



NewsBulletin

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Carly Widmeyer and Angela Sherman from
UNA Local 1 at the Peter Lougheed Centre

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By Heather Smith
President, United Nurses of Alberta

2016 – a year of hope and a perfect moment to renew our commitment to nursing

FOR members of United Nurses of Alberta and anyone concerned about the future of public health care in Canada, 2016 should be a year of hope!

Much changed in 2015.

In May, a Conservative Government in Edmonton that had attacked the workplace rights and retirement security of public employees was swept away by voters who replaced it with a majority New Democratic government. Premier Rachel Notley is clearly committed to the preservation and renewal of public health care and the rights of working people. At Alberta Health Services, we have a new board committed, and we will soon have a new CEO.

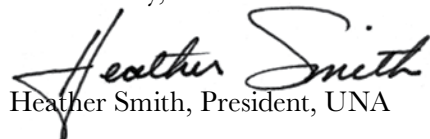
In October, Canadians turned the Conservative government of Stephen Harper out of office, replacing it with a Liberal majority. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, too, has committed his government to the protection and enhancement of public health care from coast to coast. He moved quickly, summoning Canadian premiers to their first meeting with the federal government since 2009, acting to repeal anti-labour legislation enacted by the Conservatives, and, for the first time since John Diefenbaker was PM, addressing the Canadian Labour Congress.

For Alberta nurses, the last few years have been tough years, and the first months of 2016 is the time for us to renew our commitment to health care, revitalize our nursing profession and re-energize our effort to improve and extend public health care, not just hold fast to what we have.

The early months of 2016 are an auspicious time for UNA members to renew their pride in our profession, and our commitment to it, by wearing white in our workplaces. UNA will be working with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta to emphasize the critical role played by registered nurses in health care.

We have much to feel thankful for. It is time to recommit ourselves to building a better future for nursing in Alberta and Canada!

In Solidarity,


Heather Smith, President, UNA

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UNA'S AGM SUMMED UP: tributes for nurses' work, welcome respect from Alberta's government



UNA Secretary/Treasurer Karen Craik, First Vice-President Jane Sustrik, keynote speaker Stephen Lewis, President Heather Smith, and Second Vice-President Daphne Wallace.

NURSES belong to the most important profession on the planet.

That message was at the heart of keynote remarks by Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, to the 38th Annual General Meeting of the United Nurses of Alberta in October.

Meeting from October 27-29 at Edmonton's EXPO Centre, more than 900 UNA members, guests, staff and associate members heard Lewis extol the work done by nurses, and his encouragement for them to "use your voices and your collective strength to make demands that are insistent and reasonable. Because that's the way we improve the human condition."

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CFNU President
Linda Silas



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Lewis, a vigorous 78, described some of the tragic scenes he had observed in Africa, wrought by the HIV/AIDS crisis, and, citing the divisions in our world and the work nurses do to heal them, asked: “How would it be possible to hold the human family together without nurses?”

Other speakers included Alberta Health Minister Sarah Hoffman, Municipal Affairs Minister and former UNA local president Danielle Larivee, Canadian Federation of Nurses Union President Linda Silas, Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan and CARNA President Shannon Spenceley.

Hoffman brought a welcome message of respect and partnership from Alberta’s New Democratic

government, elected on May 5, telling the elected delegates of UNA’s more than 30,000 members that, “for the first time, you have a government that is truly committed to health care.

“Preservation of public health care is in our DNA,” she said of the NDP government. She also pledged the government’s commitment to the legal rights of working people.

Larivee, a public health nurse in North Central Alberta until she ran for the NDP in the May 5 election and was elected the MLA for Lesser Slave Lake, had been appointed to Premier Rachel Notley’s cabinet as municipal affairs minister the week before the AGM.

“If it wasn’t for the United Nurses of Alberta, I wouldn’t be here,” she told the delegates, thanking the union and its leadership for its commitment to advocacy for nurses and health care, which she said was the inspiration of her political career.

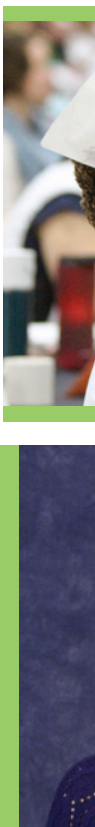
“I’m so glad I’m not sitting in my office wondering where the cuts were going to come and who was going to be gone,” she added, a reference to the NDP’s policy of continuing to support such essential public services as health care and education in the



face of a downturn in revenues from resource royalties.

Silas reminded UNA members of the need for nursing organizations to stay focused on the mission of ensuring that policy makers hear their voice for public health care, as happened during the recent federal election campaign thanks to CFNU’s effective earned media and social media health care advocacy program.

Spenceley of the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta advised the members that registered nurses “are the key to fixing the health care system ... we are everywhere.” 🍷





New terms set for Executive Board members

UNA welcomed some new members, and welcomed some members back, to its ranks of Executive Officers and District Representatives at the union's 2015 AGM.

Jane Sustrik returned as First Vice-President, and Daphne Wallace as Second VP. Both were acclaimed. They rejoin President Heather Smith and Secretary-Treasurer Karen Craik, whose current two-year terms will expire next year.

Other District Representative members of the UNA Executive Board, and the expiration dates of their terms were as follows:

North District

Susan Gallivan, 2017; Roxann Dreger, 2016

North Central District

Terri Barr, Teresa Caldwell, Jennifer Knight, Jennifer Castro, 2017; Susan Coleman, Heidi Gould, Karen Kuprys, Christina Doktor, 2016

Central District

Dianne McInroy, 2017; Sandra Zak, Wanda Zimmerman, 2016


South Central District

Amanda Bornholdt, Eyituoyo Abati, Ken Ewanchuk, 2017; Jo Rhodes, Marie Corns, Kathy Bouwmeester, Marie Aitken, 2016.

South District

Sharon Gurr, 2017; John Terry, 2016

UNA also bade farewell to Executive Board members Denise Palmer, South Central District, who served 18 years on the board; Maxine Braun, South District, 10 years; and Leslie Perry, South Central District, two years.

“We are deeply appreciative of the commitment to UNA these board members have shown over many years, and aware of the huge contributions they have made to our union and to the labour movement through their work with UNA,” said Heather Smith. 

UNA Secretary/Treasurer Karen Craik, First Vice-President Jane Sustrik, Alberta Health Minister Sarah Hoffman, President Heather Smith, and Second Vice-President Daphne Wallace.



New AHS board appointed by NDP started work on November 27

AFTER Alberta Health Services went without a board for two years, Health Minister Sarah Hoffman announced in October the NDP Government was putting together a new board to govern the province-wide health care provider.

The board officially took up its duties on November 27, an event that was barely covered by news media because of other news that day involving Alberta Health Services – the resignation of CEO Vickie Kaminski.

“I’m confident that this group has the first-hand knowledge of health

care delivery and governance that’s needed to strengthen and stabilize the health system,” Hoffman said in her October announcement.

AHS had been without a board since June 2013, when the Progressive Conservative health minister, Fred Horne, fired the board then in office because its members refused to go along with his demand they break contracts requiring AHS to pay millions of dollars in executive bonuses. After the mass dismissal of the board, AHS lawyers conceded that the law required the bonuses to be paid.

Hoffman said the new board’s members will be compensated for their work, but at a lower rate than the previous board.

Chair Linda Hughes, a respected former publisher of the Edmonton Journal and University of Alberta chancellor, will be paid \$50,000 a year plus honoraria capped at a maximum of \$3,000 per month for meetings.

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn, an epidemiology and biostatistics PhD who teaches at the University of Calgary, will be vice chair. Hemmelgarn is a former nurse.

Key dates in the history of ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

MAY 15, 2008: Health minister Ron Liepert announces creation of Alberta Health Services, a single, centralized health authority on a corporate governance model. Nine regional health boards are rolled into the entity. Ken Hughes is appointed chair; Charlotte Robb is appointed interim CEO.

JANUARY 2009: Australian health policy expert Dr. Stephen Duckett, a PhD economist, is named as first AHS CEO.

NOVEMBER 2010: Amidst an ER access crisis, Duckett walks past reporters and refuses to answer questions because he’s too busy eating a cookie. The PC government fires him. Four board members quit, charging political interference.

APRIL 2011: Anesthesiologist and longtime Calgary health administrator Dr. Chris Eagle is named CEO. Five new zones are set up.

FEBRUARY 2012: Health Quality Council of Alberta CEO Dr. John Cowell releases a report that raises concerns about long ER waits, a culture of “fear and alienation” and political interference.

SEPTEMBER 2012: Businessman and AHS board member Stephen Lockwood appointed AHS board chair to replace Hughes, who quit to run as for he PCs in the upcoming provincial election.

JUNE 2013: Health minister Fred Horne fires Lockwood and the entire 10-member board in a dispute over executive pay. He names health consultant Janet Davidson as AHS administrator, reducing AHS governance from nine regional boards five years earlier to one person.

“I’m confident that this group has the first-hand knowledge of health care delivery and governance that’s needed to strengthen and stabilize the health system.”

Health Minister Sarah Hoffman

The other board members are:

David Carpenter – former Lethbridge mayor, Workers’ Compensation Board director and AHS Official Administrator. He is a Chartered Accountant.

Glenda Yeates – former federal deputy minister of health and a senior civil servant in Saskatchewan.

Hugh Sommerville – criminal defence lawyer from Drumheller.

Marliss Taylor – manager of the Streetworks program in Edmonton and members of the Steering Committee for the Canadian Drug

Policy Coalition. She worked for many years in Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories as a nurse.

Richard Dicerni – Executive Council deputy minister and head of the Alberta Public Service since October 2014. He worked for many years as a senior civil servant in Ottawa.

“The board has significant experience in public administration and solid fiscal planning and these tools will be critical to making the system effective in the long-run,” Hoffman said. 🍷



Alberta Health Services Board
Chairperson Linda Hughes

SEPTEMBER 2013: Horne shakes up AHS executive, ordering cuts to VP ranks and dismissing five top executives. Horne appoints Davidson deputy health minister and Cowell official administrator.

OCTOBER 2013: Duncan Campbell is appointed CEO. He lasts one month before he sends out a Tweet that disagrees with the health minister.

NOVEMBER 2013: Brenda Huband and Rick Trimp are named interim co-CEOs.

SEPTEMBER 2014: Davidson returns as interim administrator at the end of Cowell’s one-year term.

MAY 2014: Vickie Kaminski, CEO of a Newfoundland health region, is appointed president and CEO.

NOVEMBER 2014: Carl Amrhein, provost and VP academic of the University of Alberta becomes administrator with a term set to end in June 2015.

MARCH 18, 2015: New PC premier Jim Prentice’s health minister, Stephen Mandel, says he will set up eight to 10 new health districts by July 1, each with an “advisory” board. But AHS structure is really essentially unchanged.

MAY 2015: NDP under Rachel Notley wins majority government on May 5; Sarah Hoffman, appointed health minister, announces a review of AHS governance.

AUGUST 25, 2015: Former Lethbridge mayor David Carpenter is named AHS administrator; Amrhein becomes deputy health minister.

OCTOBER 23, 2015: Hoffman announces AHS will be overseen by a board led by former Edmonton Journal publisher Linda Hughes. The new structure has six members with provision for aboriginal leaders to be added later.

NOVEMBER 27, 2015: Kaminski announces she is resigning; the new board takes over. 🍷

AHS withdraws all discipline in SHC information-access case

ALBERTA Health Services has withdrawn all formal disciplinary actions against 24 UNA members improperly accused in mid-October of having inappropriately accessed a patient's information at South Health Campus in Calgary.

The registered nurses represented by UNA faced serious discipline, including in one case termination. But as NewsBulletin went to press on December 11, AHS informed UNA it was withdrawing discipline for all the nurses in the SHC Emergency Room related to allegations.


Specifically, AHS said it would withdraw letters of discipline and remove them from members' files, pay reimbursement of lost wages, and advise the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta that the discipline has been withdrawn.

UNA vigorously disputed the conclusions reached by the employer in all cases and filed grievances on behalf of

all affected members, as well as a policy grievance, seeking withdrawal of the discipline and other remedies.

In a statement to members on October 14, UNA strongly criticized AHS CEO Vickie Kaminski's publication of a news release about serious and confidential disciplinary matters that remained in dispute. UNA called for her resignation.

AHS's December 11 announcement substantially resolves the grievances, which UNA expects to withdraw as soon as some minor concerns are clarified.

"As we said at the time, the employer did not have a proper case against our members and seriously overstepped the bounds of the law and our collective agreement when it identified members affected in a press release and other documents," said UNA Labour Relations Director David Harrigan. "We are gratified but not surprised by this outcome and pleased AHS has committed to learning from its actions in this situation." 

AHS CEO Vickie Kaminski quits in late November

VICKIE Kaminski, the seventh president and CEO in the short history of Alberta Health Services, resigned on November 27.

Kaminski joined AHS only in May 2014. She said in a statement that her resignation, which becomes effective in January 2016, was a personal decision.

There was little additional explanation of the reasons behind the sudden end to Kaminski's eight-month tenure at the top of the province-wide health care agency. She was hired by the Progressive Conservative government of premier Jim Prentice, and departed under the NDP Government elected less than three months after she started work.


"I have sincerely enjoyed working at AHS since I joined the organization," said the former registered

nurse and senior Newfoundland health official in her statement. "This is a personal decision for me and I will support the board during the transition period."

"I want to thank Vickie for the passion she brought to her role at Alberta Health Services," said Health Minister Sarah Hoffman. "I appreciate the range of experience Vickie brought to the table, from her work as a front-line nurse, to hospital administrator, and then as CEO. Vickie has been committed to health care for many years, and I wish her nothing but the best as she moves ahead to new opportunities."

"I am sorry to see Vickie leave AHS and I appreciate this must have been a difficult decision for her," said AHS Board Chair Linda Hughes, in what was her first official act on her first day of work in her new role.

"Vickie is well respected across the country as a health care leader and I want to acknowledge her commitment to the success of AHS and for her service to Albertans."

Kaminski was the seventh CEO of the organization since the cabinet of PC premier Ed Stelmach amalgamated the province's nine health regions into a single corporate entity in 2008. 

Outgoing AHS
President and CEO
Vickie Kaminski



Professional Responsibility a top concern for UNA members



REPORTING Professional Responsibility Concerns documents your efforts to advocate for practice environments that enable nurses to provide safe, competent and ethical care. PRC committees at worksites across Alberta are working hard to ensure UNA members concerns are documented and can be addressed at the highest level of the organization if necessary.

PRC successes are being seen at worksites across the province.

The PRC committee from Local 211 (Calgary Community) saw improvements after it advocated for increased access to information technology for home care and public health nurses. The success of this

PRC initiative received positive feedback from UNA members.

“The laptops have been amazing. No time being wasted at all. I am using my time so efficiently, at school in between meetings, waiting to arrange vaccination dates while the staff is busy, getting e-mails sent off,” one member said in response to the improvements.

“I can provide immediate resource support to schools by way of sharing online links to AHS and other resources,” said another member.

“Being able to take it out to my schools and access my email and net work drives has made it possible for me to spend more time at my

schools. Prior to having the new laptops, I spend more time in the office addressing and replying to emails. ... Thanks again for advocating on behalf of the school team. I feel it has made my role as a school nurse more creditable and enjoyable,” said another member.

Reporting a PRC is a constructive action that can help protect patients, clients, and residents and alleviate moral distress that nurses sometimes experience when they are unable to provide care as required by the standards of professional licensing bodies. To learn more about the PRC process, visit una.ab.ca 🐾

Celebrating a century of registered nursing practice in Alberta

THE Alberta Association of Graduate Nurses (AAGN) held its first meeting on October 11, 1916 with seven of its 91 members in attendance. This group, united in their goal of protecting the public from unsafe care, would grow over the next 100 years to the over 36,000 member strong CARNA we know and rely on today.

CARNA and its commitment to expert caring has remained constant throughout a century of provincial change and growth thanks to the political engagement, determination and foresight of the founding members and those who followed.

To celebrate this milestone, members are encouraged to participate in a number of events and celebrations throughout the year, including:

- An exhibit travelling across Alberta from May to September, 2016

Professional Associations
UPDATE
from CARNA

- A centennial conference being held in Edmonton from March 16-18, 2016 (www.carna100conference.ca)
- Two celebration galas – one in Edmonton and one in Calgary – in October 2016
- Announcing the 100 recipients of the Centennial Nurses Award
- A multi-media competition for students of nursing education programs
- A series on the history of registered nursing in Alberta in Alberta RN magazine

Find out more at <http://carna100.ca> or nurses.ab.ca 🐾

This article was submitted by CARNA

Former UNA local president appointed to Alberta cabinet

FORMER United Nurses of Alberta local president Danielle Larivee was appointed on October 22 to the Municipal Affairs portfolio by Alberta Premier Rachel Notley.

Larivee, who served as president of Local 315 and a Registered Nurse in public health in the town of Slave Lake, was elected as New Democrat MLA for the Lesser Slave Lake riding in the May 5, 2015, general election.

She is Alberta's first new cabinet minister since Premier Notley named her original 12-member NDP cabinet on May 24. An Alberta Health Services Registered Nurse for 17 years before her election, Larivee's ministerial responsibilities also include the operation of Service Alberta, which runs registries, provincial land titles, consumer protection and government printing services.

Larivee's appointment was part of a small cabinet shuffle, the Notley Government's first, that also saw the creation of a new Economic Development and Trade Ministry, including the innovation portfolio that was formerly part of the Advanced Education Ministry, with Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview MLA Deron Bilous as minister.

As one of the four NDP MLAs elected before the NDP Government came to power on May 5, Bilous's appointment signals the importance of the promised economic diversification process to the Notley Government. He previously held the Municipal Affairs and Service Alberta portfolio.

Edmonton-Riverview MLA Lori Sigurdson, the minister of jobs, skills, training and labour and minister of advanced education, saw her duties change a little with the move of innovation to Bilous's new ministry.

Before election to public office, Bilous worked as a school teacher and Sigurdson was a social worker. 🍷



CFNU President Linda Silas and Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister Danielle Larivee

UNA marks National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

ON December 6, 1989, 14 young women were murdered because of their gender and their course of studies at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal.

United Nurses of Alberta recognizes and mourns the anniversary of this national tragedy.

"After more than a quarter century," UNA President Heather Smith asked today, "what has really changed in Canada to prevent tragedies like this from happening again?"

Smith advocated all levels of government take meaningful steps to prevent violence against women in Canada. She noted that the possibility of such policies being enacted has been significantly improved by the changes in government taking place throughout the country.

Working on the front lines of health care, Alberta's nurses see the impact of violence against women, and sometimes experience it in their own workplaces and homes, Smith

observed. "Today's solemn occasion reminds us to renew our commitment as union members and citizens to seeking practical ways to end violence against women and girls in Canadian homes, communities and workplaces," she said.

UNA also continues to strive to create safer workplaces for Alberta's nurses, their patients and patients' families through Professional Responsibility Concern and Occupational Health & Safety committees.

Alberta's nurses have a right to safe workplaces and a responsibility to ensure the rules are enforced to create a safe environment for our patients, residents, clients, and coworkers, she said. 🍷



Canadian nurses to lead Global Nurses United working group on occupational health and safety

In late September, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas attended the annual meeting of Global Nurses United in Brazil to discuss issues affecting nurses and the nursing profession worldwide.

Global Nurses United represents more than a million nurses from 21 countries. CFNU is an enthusiastic partner.

“I am truly honoured to bring the voice of Canada’s nurses to each meeting, and it is so important to contribute to the global nursing discussions,” Silas said after the meeting, which took place from Sept 23-24 in Brasilia.

“What we often discover in each meeting is that though we all may speak different languages, and there are hundreds of thousands of miles between our countries, many of our issues are very similar across the board.”

This year, several actions items were discussed, including:

- Brazilian nurses’ fight for a 30 hour work week and for their government to sign ILO C-149, the International Labour Organizations’ nursing personnel convention, which recognizes the vital role played by nurses in health care and that nurse shortages are an obstacle to development of effective health services
- South Korea’s general strike to protect workers’ rights
- Guatemala’s transition to a new government and the need for 5,000 more nurses

- Costa Rica’s challenge with a government bill that would outsource nurses’ services
- Peru’s general strike over nurse staffing and hours
- Fights against privatization in the Philippines and Honduras

GNU also welcomed Peruvian nurses to the table and established several new working groups, and CFNU will be leading the Occupational Health and Safety and ILO C-149 groups. Australia Nurses and Midwifery Federation will be leading a working group on violence.

“Many of the action items discussed are very similar to situations happening within our own borders,” said Silas. “We recently elected a new federal government and the work starts now to reverse the cuts of federal health transfers that were felt by every nurse in this country, and affected our ability to deliver safe, quality care to patients.”

Silas also highlighted the need for a health human resources strategy at a time when Canada’s nurses worked more than 19 million hours of overtime in 2014 alone – the equivalent to 10,700 full time positions – and when thousands of new Canadian nursing graduates are unable to find full-time work each year.

“By working together we are able to discuss the different issues and provide ideas to one another, and by standing we are able to bring positive changes to the nursing profession at the global level,” she said. 🇨🇦



Get that warm Valentine's Day feeling without warming the planet!

IT may feel like winter now – but it'll soon be warming up. And just because we're worried about global warming doesn't mean we can't have a nice warm feeling for Valentine's Day!

Here are a few heartwarming tips for February 14:

Eco-friendly chocolate: Try to find fair-trade, eco-friendly chocolate for your sweetie. Rainforest Alliance certified chocolate can be found at rainforest-alliance.org. And if you can't, go home made!

Rethink romantic gifts: Can you shrink your environmental footprint and still be romantic? Probably ... from e-cards to recycled jewelry, there are plenty of eco-friendly alternatives.

Green greetings: Make sure your cards are made from recycled paper. Some manufacturers even make cards out

of plantable seed paper, which biodegrades and sprouts anew as spring flowers!

Dine in locally: This year, why not make dinner yourself ... from locally grown products! Organic wine is easy to find too. So be sure you wine and dine organically.

Plant your love: In Alberta's climate, this one might have to wait a few weeks, but how about planting a tree in honour of someone you love?

Flowers that keep flowering: Cut roses are very nice, but they're often flown in from warmer climes. A beautiful house plant may not have come from as far, and it'll keep on showing your love without a big carbon footprint.

Eco-friendly jewelry: Consumers are growing increasingly concerned about "blood diamonds" and "dirty gold" – ask your jeweler about eco-friendly, fair-trade alternatives. ♡

Green corner, on environmentally friendly topics likely to be of interest to UNA members, is brought to you by the Advocacy and Engagement Committee.

UNA believes coal phase-out will have positive impact on Albertans' health

UNITED Nurses of Alberta President Heather Smith joined Health Minister Sarah Hoffman, Environment & Parks Minister Shannon Phillips, and representatives of the Alberta Medical Association and the Asthma Society of Canada at an Edmonton press conference on



Shannon Phillips

November 23 to speak to the need for Alberta to phase out coal emissions.

"Nurses work every day with Albertans young and old who suffer from reparatory ailments," said Smith. "So we were pleased with the Alberta government's plan to phase out coal-fired electricity generation because it will have a positive impact on the health of Albertans and on the sustainability of our health care system."

The day before, the Alberta government released its plan to take action on climate change. Part of that plan includes the phasing out of coal emissions by 2030. To accomplish this goal, the government plans

to replace two thirds of existing coal electricity with renewable energy.

"Right now, 55 per cent of Alberta's electricity is generated by coal, and coal pollution causes respiratory illness in more people than any other way of generating energy," Hoffman told the reporters at the news conference. "It's time for Alberta to move to cleaner sources of electricity, and that's what we're going to do by reaching zero coal emissions."

"As trade unionists, we were also pleased the government chose to make this change in a way designed to mitigate the impact on Albertans who work in the coal industry," said Smith. ♡

Trudeau appoints new ministers of health and labour

By Dave Cournoyer
Communications Advisor

THE excitement of political change in Ottawa following the October 19, 2015, election has begun to die down as our elected officials settle into their offices and face the realities and challenges ahead of them.

On November 4, 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the members of Canada's new federal cabinet, including new ministers responsible for health care and labour issues.

Family physician Jane Philpott is Canada's new Minister of Health. She was elected on Oct. 19 as Member of Parliament for Markham-Stouffville.

Before entering politics, Philpott served as Chief of the Department of Family Medicine at Markham Stouffville Hospital and associate professor at the University of Toronto's Department of Family and Community Medicine.

During the 2015 federal election, the Liberal Party promised a Trudeau-led government would take a more hands-on approach to health care. Liberal promises included improving access and reducing the cost of prescription medications, establishing a new Health Accord, fostering pan-Canadian collaboration on health innovation, and increasing the availability of high-quality mental health services for Canadians.


MaryAnn Mihychuk is the new federal Minister of Employment, Workforce and Labour. Before her election as the MP for the Winnipeg

area riding of Kildonan-St. Paul on Oct. 19, Mihychuk served as an NDP MLA in the Manitoba Legislature from 1995 to 2004 and as Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade.

In her mandate letter from Trudeau, Mihychuk was directed to "restore a fair and balanced approach to organized labour by repealing Bills C-377 and C-525 and implementing a modern Fair Wages Policy."

Many Canadian labour unions, including United Nurses of Alberta, raised concerns about the apparent intention of the federal Government

to use Bill C-377, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (Requirements for Labour Organizations), to introduce onerous and redundant reporting requirements on unions and many other organizations involved in labour relations practice. There was also concern Bill C-377 would violate Alberta provincial privacy laws.

Former Conservative Health Minister Rona Ambrose was chosen by her colleagues to serve as interim leader of the Official Opposition following former prime minister Stephen Harper's resignation as party leader. Ambrose is the MP for the Edmonton area riding of Sturgeon River-Parkland. 

Victorian Order of Nurses shuts down in six provinces, including Alberta

THE Victorian Order of Nurses, struggling financially for years, will shut down operations in most provinces, including Alberta, the organization said in a news release on November 25.

In addition to Alberta, the non-profit home nursing provider planned to cease operations in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.


It filed for protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act.

President and CEO Jo-Anne Poirier said VON has been

considering the move for more than two years, the Globe and Mail reported. The Ottawa-based organization, which operated in Canada since 1897, will continue to provide privatized home care services in Ontario and Nova Scotia, its main business areas.

The amount the organization owes is sealed as part of a court order. The company went into receivership to protect employee wages, Poirier said.

UNA represented only nine VON employees, all in the Edmonton area.

The closing is an other illustration of the problems of having private, even not-for-profit organizations provide public services. 



We need to get farm safety right

By Dewey Funk, UNA Occupational Health & Safety Advisor

A young man just graduated from high school in rural Alberta. There is no cover on the power take-off shaft. His clothing gets caught. He is pulled in and found dead. Another life gone. He lived across the road.

A man is working on his equipment and he also doesn't stop the machinery, with its moving parts. As he tries to flip the belt back and he loses all of his fingers on both hands. He was a neighbour.

The latest death is a young 10-year old boy driving a fork lift. Tragic.

In rural Alberta, the fall is combining season. Farmers are unloading trucks, the grain augers are running and being moved while running. People are losing fingers.

Nurses across the province care for the fractures, wounds and face the hallway of tears when a death occurs in a rural community.

The Alberta government did not properly consult farmers and farm workers before announcing that Occupational Health and Safety law would be part of Bill 6: Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act. The government uses focus groups, consultation when drafting other laws. Farmers and farm workers deserve no less.

Government ministers should have immediately provided costing for the Workers' Compensation Board when the changes were proposed. Providing the cost to the farm employers would allow them to determine how WCB would impact the bottom line of their business.

Government should have had a clear definition of who is considered a farm worker and what is farm work.

I am an OH&S Advisor and I have long advocated for health and safety coverage for farm workers. I will continue to advocate for OH&S law for farm workers.

Farm workers deserve the Right to Refuse unsafe work and other basic protections all other workers in Alberta enjoy. Can you imagine being injured at work and have no income? Having to pay for medication and being faced with the situation of having to sue an employer for lost wages? The employer could be a neighbor who you've known all your life.

The top rate for WCB premiums is \$2.97 per hundred dollars, which is a low cost for insurance that will protect farm employers from being sued while providing farm workers with access to compensation.

Many laws impact our lives because they save lives. Mandatory seat belts, mandatory bicycle helmets for kids, distracted driving laws, and impaired driving legislation have all have saved lives.

The law should determine how old a child should be before they can operate farm equipment. We do not allow children to drive cars at the age of 14 by themselves and the law states they must pass a test and be 16 years old to drive unaccompanied by an adult. Why is a tractor different?

A farm can be a dangerous place. The chemicals used to spray fields can have dire effects and those chemicals should be locked up. Rural hospitals have equipment installed and nurses have trained for chemical, biohazard, radiation, and nuclear

emergencies in part because of the chemicals used on farms.

When new law is passed, an OH&S Officer will still not be allowed to investigate accidental deaths of children on farms, deaths that will continue to occur. This law does not go far enough in protecting our greatest natural resources - our children. How many more kids will have to maimed or die before we learn? 🙄

Security in AHS is Changing

ALBERTA Health Services has listened to UNA members who raised concerns about worksite security through Article 34 of the Provincial Collective Agreement.

AHS is in the process of composing a list of ten sites in each of the five zones where security needs have been identified and UNA and other health care unions have been asked to help identify sites viewed as being at risk.

AHS will then conduct a physical site assessment with staff involvement on security needs in which security enhancements would be identified. Enhancements could range from security cameras, alarms systems to having security on site. This process will begin in 2016. This change represents a structural shift in the way security needs are now being delivered.

UNA locals representing members employed by AHS submitted security surveys to the union in spring 2015. Survey results were provided to the employer and helped support UNA's case that improvement to security is required. 🙄

UNA pleased by province's new approach to encouraging flu immunization

UNITED Nurses of Alberta supports the government of Alberta's efforts to encourage an increase in overall immunization rates among all health care employees.

At an Edmonton influenza vaccination clinic in early November, UNA President Heather Smith, UNA First Vice-President Jane Sustrik, Alberta Health Minister Sarah Hoffman and other health care leaders urged all Albertans, and especially health care workers, to get immunized.

Sustrik had her 2015 flu shot at the clinic as Smith, who had already had hers, looked on.

The provincial government, which is emphasizing an approach that encourages immunization by focusing on education, promotion and making it easy for health care employees to get their shots, hopes to achieve an 80-per-cent immunization rate among health care workers this year.

Hoffman told reporters at the clinic that health care workers can now be immunized at their workplaces while



First Vice-President Jane Sustrik receives her flu shot

they are on shift so they do not need to take time off work to get the flu vaccine.

UNA's position has long been that vaccination programs are only a small part of the overall response that is required to prevent exposure to influenza and the spread of this serious disease in health care settings. Other components include routine hand hygiene, use of personal protective equipment, isolation policies, sufficient capacity in the system to meet a surge in patients, and adequate staffing at all times.

Smith said UNA is pleased that the government is now emphasizing the same range of influenza control measures as long advocated by the union, rather than putting all its efforts into vaccinating employees and then tabulating statistics about them as the previous government did.

"A higher percentage of immunized employees is certainly a big part of dealing with the challenge faced by Alberta Health Services, but we obviously also needed to be more diligent about the other aspects of influenza control," she added. Hospital overcrowding and pressure on employees to return to work too quickly after an illness also impact the ability of AHS to keep outbreaks under control.

The government says the new AHS approach has yielded two key results:

1. Doubling the rate of health worker immunization since 2012.
2. Dramatically improving partial results this year – when more than 40 per cent have already received their shot. 🍷



Health Minister Sarah Hoffman receives a flu shot



UNA President Heather Smith talks to the media about the importance of influenza vaccinations

Five days doing surgery in Peru showed blessing of Canadian health care



Some of the volunteers on the TANGO Foundation medical mission to Peru above; below left, Roberta Halldorson of Local 70 in Medicine Hat; next page, more scenes from the mission.



FIVE difficult but rewarding days of volunteering with a surgical mission in Peru left Registered Nurse and UNA member Roberta Halldorson more appreciative of Canada's universal health care system.

Seeing the lack of resources and funding in the Peruvian communities of Chincha and Pisco, several hours south of Lima, was an education, said Halldorson, a member of Local 70 at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. "When every purchased item, every medication and even patient gown has to be provided by the patient, it was incredible to see the gratitude of the people I was able to help."



The humanitarian mission to Peru organized by the TANGO Foundation – TANGO stands for Taber Assisting Nations through Global Outreach – from October 16 to 25. Based at the Peruvian American Medical Society Clinic in Chinchá, about three hours from Lima, a total of 65 volunteers almost all from Southern Alberta provided medical, dental, optometric, surgical, educational and humanitarian building aid to those in need.

The nine members of Halldorson's surgical group worked in general surgery, cataract surgery, endoscopy, outpost medical construction and education. Halldorson was part of the five-member general surgery team, traveling daily from Chinchá to the Hospital San Juan de Dios in Pisco. This hospital was built after a large earthquake in 2007 that destroyed a large part of the town.

"Members of the group spent the first day assessing patients to determine who needed surgery," she recalled. "People had been waiting at the hospital since 4 a.m. to be seen. After the day was done, a total of 16 patients were booked for surgery for the next four days."

Most of the procedures carried out by her team were gall bladder surgeries, plus a couple of hernia repairs. "Patients were given a list of things they needed to bring with them on the day of surgery," she recalled. "This included items like a disposable patient gown, IV fluid and tubing. Even bringing in medication was their responsibility. If they were prescribed something in hospital, their

family would have to go to a pharmacy and bring it to the hospital for them."

Every morning the surgical team boarded a bus at 7 a.m. to make the commute to Pisco. "Once we were at the hospital we were able to prepare the operating theatre for the day. Other team members that were working in the recovery room prepared the patients for surgery.

"All of these tasks were done with the assistance of a few wonderful volunteer interpreters. ... A couple of the local nurses spoke a little bit of English as well."

Each case was managed by members of Halldorson's team, "from preoperative to operative to recovery," she remembered. "This type of surgery is considered elective as it sometimes is in Canada, but due to their health care system these patients would be unable to afford the surgery."

Each evening, the team returned to Chinchá where PAMS provided dinner. One evening they had dinner at an orphanage where the construction team was volunteering.

Halldorson noted that the team brought packs with the team containing basic draping, sponges and sharps, as well as a couple sets of basic instruments. They also brought laparoscopic surgical equipment purchased by TANGO and left behind as a gift to the hospital.

She was grateful to UNA for its support in the form of a \$1,000 humanitarian grant. 🍷

For more information about the TANGO Foundations, visit www.thetangofoundation.com/

UNA shares recommendations with Alberta Government for new essential services laws

UNITED Nurses of Alberta has submitted recommendations calling for all employees to be given the right to strike unless specifically determined otherwise to the Government of Alberta's review of the province's essential services legislation.

In addition to the written submission, UNA representatives participated in two round table discussions related to essential services for employees working in long-term care and health care. These sessions were organized by the provincial government and involved unions and employers.

As a result of recent legal decisions, the government has until April 1,

The government has until April 1, 2016, to amend the current Labour Relations Code.

2016, to amend the current Labour Relations Code.

UNA believes the ruling from the Supreme Court constitutionally protects the premise that all workers have a right to strike until such time they are deemed by the government, employer and union to be providing an essential service.

UNA also believes aspects of its traditional approach to ensuring the delivery of essential services during

strikes will be helpful to the government in drafting new legislation that protects the public and patients at the same time as it respects the constitutionally protected rights of health care workers.

UNA proposed a list of 13 recommendations for a framework for drafting Charter-compliant essential services legislation and a series of specific recommendations for changes to the Alberta Labour Relations Code that would safeguard the rights of working people while ensuring the delivery of essential services during labour disputes.

The full list can be found on UNA's website. [UNA](#)

New contract ratified by UNA and Capital Care Edmonton

AFTER more than a year of negotiations, a new collective agreement has been ratified by members of United Nurses of Alberta Local 118 and their employer, Capital Care Edmonton.

The new contract applies to UNA members employed at the following facilities: Dickinsfield; Grandview; Laurier House; Lynwood; Norwood; Strathcona Care Centre; Choice Program Dickinsfield; Choice Program Norwood; Kipnes Centre for Veterans.

Highlights of the new four-year contract include:

- A \$2,000 lump sum payment in the first year of the contract, 2-per-cent salary increase and a \$1,000 lump sum payment in the second year, a 2.25-per-cent salary increase and \$1,000 lump sum payment in the third year, and a 3-per-cent salary increase in the fourth year.
- Special Leave to be replaced with Personal Leave as of April 1, 2016

- A \$250 employer reimbursement for annual professional association fees.
- Inclusion of Physiotherapy and Massage Therapy coverage in the contract as of March 1, 2016

Language in the collective agreement related to promotions and vacancies was improved to more closely reflect the Provincial Collective Agreement. [UNA](#)

Know your Rights

Report from Director of Labour Relations **David Harrigan**



Employees assigned on-call duty must be paid for phone consultations

UNDER United Nurses of Alberta's Provincial Collective Agreement, employees who are assigned on-call duties must be paid for telephone consultations during the times they are on call.

Article 9.01, On-Call, of the Provincial Collective Agreement defines on-call duty as "any period during which an Employee is not on regular duty and during which the Employee is on-call and must be reasonably available to respond without undue delay to any request to report for duty."

Article 9.08, Telephone Consultation, says that "when an Employee, who has been assigned on-call duty, is consulted by telephone and is authorized to handle patient/resident/client matters without returning to the workplace, such Employee shall be paid the overtime rate for the total accumulated time spent on telephone

consultation(s), and corresponding required documentation, during the on-call period."

In addition, Article 9.08 states that "if telephone consultation has been provided by the Employee and the total accumulated time spent on such telephone consultation(s) and corresponding required documentation, during the on-call period, is less than 30 minutes, the Employee shall be compensated at the overtime rate for 30 minutes."

UNA encourages members who have been consulted on the telephone when they are on call to claim to be properly compensated under this article.

For more information, or to address a problem getting paid for telephone consultations during on-call periods, you can call your UNA Local Executive or Labour Relations Officer at 1-800-252-9394. 🍷

New contract ratified by UNA and Good Samaritan Society

MEMBERS of four United Nurses of Alberta locals and their employer, the Good Samaritan Society, have ratified a new collective agreement.

The new four-year contract applies to members of Local 8 at the Clearwater Centre in Rocky Mountain House, Local 212 at Good Samaritan Stony Plain Care Centre, Local 223 at Good Samaritan Medicine Hat, and Local 316 at Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre/Mill Woods Centre/Dr. Gerald Zetter Care Center/CHOICE Program.

Highlights of the new contract include:

- A 2-per-cent salary increase in the first year of the contract, a 2.25-per-cent increase in the second year, and a 3-per-cent increase in the third year.
- A \$1,500 lump sum payment in the first year of the contract and \$1,000 lump sum payments in the second and third years.
- 75/25 cost sharing to continue for 12 weeks beyond health related portion of maternity leave.

- A \$250 employer reimbursement for annual professional association fees effective as of January 1, 2016.
- Reinstatement of the semi-annual \$875 lump sum payments that had ended in 2013.

UNA was successful in ensuring a significant rollback to pension contributions proposed by the employer will not happen. 🍷



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are here for you!**

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