied consistently to all similar jobs by the same employer.

The 1989 arbitration panel considered part of Article 14.04 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, which remains unchanged in 2012, which reads:

*"In making promotions and transfers, the determining factors shall be skill, knowledge, efficiency, experience and other relevant attributes, and where these factors are considered by the Employer to be relatively equal, seniority shall be the deciding factor."*

Because the employer had failed to properly meet its full obligation under Article 14.04 to consider all four factors – *skill, knowledge, efficiency, experience* – the panel upheld UNA's grievance.

In the more recent situation, the employer has agreed that all postings will state that a degree is preferred but not that it is a requirement, and to consider transferable skills in determining which candidate will be successful.

UNA members need to be aware of this agreement, and should make applications on the understanding that regardless of what a posting says a nurse who feels she has appropriate skills and experience to apply for a job is entitled to do so and to be considered for the position.

UNA members who are denied the right to apply for *any nursing job* on the grounds they do not have a bachelor's degree or who believe their qualifications were not properly considered for this reason should contact their UNA Labor Relations Officer immediately. ❧

# UNA Provincial Negotiating Committee representatives



## Representatives

### North District

Diane Plowman  
Local 30 (Peace River Community Health Centre/Sutherland Place)

Sheila Dorscheid  
Local 37 (Queen Elizabeth II Hospital - Grande Prairie)

## Alternates

Linda Selnes  
Local 52 (Grimshaw Health Centre)

Alyssa McDonald  
Local 63 (Grande Cache Health Centre)

## Representatives

### North Central District

Alan Besecker  
Local 302N (Cross Cancer Institute)

Heidi Gould  
Local 229 (Fort McMurray Community)

## Alternates

Chandra Clarke  
Local 79 (Edmonton General Continuing Care Centre & Grey Nuns Community Hospital)

Loretta Hughes-Macey  
Local 196 (Capital Health Community)

## Representatives

### Central District

Gail Pederson  
Local 38 (Wainwright Health Centre/Hardisty Health Centre)

Anna-Marie Nicol  
Local 12 (Bethany-Camrose/Bethany Meadows)

## Alternate

Karen Nagribianko  
Local 222 (Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury)

## Representatives

### South Central District

Claire Galoska  
Local 95 (Alberta Children's Hospital - Calgary)

Diane Lantz  
Local 1 (Peter Lougheed Centre)

## Alternates

Marie Aitken  
Local 228 (Claresholm Centre for Mental Health and Addictions)

Leslie Perry  
Local 119 (Canmore General Hospital)

## Representatives

### South District

Steven Johnson  
Local 120 (Lethbridge Health Centre)

Colleen Adams  
Local 160 (Cardston Health Centre)

## Alternates

Malcolm Weisgerber  
Local 82 (Fort MacLeod Health Centre)

Stacey Clark  
Local 126 (Palliser Community)