



NewsBulletin

WINTER 2016 VOLUME 40, NUMBER 4

UNA Members Amanda Moe, South Central District Representative, and Kristine Senftner, Treasurer Local 1, during the 2016 Demand Setting Meeting.



Business, Bargaining & Solidarity:

UNA's 39th Annual
General Meeting

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Letter protects UNA
members in Operational
Best Practices process

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

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Bargaining and dealing with 'Operational Best Practices' to top UNA concerns in 2017



■ As the song goes... *the weather outside is frightful* ... a sure sign that winter is officially here. Even as we rush to 2017, however, there is much still remaining to do before we can say goodbye to 2016.

Top of the list of work yet to be completed is “Operational Best Practices” (OBP). Alberta Health Services has still not provided a breakdown of the reduction of one million RN/RPN hours in the 16 large hospitals across the province where it plans to implement OBP. Nor is it clear how OBP will affect other facilities and community services as Alberta Health Services “bends the cost curve” this year and in future budgets.

This edition of UNA NewsBulletin also contains coverage of our 39th Annual General Meeting, which was held in October, and the November Provincial Demand-Setting Meeting. Now the work of creating formal contract language begins. The membership ratification vote on the proposed contract changes will occur January 30, 2017. Actual negotiations may commence sometime in February. Watch for information about Local meetings at your work site and please provide your input to your Local Executive.

I will take this opportunity to thank the 1,500 members who participated in our pre-negotiations survey in October. I also thank all our Local Executive leaders and committee members across the province for their work in 2016. Their advocacy on behalf of UNA members and patients made a difference to the lives of thousands of UNA members and the safety of patients, residents and clients in worksites across our province. ♥♥

*I wish a safe and enjoyable
festive season for all members
and their families.*

Onward to 2017!

In Solidarity,

Heather Smith
Heather Smith

President, United Nurses of Alberta

Close to 1,000 RNs, RPNs and others attended **UNA's 39th AGM** in Edmonton



■ With the theme of “Together for a Stronger Future,” United Nurses of Alberta’s 39th Annual General Meeting October 25 to 27 saw the first visit from a sitting Alberta premier in the union’s history and was attended by close to 1,000 delegates and other participants.

Indeed, there were so many Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses in the vicinity of Edmonton’s EXPO Centre on the city’s east side that the CBC’s traffic report warned commuters to take extra time and consider changing their routes to work!

Delegates elected by UNA’s more than 30,000 RNs, RPNs and allied health care workers also heard comments by President Heather Smith and other senior union officials immediately after the call to order at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, October 25.

Important speakers included University of Alberta Nursing professor Greta Cummings, a PhD and RN whose recent work deals with how leadership by individuals and organizations can improve health care outcomes for patients, and UNA PRC Advisor Josh Bergman, on the flows in managerial efforts to reorganize workforce make-up to save money.

Throughout the three days of business, delegates also heard from such well-known figures as Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, Danielle Larivee, Alberta municipal affairs minister and former UNA activist, and Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour.

Delegates democratically elected by UNA members also dealt with the important business of the union, including approval of UNA’s annual budget. 🍷

Together AGM FOR A STRONGER FUTURE 2016

□ MORE AGM STORIES AND PHOTOS, PAGES 4-10

CHANGES COME TO UNA LEADERSHIP

- UNA welcomed some new members, and welcomed some members back, to its ranks of Executive Officers and District Representatives at the union's 2016 AGM.

Heather Smith returned as president and Secretary-Treasurer Karen Craik was re-elected in a contested race. They rejoin First Vice-President Jane Sustrik and Second Vice-President Daphne Wallace, whose current two-year terms will expire next year.



The District Representative members of the UNA Executive Board are:

NORTH

- Roxann Dreger
- Emily Lozeron

NORTH CENTRAL

- Terri Barr
- Teresa Caldwell
- Jennifer Castro
- Susan Coleman
- Christina Doktor
- Jennifer Knight
- Karen Kuprys
- Nicole Van Dijk

CENTRAL

- Dianne McInroy
- Sandra Zak
- Wanda Zimmerman

SOUTH CENTRAL

- Eyituoyo Abati
- Marie Aitken
- Barbara Campbell
- Marie Corns
- Ken Ewanchuk
- Amanda Moe
- Jo Rhodes

SOUTH DISTRICT

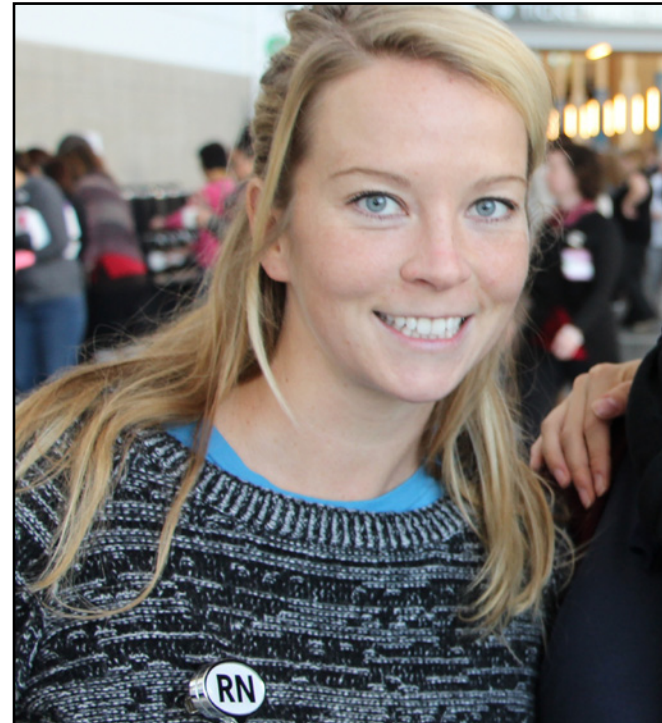
- Sharon Gurr
- John Terry

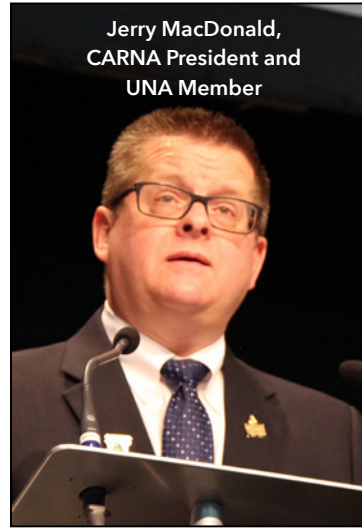
UNA also bade farewell to Executive Board members Susan Gallivan, North District, who served 12 years on the board; Heidi Gould, North Central District, who served for two years; and Kathy Boumeester, South Central District, who also served two years.

UNA thanks the outgoing Board members for their years of tireless dedication and service to the union. 🍷



Scenes from the AGM





Scenes from the AGM



Joshua Bergman

Patient safety concerns too often originate in workforce changes unsupported by evidence: PRC Advisor

- Many of the patient-safety concerns raised by Registered Nurses and other health care workers in Alberta's hospitals and care facilities are the symptoms of larger workforce changes that have been taking place in the province for 20 years, United Nurses of Alberta professional responsibility advisor Joshua Bergman told the union's AGM on Oct. 26.

Such workforce changes tend to have the effect of diluting the number of Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses in the workforce and replacing them with workers who have a mix of skills, in health care facilities across Alberta, Bergman said in his well-received remarks.

“Unfortunately, a number of these changes don't appear to be based on any obvious evidence and appear largely driven by the goal of saving money, or

‘bending the cost curve,’ as they call it now,” Bergman told the more than 900 AGM participants.

In fact, he said, strong evidence from generations of Canadian and international research consistently demonstrated a clear relationship between inadequate nurse staffing and poor patient outcomes, including higher mortality rates, hospital-acquired infections, cardiac arrest, falls, medication errors and longer hospital stays.

So while it's important for governments to be responsible stewards of Alberta tax dollars, observed Bergman, who is a Registered Nurse and holds a Masters Degree in Public Health, “this approach must be balanced with evidence and the obligation to promote and protect the health of Albertans.” 🍷

A longer account of Joshua Bergman's important remarks is available on UNA's website - www.una.ab.ca

Clinical instructor enthusiastic about benefit of students at AGM

■ Nursing student Kendice Stenlund says she was impressed by the passion of members of the United Nurses of Alberta she observed and met this year's AGM.

They are "making a difference in our profession," she wrote in a note of thanks to UNA's executive officers.

Stenlund attended the AGM in the company of Local 68 Vice-President Steve Basarab, who works at the Wetaskiwin General Hospital and is a clinical instructor in the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing's Camrose site.



Kendice Stenlund and Steve Basarab

Basarab, a UNA member since 2011, said he believes the experience of attending UNA's AGM

showed his student that there is an organization made up of Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and others across an entire province "will stand up for her as a student and onward."

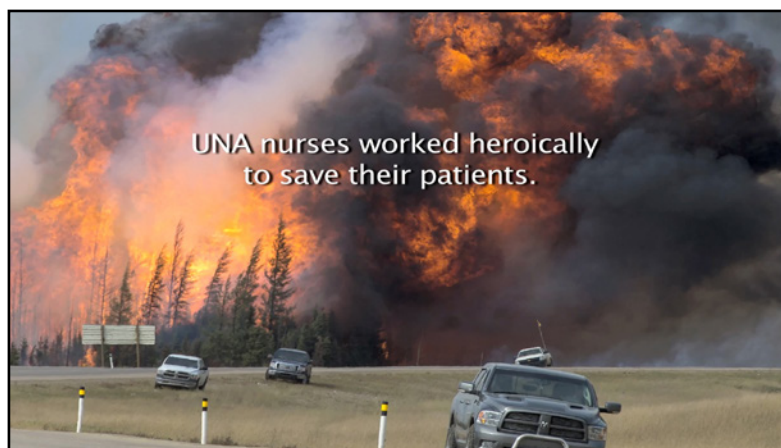
"As an instructor I have quickly learned that students often feel alone in their struggles and not a true part of the team," Basarab wrote in a note to the Executive Officers. "Bringing students to AGM shows them that they are not alone and that, as a labor movement, we are all in this together." 🍷

UNA pays tribute to the Nurses of Fort McMurray

■ More than 1,000 United Nurses of Alberta members paid tribute to the Registered Nurses and emergency workers of Fort McMurray at the UNA annual general meeting on Oct. 27, 2016 in Edmonton.

Facing huge challenges and personal loss during the wildfires of May 2016, nurses demonstrated an unwavering commitment to their patients and their community.

Following the premiere of a video tribute to Fort McMurray nurses, members of UNA Local 96 Northern Lights Regional Health Centre and Local 229



Scene from the video

Fort McMurray Community were given a standing ovation at the AGM for their efforts during the wildfire. 🍷



Premier to AGM: erratic funding of health care in wake of resource price volatility would be 'fiscal malpractice'

■ In the first such address by an Alberta premier in the 39-year history of the United Nurses of Alberta, Rachel Notley told the union's Annual General Meeting on Oct. 27 of her respect for nurses, the health care services they provide and their union.

Nurses have been "leading the fight to protect and improve health care," the premier told the more than 900 UNA members, observers, staff and others in the room at the EXPO Centre in Edmonton. "Thank you for your courage, integrity and dedication to the cause."

"I'm very happy that our government is implementing many of the things UNA has fought for," she said, explaining that throughout Alberta's recent history, moments like the current oil price bust have been marked by a predictable government response: "Cuts."

The request to health care workers, predictable for the same reason, has historically been to do more with less. "This request has always come in an environment of erratic and volatile funding levels. That's a recipe for failure."

But her government believes "forcing public spending into the same volatile pattern as oil prices is fiscal malpractice," Premier Notley stated.

As a consequence, the NDP is determined to handle the current economic slowdown caused by low world oil prices, which has cut close to 15 per cent from the province's revenue stream, in a thoughtful way that doesn't do additional harm to the provincial and national economies. "It begins with not making a bad situation worse. Instead of throwing frontline staff, like nurses, out of work, we are protecting public services and the people who use them. We are keeping funding stable so that health care and education can function."

But Notley warned that achieving this goal in current circumstances is an enormous challenge. "Our government is protecting vital public services, but that means we have very little room for new spending until the economy recovers."

So the government is working with public sector partners like Alberta's nurses to manage cost pressures within existing funding levels, she said. "In return, we offer stability and certainty in overall commitments from government."

She cited the government's recent deal with the Alberta Medical Association, representing the province's physicians and endorsed by 74 per cent of the

"Our government is protecting vital public services, but that means we have very little room for new spending until the economy recovers."

□ CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



association's members, as an example of how this can work.

"We asked our doctors to help us protect the health care system by getting those increases under control, and they answered the call," she said. "The renegotiated AMA agreement is designed to hold spending increases to about 2 per cent through 2018."

In other words, the premier said, public employees, especially health care workers, and the government have a tricky job to do together. "This isn't about slash and burn. We do need to work together so

that public Medicare is strong, financially sustainable and here to stay."

If there's anything she learned during the years she worked as a UNA Labour Relations Officer, the premier noted, "it's that how you make those decisions matters."

"Facing difficult times with integrity, diligence and compassion typically gets the best results over the long term," she concluded.

The majority NDP Government was elected on May 5, 2015. 🍷

Premier Rachel Notley with UNA's Executive Officers, from left to right Secretary-Treasurer Karen Craik, First VP Jane Sustrik, Premier Notley, President Heather Smith and Second VP Daphne Wallace.

Bargaining survey now complete and in use

■ UNA Research Officer Judith Grossman provided a detailed, confidential briefing to delegates during the AGM on the completed bargaining survey of the union's members.

The telephone survey for UNA by Viewpoints Research was conducted in mid-October with the goal of providing delegates to the Demand-Setting Meeting and UNA's Bargaining Committee with confidential and anonymous information

from the membership about their priorities in negotiations for the new Provincial Collective Agreement.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, telephone interviewers used in the survey do not see the members' phone numbers, which were dialed by a computer. Additionally, before results are shared with UNA, Viewpoints Research combines and aggregates all responses further ensuring anonymity. 🍷



Brace for complex negotiations and more in 2017: Heather Smith

"We are obligated to advocate in our workplaces and at all political levels to achieve outcomes that benefit us and our society."

Heather Smith

■ In her report to United Nurses of Alberta's 39th Annual General Meeting on the morning of October 25, President Heather Smith warned delegates, observers and other participants that a complex and challenging year of bargaining lies ahead.

Not only must UNA bargain a new pattern-setting Provincial General Agreement in a poorly performing economy, she said, but the union must also take part in negotiations for an independent Local Authorities Pension Plan and deal with complex bargaining of workplace essential-services rules under new Alberta legislation.

Smith also highlighted the challenge posed for nurses and safe health care by Alberta Health Services' "Operational Best Practices" program. AHS, she said, "intends to reduce Registered Nursing and Registered Psychiatric Nursing in 16 large acute care hospitals by one million hours."


That's the equivalent of 520 full-time positions, Smith pointed out. "It is not about what is best for patient outcomes,

patient safety or quality of work life of the employees they claim to value. It is about bending the cost curve on the backs of workers."

While UNA has taken part in unprecedented direct political consultation and made submissions to government on such issues as the nursing home and home care regulations review and labour law, Smith said "we are obligated to advocate in our workplaces and at all political levels to achieve outcomes that benefit us and our society."

"While we have a government that is more friendly to labour, we know we cannot sit back and wait," she reminded her audience.

Smith added that UNA continues to invest in safe staffing research and, working with national partners like the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, to advocate for a new national Health Accord, plus national Pharmacare, home care, and seniors' strategies.

The Provincial Collective Agreement expires on March 31, 2017. 



November's Demand-Setting Meeting prepared the way for 2017 round of bargaining

■ Close to 500 voting delegates to the 2016 Demand-Setting Meeting worked hard for three days on the nitty-gritty of preparing proposals for United Nurses of Alberta's upcoming round of Provincial Collective Agreement negotiations.

The meeting, which ran from November 22 to 24 at the EXPO Centre in Edmonton, was attended by close to 800

people in all, including observers, union staff and technical staff.

UNA's 2016 Demand-Setting Meeting was an important first step in the upcoming 2017 round of negotiations. UNA DSM meetings are traditionally held in the months before the next round of bargaining the union's largest collective agreement. The last DSM was held in Edmonton in 2012.

UNA's 2016-17 Bargaining Committee. From left to right, seated Malcom Weisgerber, Co-chair, South District; Heather Smith, President; David Harrigan, Director of Labour Relations; Diane Lantz, Co-chair, South Central District. Standing: Jens Gundermann, North Central District; Leslie Perry, South Central District; Lisa Hein, North District; Jamie Suchan, North Central District; Melinda Skanderup, South District; Gail Pederson-Todd, Central District; Gwen Prusak, North District; Mark Cowan, Labour Relations Officer; Heather Venneman, Central District.

□ CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Together FOR A STRONGER FUTURE **DSM 2016**



Scenes from November's Demand-Setting Meeting



□ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

President Heather Smith, who chaired the meeting’s lengthy sessions, described the process as “all business,” and noted that UNA’s goal is always to reach agreement with the four employers that are parties to the Provincial Collective Agreement “that sets the standard for nurses all across Canada.”

Delegates at the meeting examined in detail UNA’s bargaining proposals, and voted on proposals to reflect the will of the membership. After three days of intensive work, delegates emerged from the meeting on November 26 with a complete bargaining package to put to eligible members of the union’s general membership for ratification.

UNA expects the province-wide vote to take place on January 30.

Negotiations with bargaining representatives of Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care and the Bethany Group (Camrose) are expected to commence in February 2017. It is UNA’s intention that the agreement will serve as the template for all upcoming UNA collective agreements.

When bargaining is complete and a collective agreement has been reached, all eligible members will have the opportunity to participate in a ratification vote on the new contract. Only when the new provincial agreement has been ratified will UNA’s leadership sign the agreement. 🍷

Scenes from November’s Demand-Setting Meeting



Despite Provincial Agreement bargaining, UNA's also busy with small-table negotiations

- With negotiations for a new Provincial Collective Agreement set to begin in the New Year, United Nurses of Alberta is also focused on negotiating new contracts for members employed at smaller worksites throughout Alberta.

As this NewsBulletin went to print, negotiations were taking place for Registered Nurses and para-medical staff between members of Local 234 at the Hardisty Nursing Home, and between members of Local 417 and their employers at the Devonshire Care Centre and Chinatown Care Centre in Edmonton.

Negotiations for first contracts are expected to begin soon for newly organized UNA members at Extendicare Cedars Villas represented by UNA Local 422 and Carewest Rouleau Manor.

After seven months of negotiations, two first collective agreements were ratified in September 2016 by members of UNA Local 421 employed by the Father Lacombe Care Society at the Father Lacombe Care Centre and the Providence Care Centre in Calgary.

UNA was proud to welcome members of this new local when they joined the union in 2015. Local 421 represents Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides at this worksite. The two individual contracts cover RNs working in Direct Nursing roles and another for LPNs and HCAs working in Auxiliary Nursing roles.

Features of the two agreements, which expire on August 31, 2019, include:

- Salary grid for RNs equal to those in UNA's agreement with Alberta Health Services



Members of the United Nurses of Alberta Hardisty and Devonshire Bargaining Committee. Left to right: David Harrigan, Jason Rockwell, Carol Moos, Christina Doktor, Nerlyn Camat and Jena Doyle.

- Salary increases of 2 per cent in the first year, 1.5 per cent in the second year, and 1.5 per cent in the third year for LPNs and HCAs
- Education allowance increases for Gerontological Certification and Baccalaureate Degrees
- Signing bonuses of \$800 for LPNs and \$600 for HCAs
- \$100 per year professional fee reimbursement for eligible employees
- Voluntary RRSP program for Employees in which the employer will match contributions up to a maximum of 4 per cent of gross earnings each pay period
- One professional development day per year for RNs and LPNs at their basic rates of pay
- Improvements to prepaid health benefits, including vision care, dental care, group life insurance, and long-term disability
- Increased vacation accruals

UNA provides a wide range of services to its members. A key role is negotiating the excellent collective agreements that regulate salaries, benefits, schedules and working conditions of members. UNA also administers its agreements to resolve disputes, improve working conditions and protect nurses' workplace rights. 🍷

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VON Canada plan to disentitle employees from their pensions blocked by UNA legal fight

■ When the Victorian Order of Nurses of Canada announced a year ago it was shutting down in six provinces and filing for protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, five United Nurses of Alberta members lost their jobs.

If VON had had its way, the UNA members and possibly former VON Canada employees too would have also lost their pension entitlements.

A tough response by UNA, however, has resulted in VON dropping its plan to disentitle the UNA members, as well as former employees already receiving VON pensions.

On Nov. 25, 2015, VON Canada announced it was shutting down its operations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador and filing for protection from creditors. But the 115-year-old Ottawa-based organization said its operations in Ontario and Nova Scotia would not be included in the restructuring and would continue to operate.

VON had been providing home care services for Alberta Health Services in Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge.

UNA responded by hiring the Toronto law firm of Goldplatt Partners LLP to oppose VON Canada's planned partial

wind-up of its pension in the organization's home jurisdiction. In April 2016, UNA made submissions to the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) that relevant legislation in Alberta prohibited the partial wind-up of pension plans. At about the same time, the Ontario Nurses Association made submissions to FSCO in favour of the partial wind-up.

FSCO had signaled it would take a position in favour of the employer's plan, but changed course after receiving UNA's arguments. In August FSCO submitted positions to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice that indicated it had adopted many of UNA's arguments. On August 8, VON Canada withdrew its motion to partly wind up the plan.



Goldplatt lawyer Darrell Brown

ONA, however, pursued its arguments for a partial wind-up, and in late August several parties, including UNA, went to court to address ONA's motion.

On Sept. 6, the Superior Court of Justice issued a decision that reflected UNA's position and restored pension entitlements to all affected members of the pension plan.

"It is clear that had UNA not been involved, it is highly unlikely VON Canada would have proceeded without objection from FSCO," wrote Goldplatt lawyer Darrell Brown, who handled the case. "Your efforts have, I believe, benefitted all terminated and retired members of VON East and West." 🍷

On Sept. 6, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice issued a decision that reflected UNA's position and restored pension entitlements to all affected members of the pension plan.

UNA and AHS sign Letter of Understanding protecting UNA bargaining unit members during planned workforce changes

■ United Nurses of Alberta and Alberta Health Services on Nov. 4 signed a Letter of Understanding ensuring there will be no involuntary reduction of full-time equivalency (FTE) of any member of the UNA bargaining unit as a result of implementation of AHS's "Operational Best Practices" targets.

The announcement came after several days of news stories speculating on the impact of the Operational Best Practices program being implemented by AHS – with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees stating flatly the program would result in layoffs and both AHS and the government maintaining that was not so.

While this went on, UNA and AHS engaged in two weeks of intensive discussions that resulted in the LOU – a legal document that now forms part of the current collective bargaining agreement between the union and the largest employer to sign the Provincial Collective Agreement.

The letter includes a binding undertaking that the AHS commitment will remain in effect until March 31, 2017, or upon ratification of a new collective agreement, whichever is later. It is expected most of the changes will take place over the next year and a half.

The current Provincial Collective Agreement between UNA and AHS is set to expire on March 31, 2017.

“We have expressed our concerns and will continue to monitor the transformative changes to the workforce, including the implications of Operational

Best Practices,” UNA President Heather Smith said at the time the agreement was reached.

The parties committed in the letter “to continue to work together in order to operationalize this Letter of Understanding.”

It is important to note the use of the concept of full-time equivalency – a way of measuring the workload of employees to make them comparable across a workforce – does not mean part-time jobs will be eliminated. 🍷



RNs at two worksites vote to join UNA

■ United Nurses of Alberta welcomes the Registered Nurses from two worksites as the newest members of the union. RNs employed at Carewest Rouleau Manor in southwest Calgary and the Revera Jasper Place Continuing Care Centre in west Edmonton voted overwhelmingly to join UNA in November 2016.

As soon as possible, UNA will negotiate a first collective agreement for the new members, who before the vote worked without representation by a union.

UNA already represented RNs at the Carewest - Colonel Belcher facility in northwest Calgary, who are members of UNA Local 221.

Revera employees already represented by UNA include members of Local 107 (Mount Royal Care Centre), Local 210 (Bow-Crest Care Centre), Local 235 (South Terrace Continuing Care Centre), Local 401 (McKenzie Towne Care Centre), Local 410 (Miller Crossing) and members of Local 137 (Riverview Long Term Care). Members of those locals voted to ratify their current collective agreement in June 2015. That contract expires on December 31, 2017. 🍷

Professional Associations
UPDATE
 from CARNA

SHAPE YOUR PROFESSION: CARNA seeking member feedback

Medical Assistance in Dying Guidelines

- CARNA is seeking feedback from Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners on the new draft documents *Medical Assistance in Dying: Guidelines for RNs* and *Medical Assistance in Dying: Guidelines for NPs*.

Information from a legal review, a review of the literature, and an environmental scan across Canada informed the development of two CARNA draft guideline documents to help support the role of NPs and RNs in medical assistance in dying.

To provide feedback, visit nurses.ab.ca > Professional Resources > Documents > Documents in Review

Please note: CARNA is awaiting NP standards on medical assistance in dying from Alberta Health. These standards are required prior to NPs participating in medical assistance in dying.

Feedback will be collected until 4 p.m. on Jan. 2, 2017.

If you have any questions related to medical assistance in dying, these guidelines or the Alberta Health NP standards, please contact Pam Mangold at pmangold@nurses.ab.ca. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Continuing competence and professional development

CARNA is looking to provide greater support to RNs and NPs in identifying learning opportunities and enhancing their practice competence. They want to explore new ideas and approaches that support CARNA members to engage in lifelong learning and professional development.

CARNA is seeking member perspectives for redesign of a program that is evidence-based, easy to use and effective in supporting your ongoing professional learning. The information you share is valuable and will help guide the development of a continuing competence program that provides support for meaningful engagement in professional learning. 🍷

Please check your inbox for an email inviting you to participate in the Thoughtexchange consultation. If you did not receive this email and would like to participate, please contact tpaton@nurses.ab.ca.

Nurses' Planners now in UNA members' hands

- Copies of the 2017 Nurses' Planner should now have arrived in the mailboxes of all UNA members.

The 2017 planner celebrates the 40th year in the history of UNA's work on behalf of our province's nurses, the people we care for as nurses, their families and all of Alberta's citizens.

The planner includes important information about UNA, as well as tools to assist members in advocating for themselves, their co-workers and those in their care. As in 2016, this planner contains important information on the benefits package included in the new Provincial Collective Agreement. 🍷



A request of every nurse in UNA: **PLEASE REPORT ALL SERIOUS INJURIES!**

By Dewey Funk
UNA Occupational Health
& Safety Advisor

- Section 18 of the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act* stipulates that an employer must report a serious injury or accident that results in death, injury or hospitalization of a worker for two days or more.

I have discussed with Government of Alberta, Occupational Health and Safety Officers how many reports they have received regarding serious injuries and accidents from health care workers. Their answer was astounding: *None!*

When a nurse was choked so severely by a patient she had to be admitted to Intensive Care, how could this not have been considered a serious injury? Yet no one reported that injury.

The sad part is that many workers do not know about this requirement because most front-line workers have never received the training about the types of injury that must be reported under the *OH&S Act*. Employers are breaking the law if they do not report such injuries.

By law, employers must conduct an investigation surrounding each incident, prepare a report outlining how the incident/injury occurred, note any corrective action taken to prevent another incident/injury from occurring, and keep the report on record for two years in case an officer needs it to investigate.

Not reporting the injury means there will be no examination of employer policies

and procedures that could prevent other incidents from happening.

When I think about the nurse who was admitted to ICU, I think about how this type of injury effects not just her but everyone else. She had to go through recovery, not just from the physical injury but from the physiological injury as well. Her husband, children and other family members had to help their loved one through the process of recovery.

We also have to look at her co-workers who were there, who assisted her in breaking away from the patient. They witnessed their co-worker, colleague, friend being choked by a patient. What are their injuries? Who cares for them? They suffer in silence, go about their duties after all it's about the patient.... *Really?*

Accordingly, I am making this request of every nurse in UNA: When there is a serious accident or injury at your worksite, *please* report it to me either by email or phone so we can do a follow-up to ensure reporting is done.

The Government of Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Officers can only investigate *reported* incidents. I will report on your behalf so you do not have to reveal your name.

I don't ever again want to sit in silence and disbelief and ponder how this could happen! 🍷



Not reporting the injury means there will be no examination of employer policies and procedures that could prevent other incidents from happening.





UNA welcomes Blair Bukmeier

as Edmonton-based LRO

United Nurses of Alberta is pleased to welcome Blair Bukmeier as a Labour Relations Officer in the Provincial Office in Edmonton.

Bukmeier joins UNA after six years at Covenant Health, where he spent the past four years as a senior human resources advisor.

Before joining Covenant Health, Bukmeier worked from 2008 to 2010 as a human resources advisor for Alberta Health Services, where he was involved in a major project to transfer the Edmonton-area geriatric

psychiatric program from Alberta Hospital Edmonton to Covenant Health's Villa Caritas site. He also worked for a spell as an HR officer with Correctional Services Canada.

Bukmeier graduated in 2006 from the University of Lethbridge with a Bachelor of Management degree in human resources and labour relations. He also holds a business administration and marketing diploma from NAIT.

In his personal life, Bukmeier and his wife are active outdoor enthusiasts and new parents. 🐾

New features added to UNA Apple and Android Apps



United Nurses of Alberta is pleased to announce the addition of new features to the union's popular Apple and Android smart phone apps.

New features added to the app in a recent update allow UNA members to submit expense claims and Leave of Absence requests through their mobile devices. The Apple app requires iOS 8 or newer and the Android app requires Android 4.2 or newer.

The UNA apps connect 30,000 Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and allied health care workers with their union. These apps

provide direct links to breaking news, collective agreements, resources and more. Now with access to DMS, members with UNANet accounts can update their contact information, submit expense claims and LOA requests, and local executives can access information about their local members and duespayers.

UNA launched the first version of its Apple iOS app for iPhone and iPad users in March 2014. The Apple and Android apps have been downloaded more than 5,000 times. If you have any feedback or questions about the latest changes to the UNA app, please contact app@una.ab.ca. 🐾

Retired UNA activist **Beryl Scott** receives Afro-Canadian Heroes honour

- Long-time UNA activist Beryl Scott has been named recipient of the 2016 Community Woman of the Year Award by Diversity Magazine's Afro-Canadian Heroes organizing team.

Scott was presented with the award on Nov. 5 in Edmonton for her tireless work on behalf of many community groups such as the Canadian Multicultural Foundation's annual Harmony Brunch, which celebrates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

On hand for the ceremony were federal Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi, MP for Edmonton Mill Woods, David Shepherd, MLA for Edmonton-Centre, and other dignitaries and community members.

Before retiring from the UNA Board after a dozen years in that role in 2011, Scott was a dedicated union activist for more than three decades. She became active with the union soon after starting work at Edmonton's Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton in 1981. She transferred to the old Edmonton General Hospital after a year, and followed the move of the facility to the Grey Nuns site in 1988. After her 1982 move, Scott became an active member of Local 79 until her retirement.

Scott was UNA rep and chair of the Alberta Federation of Labour's Workers of Colour and Aboriginal Workers Committee. 🍷



Beryl Scott, with Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Karen Craik

New Private Member's Bill to tackle issue of **WORKPLACE BULLYING**

- Protecting Alberta working people from the psychological and emotional damage of workplace harassment and bullying is the objective a Private Member's Bill introduced by New Democrat MLA Craig Coolahan on Nov. 9

Introduced by the Calgary-Klein MLA, Bill 208, the Occupational Health and Safety (Protecting Alberta Workers from Harassment) Amendment Act, will for the first time recognize in Alberta legislation the danger of workplace bullying.

The fact many Alberta employers do not have anti-bullying policies in place thousands of workers



MLA Craig Coolahan

vulnerable, with minimal recourse if they are a victim of workplace bullying and harassment.

"This legislation will be preventative, not punitive", said Coolahan in a news release. "It is meant to ensure all employers and employees are aware of the definition of workplace harassment and what is

and isn't thorough, robust policy and training."

Consultations with businesses of all sizes, victims of workplace bullying, labour unions, HR organizations and the Psychologists Association of Alberta show there is strong support for ensuring Alberta has safe work environments that are free from harassment.

This Act will make harassment policies mandatory for Alberta businesses and provide victims of workplace bullying the ability to lodge a complaint with Occupational Health and Safety. 🍷

UNA mourns loss of activist, former SNAA president **Barb LeBlanc**

■ UNA mourns the loss in October of Barb LeBlanc, union activist, nursing advocate and Staff Nurses Association of Alberta president from 1986 to 1992. She was 63.



Barbara Lynne LeBlanc – who helped establish the first Professional Responsibility Committee at the University of Alberta Hospital, a very important gain in collective bargaining – also served as a VP of the SNAA from 1982 to 1996, and sat on the board of the National Federation of Nurses Unions (now known as the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions) during the time she was SNAA president.

In 2012, she worked as a temporary Labour Relations Officer in the United Nurses of Alberta Provincial Office in Edmonton.

“Barb was a mentor to me as I started my union involvement in 1984,” said UNA First VP Jane Sustrik, who was a member of SNAA’s board at the time and was president of the U of A Hospital local from 1990 to 1997. “She was a teacher, a leader, a role model, an inspiration, a

confidante, a goof who loved to have fun, and a friend. I will miss her as will many members, nurses, friends and family.”

LeBlanc also served as the chair of the Rainbow Society board in the late Eighties and early Nineties, and was a provincial councillor for the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, a precursor organization to CARNA from 1988 to 1993.

She was a frequent bargaining committee member, often during tough times, but always had a smile, a memorable laugh and fun along the way.

LeBlanc was born in Midale, Sask., and was raised on the family farm near Goodwater, Sask. She died of Alzheimer’s and cancer on Oct. 18, 2016. She is survived by her husband Rob, sons Michael and Ryan and many extended family members. 🍷

A Nursing Bursary was established in LeBlanc’s name and memory at the University of Alberta. For information, visit uab.ca/honour.

Canada's nurses agree: education should be a fundamental right

By Emily Doer
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions

■ Canada's nurses and labour leaders joined thousands of students from more than 50 campuses in 36 cities across Canada for All Out November 2nd Day of Action demanding universal access to education, education justice and public education for the public good.

In a show of solidarity, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas joined hundreds of students on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, addressing the crowd with the message education and health care should be for everyone – not just those who can afford it.

Education and health care should be a right, not a privilege, Silas told the students. “The price tag attached to post-secondary education in this country is a barrier for far too many Canadians,” she said, noting that the average education-related debt is approximately \$28,000, with estimates as high as \$40,000 for nursing students. “This leads to a life of struggles, stress and sacrifice.”

The Canadian Federation of Students calls for universal access to education. The CFS argues that whoever you are, wherever you were born, whatever your age or background, you should have a right to a higher education without fear of debt.

Students pushed out of colleges and universities today, who are disproportionately Indigenous, racialized, queer and trans, people with disabilities, people raised in single-parent homes and people from low-income families, the CFS says. The group argues public education is a public good that

society benefits from as a whole, and it must be funded as such.

“We must stand together on these issues and recognize the socioeconomic and financial barriers that directly impact access to essential health services like Pharmacare and education in this country, among other challenges,” said Silas. “We must work toward building a more inclusive, healthy, educated and empowered Canada.”

Another issue that the CFNU's national executive board has tackled is the change last year of the Canadian nursing licensing exam to the U.S.-designed NCLEX-RN exam. This has had severe impacts on nursing students, resulting in higher failure rates, increased costs and undue stress for students.

“We know that our Canadian nursing students are some of the most highly educated nurses in the world, yet due to issues with the exam students are spending thousands of dollars on top of already sky-high tuition fees to pay for additional prep courses and multiple rewrites,” Silas said.

She said the CFNU supports affiliates at the Canadian Nursing Students' Association, which represents nearly 30,000 nursing students across Canada on this issue.

“With our new licensing exam and the issues surrounding it, our debts continue to skyrocket,” said CNSA President Bryce Boynton. “It is costing our new graduates thousands extra, furthering the financial burden of seeking a higher education in order to provide competent care for Canadians.” 🍷



CANADIAN
FEDERATION
OF NURSES
UNIONS

WHEN KNOWLEDGE MEETS KNOW-HOW

Medical mission to Haiti inspires Red Deer nurse



Nurse Richelle Howard with one of her young patients in Haiti

■ It's a familiar story: UNA nurses who return from overseas medical missions with charitable groups find they are more appreciative of things we take for granted in Canada.

Richelle Howard, RN, a member of UNA Local 2 at Red Deer Health Centre, had this experience during a two-week mission to the town and region of Grand Goave, Haiti, this November with a Hungry for Life International team from Cranbrook, B.C. The Christian medical charity was working in affiliation with a group called Haiti ARISE.

In her report to UNA of the two-week mission, she also told of how she was inspired by the resilience and faith of the people she met in southwestern Haiti, which the month before had been severely battered by Hurricane Matthew. Up to a million people in the French-speaking Caribbean nation lost everything in the catastrophic storm.

On the drive from the capital Port au Prince, the recipient of a \$1,000 UNA humanitarian grant wrote in her report, signs of the storm's devastation were everywhere. "There were many houses without roofs and many were using old boards, tin, cardboard and plastic to make a 'home' for their families," Howard recalled. "There was no sanitation or garbage pick-up so everywhere we looked, it was a mess."

So it was relief, Howard said, to arrive at the Haiti ARISE compound in Grand Goave, about two hours from the capital.

The mission to Haiti was headed by Dr. Bob Cutler of Cranbrook. Howard was the only Albertan on the Canadian team of four physicians, four nurses, one pharmacist, and support workers that saw 150 to 200 patients every day in the country and dealt with a large number of serious medical conditions. Among infants and children, for example, the team saw tinnea, pneumonia, malaria, typhoid, severe hypertension, uncontrolled diabetes, birth traumas, seizures, cerebral palsy, and "boutons," a skin condition that looks like heat rash but which can become infected.

"The days at the clinic were very busy with the medical staff working extremely hard," she reported. "Between the check-in time right through to the time patients saw the nurses and doctors, had their prescriptions filled, they may have to wait two hours in Haiti's 32-degree heat and high humidity."

Nevertheless, Howard said, she never saw a Haitian patient or family member get angry at the long, hot waits, despite the fact many had serious medical conditions. "Most of the team members have experienced patients that have left a memorable impact," she observed. "Despite the sadness in some of these



cases, there remained laughter and joy among the patients and caregivers alike.

Since returning, Howard wrote in her report to UNA, "I am much more grateful and appreciative for the little things that usually wouldn't cross my mind.

"I think many people here in Canada take little things for granted and are ignorant to the fact that there is a huge population of people around the world that live in poverty beyond explanation," she concluded.

Hungry for Life and Haiti ARISE are affiliated with several evangelical Protestant churches. More information can be found at hungryforlife.org and haitiarise.org. 🇺🇸

"Despite the sadness in some of these cases, there remained laughter and joy among the patients and caregivers alike."



PRC leads to installation of endoscopy suite in Cold Lake

- A new endoscopy suite is up and running at the Cold Lake Health Centre thanks in part to the work of local UNA members who engaged in the Professional Responsibility Concern process at their worksite.

Members of UNA Local 76 raised their concerns through numerous PRCs about the old endoscopy unit, which was located in a treatment room in the hospital's Emergency Department. After more than one year of advocacy, the local executive presented their concerns directly to the senior leadership of Alberta Health Services.

Their hard work paid off.

In April 2016, the Cold Lake Sun reported that Health Minister Sarah Hoffman had announced \$3.4 million in capital funding for the Cold Lake Health Centre, which included earmarked funding for the new endoscopy suite.

“The feedback I have received from staff and patients has been nothing but positive,” UNA Local 76 President Nicola Girardi said in an email.

If you have a concern about patient, client, or resident safety or staffing levels in your workplace, you should fill out a Professional Responsibility Concerns Report as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact UNA's Professional Responsibility Advisors at 1-800-252-9394. 🌸

Members of UNA Local 76 raised their concerns through numerous PRCs about the old endoscopy unit

Need remains for remembrance and action to stop violence against women

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

On December 6 this year, United Nurses of Alberta recognized and mourned the anniversary of this national tragedy.

UNA believes all levels of government must continue to take meaningful steps to prevent violence against women in Canada.

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. This 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.

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

All of Alberta's nurses have a right to safe workplaces and a responsibility to ensure rules are enforced to create a safe environment for our patients, residents, clients, and coworkers. 🌸



Nursing Locum programs now operates throughout AHS North Zone

- The Nursing Locum letter of understanding signed by United Nurses of Alberta and Alberta Health Services in 2012 remains in operation and continues to help increase nursing resources in the province's north.

The project, which originally operated in a small number of communities in northern Alberta where historically it had been difficult to fully staff health care facilities throughout the year, has since been expanded to include all parts of AHS's North Zone. In addition, it has been expanded beyond hospital settings to include public health and home care nursing.

The locum assignments – short for “*locum tenens*,” Latin for temporary substitute – enable Registered Nurses working elsewhere in the province in positions represented by UNA to pick a temporary assignment for a set period of time. After

the assignment ends, they return to their previous jobs or to casual status.

Joining the locum pool brings bonus incentives, including a premium payment of \$6 per hour and reimbursement for accommodation and travel expenses, in addition to the pay and benefits available to nurses under the Provincial Collective Agreement. RNs now working for AHS can see the current postings for the program at www.healthjobs.ab.ca.

The program also included benefits for nurses in the affected region to ensure everyone was treated fairly.

UNA locals and members in areas that are hard to recruit for or elsewhere experiencing significant numbers of vacancies or problems accessing vacation time, banked overtime or statutory holidays because of understaffing are urged to ask their supervisors if they are aware of the locum program.. 🍷

Joining the locum pool brings bonus incentives.

Nurses from across Canada are coming to Calgary in June

- Nurses across Canada are advised to dust off their cowboy boots – or maybe buy a pair.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions' 18th Biennial Convention will be held in June next year in Calgary.

Proudly hosted by United Nurses of Alberta, the theme of the June 5-9 CFNU convention will be “Canada’s Nurses Speak Up!” CFNU says that’s meant as a reminder to nurses the most powerful tool they possess to make change happen is their voices.

More than 1,000 nurses from across Canada are expected at the Calgary event, where they will have the opportunity to take part in workshops and plenary sessions, socialize with nurse activists from elsewhere in the country, hear from knowledgeable and informative keynote speakers and play a role in choosing the issues CFNU will focus on in future years.

Registration opened on December 7. 🍷



Respected labour lawyer named chair of Alberta Labour Relations Board

- The appointment of William Johnson, Queen's Counsel, as chair of the Alberta Labour Relations Board was announced on October 20 by Labour Minister Christina Gray.

Mr. Johnson, a well-known and respected Calgary labour lawyer since the early 1980s, has since the start of 2016 been vice-chair of the of the board.

He replaced Mark Asbell, also a Q.C., who has been a member of the board for more than 20 years and chair for 17 years, Gray said in a news release.

Johnson's biography on the ALRB website says his background in labour and employment law includes work in numerous sectors of the economy, among them retail, industrial, health care, public

sector, transportation, entertainment, communications, education, construction and utilities. He has been frequently listed in LEXPERT magazine to the Leading 500 Lawyers in Canada in the area of employment and labour law. Johnson also served three years starting in 2013 as a member of the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

The Board includes three members with strong connections to UNA: Labour Relations Director David Harrigan, Labour Relations Manager Jeannine Arbour, and former Labour Relations manager Kris Farkas.

The ALRB is the independent and impartial tribunal responsible for the day-to-day application and interpretation of Alberta's labour laws. 🍷

Health employees encouraged to get their flu shots

- Alberta Health Services again this year is urging all health care staff to get a seasonal influenza immunization.

Although influenza immunizations are not mandatory for health care workers, United Nurses of Alberta also encourages its members to receive their annual influenza immunization.

The flu shot has been available through AHS Public Influenza Immunization Clinics since October 24, as well as at some pharmacies and some physician's offices.

Workers in health care settings have a special role in the fight against influenza, as they are capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk for severe



First Vice-President Jane Sustrik receives her flu shot

influenza illness. Immunization is the best defense against the flu.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization considers the provision of influenza immunization for health care workers who have direct patient contact or provide indirect health care services to be "an essential component of the standard care for the protection of patients." 🍷

UNA Collective Agreement says the employer shall post a vacation schedule planner by Jan. 1 each year



Know *your* Rights

Report from
Director of Labour Relations
David Harrigan

- According to the UNA Provincial Collective Agreement, employees are required to submit 75 per cent of their vacation entitlements for a year in the vacation schedule planner by March 15.

Article 17.03 of the collective agreement states that the employer shall post the vacation schedule planner by Jan. 1 each year. It says the employer shall indicate approval or disapproval of vacation requests submitted by March 15 and post the resulting vacation schedule by April 30 of each year.

The employer has an obligation to provide guidance as to the reasonable number of employees for each unit, program or site who may be granted vacation at the same time.

Vacation approval delayed or pending?

At most UNA sites, the employer must inform the Employee of approval or denial of their requests on the vacation planner by April 30.

If there is a delay in the approval beyond the deadline, or if the employer says it

is pending, the employee should consider their vacation denied and initiate a grievance immediately. If an employee believes vacation time has been inappropriately assigned, they may also file a grievance.

For example, if an employee has applied for a week block vacation and the employer approves Monday and Tuesday, but not Wednesday, and approves Thursday and Saturday, but not Friday, that is effectively a denial of her vacation. The employee should grieve this type of denial.

Grievances should be filed within 10 days (excluding weekends and named holidays) of April 30 or from the day you were informed of vacation decisions, whichever is earlier.

The UNA Provincial Collective Agreement does not provide for a standing, or pending vacation request. If circumstances change such that a previously denied vacation period becomes available, the Employee will need to submit a new vacation request for consideration.. ❧

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your UNA local executive or Labour Relations Officer at 1-800-252-9394.

14 days' notice required for changes to on-call period

- Under Article 9.02 (a) (ii) of the United Nurses of Alberta Provincial Collective Agreement, an employee will receive at least 14 days' notice by their Employer when changes are made to the employee's on-call period.

If an employee is not given at least 14 days' notice, the employee shall receive two times the on-call rate of pay for the first changed on-call period.

If the on-call period is during a regular workday, employees should be paid \$6.60 for all hours during the first period of on-call affected. If the on-call period is during a day of rest or a Named Holiday, employees should be paid \$9 for all hours during the first period of on-call affected.

The article also stipulates that the change will be recorded on the on-call duty roster. ❧

MAKE SURE YOU CLAIM YOUR 2% RRSP SUPPLEMENT

WAIT!

DON'T FORGET YOUR MONEY!

Most UNA collective agreements include an option for members in regular positions to pay 2% into an RRSP.

If you sign up, your employer has also agreed to pay you an extra 2% into your RRSP.

For a newly graduated nurse working full time, the employer's contribution alone equals an additional \$1,400 a year, that otherwise will not be paid.

There's no barrier to joining immediately if you are in a regular position. So why wait? Don't forget to take your money!

