

News Bulletin

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Nurses challenge understaffing, prepare for AGM, and, sometimes, 'go political'

HOW quickly we transition from the heat of summer to the cooler fall weather. Children return to school and the long days of sunlight dwindle each day.

While many members enjoyed summer vacations with their families, others struggled with understaffing and endless demands to work additional shifts. For one United Nurses of Alberta Local in particular the failure to respond to repeated pleas for more staff and numerous professional responsibility concerns resulted in an unprecedented crisis for nurses working in the Emergency Department. That was Local 2, at the Red Deer Regional Hospital.

In early June, the number of additional and overtime shifts equaled 27 full-time jobs. For more than four years the Local 2 Professional Responsibility Committee had identified the inadequacy of staffing available to meet the demands for patient services. Two years ago, the PRC Committee presented their concerns to the Board of Alberta Health Services but appropriate steps were not taken. Staff concerns were ignored or belittled. They were wrong because Operational Best Practices must be right.

After several emergency meetings with management and two with the Minister of Health, we wait to see if this avoidable crisis will be addressed.

While the situation is ongoing, rest assured that if UNA members hadn't taken action, many of those RN positions would continue to remain unfilled today, dramatically impacting the levels of patient care at the Red Deer ER.

Fall is always a busy time for UNA as we prepare for the Annual General Meeting on October 23, 24 and 25 in Edmonton. Our Locals will be holding meetings to review proposed changes to

UNA policies and our Constitution. This year the theme is *"It Matters,"* which has multiple meanings. PRCs matter, OH&S concerns matter, workplaces free of harassment and violence matter, and political engagement matters.

One speaker I am looking forward to hearing from on the first day of the AGM is Danielle Larivee. Larivee now serves as Alberta's Minister of Children's Services and Minister for the Status of Women, but before she was elected as the MLA for Lesser Slave Lake in 2015 she was a Registered Nurse and president of UNA Local 315, representing community health nurses in Slave Lake.

As nurses, we are comfortable as advocates for patient care but sometimes need to step out of our comfort zone and take political action, as Larivee did when she ran for political office.

UNA remains a non-partisan organization, but that does not mean we are neutral on issues that have a direct impact on the health care system. With a provincial election expected in spring 2019, we should not hesitate to advocate for policies we believe will improve public health care. We must vigorously oppose policies that would have a negative impact on patient care and the nursing profession.

UNA's greatest strength is its members. That's why **it matters** that we do not shy from our responsibility to take action to advocate for the nursing profession and patient care in all corners of the province, even if that means "going political" from time to time

Heather Smith
President, United Nurses of Alberta

UNA Annual General Meeting set for October 23-25 in Edmonton

■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta’s Annual General Meeting is set for October 23 to October 25 at the EXPO Centre in Edmonton. Elections are scheduled for the positions of president and secretary-treasurer this year.

The theme of this year’s AGM: *It Matters!*

More than 1,000 UNA delegates, observers, staff members and others from throughout Alberta are expected to participate in the union’s most important business meeting of the year.

The meeting will be called to order at 9 a.m. sharp on Tuesday, October 23. Shortly after that, UNA President Heather Smith will deliver her annual report to the membership, followed by reports from the unions’ directors of Labour Relations, Finance and Information Systems.

At 1 p.m., Hon. Danielle Larivee, Alberta’s Minister of Children’s Services, a Registered Nurse and former UNA

activist, will address the delegates on the question, “Do politics matter to nurses?”

On Wednesday, October 24, delegates and other participants are expected to hear greetings from Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, and conduct union business.

On Thursday, the final day of the AGM, delegates will hear motivational speaker Linda Edgecombe on how to move from distraction and being overwhelmed to engagement and resiliency. Delegates will also deal with committee reports before adjourning at 4:30 p.m.

A “How to Attend” document for delegates and members interested in going to the AGM is available in the “AGM Conference” on UNANet. For instructions on how to join UNANet, visit UNA’s website at una.ab.ca and click on the red UNANet button at the top, right-hand side of the webpage. 🍷



There’s still a little time to apply for UNA NURSING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

■ **THERE’S** still time to apply for United Nurses of Alberta’s annual Nursing Education Scholarships.

Applications must be delivered to the UNA Provincial Office by postal mail or by hand no later than 4:30 p.m., October 15, 2018. Digital and faxed applications will not be accepted.

The scholarships are to be used for the first year of nursing studies in an approved nursing program in Alberta.

They are open to students who are related to a UNA member or associate member.

To complete the process, applicants must write a short essay that answers the question: “*How has the United Nurses of Alberta made a difference in the work lives of Alberta Nurses?*”

This year, UNA will award 10 scholarships of \$1,000 each, plus one award of \$1,000 sponsored by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. Winners will be announced early in 2019. 🍷

Application forms are available now by going to UNA’s website – una.ab.ca – and searching UNA scholarships or going directly to una.ab.ca/memberresources/scholarships/.

Reminder to RNs and RPNs: you'll need to stay up to date to maintain registration during long leaves

■ **REMINDER:** Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses need to take measures to demonstrate their continued skill levels if they wish to maintain their professional registration while taking extended leaves for any reason.

The College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta requires RNs to have worked 1,125 nursing hours over the previous five years to keep their nursing registration. The College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta has a similar requirement of 1,400 hours.

This means United Nurses of Alberta members who are away from nursing for extended periods because of sick leave, leaves of absence or family responsibilities and want to maintain their registration need to take measures to ensure they can demonstrate they are up to date on nursing practice.

RNs can show their skills have remained current by reviewing nursing journals,

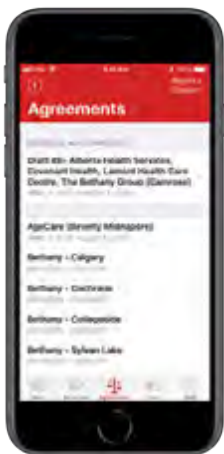
staying abreast of practice standards, taking CARNA or Canadian Nursing Association webinars, and taking nursing courses. It is very important, though, for RNs to keep track of what they have done to maintain their nursing skills by registering with CARNA and using the College's web-based Continuing Competence Program pages to maintain a record of practice standards indicators.

This can be done by signing in at MyCARNA.nurses.ab.ca, opening the site's MyCPP section, selecting a Practice Standard Indicator, and recording what you have done. A more detailed explanation is found on CARNA's website, nurses.ab.ca.

For Registered Psychiatric Nurses, the CRPNA requires RPNs to complete the College's Continuing Competence Program. Details are available online at the CRPNA's website, crpna.ab.ca. The College also publishes a booklet on the topic. 🍷

UNA members with questions may also contact their UNA Labour Relations Officer for assistance and advice.

New contract now found on UNA App



■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta's mobile App is a contract in your pocket.

And it's now been updated with the newest collective agreements, including the latest Provincial Collective Agreement with Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care and the Bethany Group (Camrose).

In addition to having instant access in your pocket to all of UNA's collective agreements, the App lets members access important Occupational

Health and Safety and Professional Responsibility Concern forms, and read the latest news updates. It also provides members with an easy way to ask questions about their contract.

An electronic membership card is attached to the App when UNA members log in to their UNA DMS account.

The App can be downloaded from the Apple App Store, for Apple iOS products, and from Google Play for Android. 🍷

STAFFING PROBLEMS CONTINUED TO PLAGUE RED DEER REGIONAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT THROUGH SUMMER

■ **AFTER** more than four years of working to get Alberta Health Services to resolve critical staffing shortages in the Red Deer Regional Hospital Emergency Department, United Nurses of Alberta filed a grievance in June 2018 seeking to require the employer to alleviate the problem by hiring at least 27 full-time RNs and implementing other remedies.

Frustrated with months of chronic problems without significant new nursing hires in the ER, members of UNA Local 2 took their message to the media to put pressure on the employer and the government to resolve the staffing shortage. And they got attention.

Representatives of Local 2 and UNA's Provincial Office met with Health Minister Sarah Hoffman on August 1 to discuss the staffing crisis in the Red Deer Hospital ER. UNA was able to use the meeting to clarify the differences between UNA's position on how the department's staffing issues can be remedied and statements made by AHS about the situation.


As the weekend began on the evening of Friday, August 17, United Nurses of Alberta Local 2 learned the employer would be requiring Registered Nurses to once again work overtime so the department could operate safely over the weekend.

UNA also learned AHS has contacted at least two commercial nursing employment companies to contract "agency nurses" to help staff the Emergency Department this weekend without informing the union or its members.

UNA was concerned such short-term workers might not be ready to operate safely in Emergency on the short notice typical with agency nurse contracts.

UNA First Vice-President Jane Sustrik immediately contacted the office of the Health Minister and received three commitments from the government:

1. Hoffman and senior AHS leadership would meet within two weeks with UNA to discuss solutions to the staffing crisis in Red Deer
2. Hoffman will meet UNA representatives to discuss the union's concern with AHS's Operational Best Practices program
3. We will work together to examine what went wrong in Red Deer to avoid similar situations elsewhere in Alberta

The situation remains ongoing and further updates will be posted on UNA's website – una.ab.ca. 

Check UNA's website una.ab.ca for updates on this story



UNA Local 2 representatives and Provincial Office staff at the Legislature Building before their meeting with Health Minister Sarah Hoffman. Left to right: Local 2 President Sue Beatson, Professional Responsibility Concern Advisor Chris Axtell, UNA First VP Jane Sustrik, Labour Relations Manager Lee Coughlan, Local 2 VP Margo Buss, and LRO Carolyn Olson

OH&S COMMITTEE WORK

Does it qualify for overtime, weekend premiums, and shift differentials?

By Julia Renouf
UNA, Labour Relations Officer



Dewey Funk

If you have questions related to pay issues, please contact your local executive or your Labour Relations Officer by calling 780-425-1025 or 1-800-252-9394 north of Red Deer or 403-237-2377 or 1-800-661-1802 in Southern Alberta.



■ UNITED Nurses of Alberta takes the position Occupational Health and Safety Committee work required since Alberta's new workplace safety legislation took effect on June 1 should be paid at the same rate as any other work.

In other words, work on a Joint Work Site Occupational Health and Safety Committee as defined in the legislation qualifies for overtime pay, premiums and shift differentials if justified under the normal rules of UNA's collective agreements.

The new Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that any workplace with 20 or more employees have a Joint OH&S Committee if it is expected to operate for 90 days or more. The Act says that when a committee member attends meetings, training, or does other committee work required by the law, the member is deemed to be at work and is to be paid at the applicable rate of pay.

Alberta Health Services has published a bulletin stating attendance at OH&S meetings and training will be paid at the basic rate of pay while other required committee work that cannot take place within a committee's regularly scheduled shift is subject to overtime, premiums, and shift differentials. Such circumstances include preparing for meetings and participating in inspections and investigations, the bulletin says.

In the case of Covenant Health, however, UNA representatives at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Edmonton have

been informed OH&S Committee members' work should be done during normal working hours, and in cases where it does not the employer will only compensate employees at their "basic rate of pay."

Basic Rate of Pay is defined in the Provincial Collective Agreement as the step in the scale applicable to the employee as set out in the Salary Appendix, along with educational allowances and the Long Service Pay Adjustment, but not including of all other allowances and premium payments.

UNA's position is that all committee work – including attendance at OH&S meetings, OH&S training, and preparing for meetings and participating in inspections and investigations – is subject to overtime, weekend premiums, and shift differentials when the appropriate conditions outlined by the collective agreement are met.

As a result, UNA has filed a grievance, which is proceeding.

While the grievance process moves forward, UNA encourages members who do OH&S Committee work at times they would normally qualify for overtime, shift premiums or shift differentials to submit that for time as they normally would.

If the overtime, weekend premiums, or shift differentials are denied, please notify us by email immediately.

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORTING CONCERNS CONTINUE

■ CONCERNS continue to be raised about the need for nurses to report all incidents and situations that put United Nurses of Alberta members' safety and that of other health care workers at risk.

When we fail to report such incidents to our employers, they can't address the concerns of UNA members and their workplace Occupational Health and safety Committees.

When incidents are properly and consistently reported, both the employer and UNA can track trends and implement fixes that make our workplaces safer for everyone.

As noted by UNA OH&S Advisor Dewey Funk in a column in 2017, accurate and consistent reporting by nurses of splashbacks from immunization needles made it clear to Alberta Health Services this was a serious safety hazard, and when the employer and needle manufacturer both investigated. As a result, the loading procedure was changed. Since all nurses were informed of the changes, there have been no recorded incidents.

The AHS reporting system, MySafetyNet, allows UNA members to report anything that could potentially negatively impact health or safety in the

workplace. MySafetyNet, often referred to as MSN, is an online reporting process that can be accessed through a link on the AHS main page on Insite, where it appears on the left side of the page, under "Report Safety Incidents."

UNA recommends you report the concerns on the shift during which they took place or as soon as possible afterward. There is no time limit to report an incident.

Harassment and workplace violence, which recent surveys of UNA members clearly show remain serious concerns to nurses, can be reported on MySafetyNet. UNA recommends always filing a formal complaint in cases of violence or harassment. The employer is obligated to investigate and report back to you on the findings of its investigation.

If managers discourage reporting, or you are troubled by the process in any way, you should contact Funk at UNA's Provincial Office, or your UNA LRO.

If an incident involves patient safety, it should be reported on the employer's Reporting and Learning System instead of MSN, and may also be an appropriate topic for filing a Professional Responsibility Concern under UNA's collective agreement. 🍷

□ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

UNA is seeking the following information: a brief description of the committee work performed; the date and time it took place; what premiums, differentials, and overtime the employee claimed; when it was denied; if overtime was requested, and the circumstances that led to the employee to qualify for overtime. For example, if the committee meeting took place after the employee's shift. If the request was denied in writing, please send a copy to your Labour Relations Officer.

If your Labour Relations Officer agrees you should have been paid a higher amount, they may talk to you about filing a grievance. However, since this issue is being determined province-wide, it is unlikely it will proceed through the normal steps of the grievance process. Instead, it is likely that the grievance will be put on hold until the provincial grievance has been resolved. If UNA is successful in the provincial grievance, you will be paid at that time. 🍷

With files by Dewey Funk,
Occupational Health & Safety Advisor

If you have any questions about the new OH&S Act, please contact UNA Occupational Health and Safety Advisor Dewey Funk at dfunk@una.ab.ca, 780-425-1025 in Edmonton, or 1-800-252-9394 province wide.

Two new LROs begin work in SARO



Jonathan Doner



Tim Bantle

■ **TWO** new Labour Relations Officers with experience in Calgary hospitals have begun work in United Nurses of Alberta's Southern Alberta Regional Office.

Tim Bantle, former president of UNA Local 415 at the South Health Campus (SHC), began work in June, while Jonathan Doner, former president of Local 121 at Rockyview Hospital, started at the end of July.

Bantle, a Registered Nurse who trained at Medicine Hat College, began work at SHC when it opened in 2012.

He has worked there as a Clinical Nurse Educator, a critical care RN at the Foothills Medical Centre and in rural and long-term-care nursing in Claresholm and in the British Columbia communities of Vernon and Salmon Arm.

A father of two young children, Bantle lives with his family in the rural Municipal District of Foothills, south of Calgary. He says he enjoys off-road sports, fishing, camping and working in the yard. He is a part-time student at Athabasca University.

Doner, who studied political science at the University of Western Ontario in London and earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Trent University in Peterborough, Ont., first worked at the Valleyview Health Centre in Alberta's Peace Country, where he was a member of UNA Local 6.

More recently, he has worked in the Rockyview's Emergency Room and volunteered for UNA duties.

He enjoys gardening and raising animals on a small farm outside Calgary. 🐾

BRADY HOLROYD joins UNA permanent staff

■ **LABOUR** Relations Officer Brady Holroyd, who began work with UNA in July, has now joined our union's permanent staff.

Holroyd grew up in Edmonton and earned a BA in sociology at the University of British Columbia before pursuing a law degree at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He also earned a certificate in dispute resolution during his studies.



Brady Holroyd

Holroyd's recent work experience before joining UNA's staff included a small labour law firm in Oregon and the state employment department in Portland. He says he likes to stay active, watch the Oilers and play soccer.

Holroyd will work from the Provincial Office in Edmonton. 🐾

UNA celebrates Stampede 2018 by dishing out more than 1,000 burgers and hotdogs

■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta's Stampede BBQ team are outdoor cooking champs!

The crew of volunteers from UNA's Calgary locals and union staff grilled more than 1,200 burgers and hotdogs under a blazing sun on July 12 and dished them out along with juice and water to throngs of friends, neighbours and passersby at UNA's Southern Alberta Regional Office on the city's Kensington Road.

UNA was pleased to welcome Deputy Premier and Health Minister Sarah Hoffman, Children's Services Minister Danielle Larivee, Justice Minister Kathleen Ganley Agriculture and Forestry Minister Oneil Carlier, Culture Minister Ricardo Miranda, along with a dozen other MLAs who took to opportunity to meet nurses and others at the event.

Thanks to our many UNA volunteers for their hard work and to everyone who joined them at this year's annual Stampede event. We'll see you again at next year's Stampede! 🍷



Some of the volunteers, Executive Officers, and guests – Including Health Minister Sarah Hoffman – at this year's Calgary Stampede BBQ.



CANADIAN
FEDERATION
OF NURSES
UNIONS

Canada's premiers weigh in on need for national pharmacare

■ **WHEN** Canada's current provincial and territorial first ministers gathered in July for their annual summit, it was anybody's guess whether the group would find much commonality on any topic, especially the bold-social-program variety. But that is exactly what happened when the premiers assembled in picturesque St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick.

While many expected the escalating trade dispute with our southern neighbours to dominate the air time, Canada's nurses were hard at work promoting national pharmacare at the summit.

Nurses organized a breakfast event for premiers featuring the chair of the recently created Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, Dr. Eric Hoskins. Premiers got to hear from Hoskins about the council's national consultations, currently underway, and their plan to build a concrete blueprint for taking pharmacare from vision to reality.

The event also featured Member of Parliament John Oliver, who discussed the parliamentary health committee's recent Pharmacare Now report, and

former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page, who presented on fiscal approaches to a national plan.

As Linda Silas, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, highlighted, premiers of all political stripes have powerful reasons to support a national pharmacare plan. Aside from the compelling moral imperatives of saving lives and decreasing morbidity, Silas pointed to the significant financial savings, between \$4 and \$11 billion annually, that national pharmacare would deliver.

Instead of the current 100,000+ public and private plans across the country, a single-payer, universal, public plan with a national formulary would allow for Canadians to leverage our collective purchasing power to negotiate better prices for medications that are effective and safe, based on the evidence, while ensuring no one falls through the cracks.

But here's the kicker: there will be an initial startup cost and the logistics of pan-Canadian implementation are enough to give even the most seasoned policy wonk a headache.

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By Lauren Snowball
Canadian Federation
of Nurses Unions

Recent events
have made
pharmacare
more prominent
than ever.



CFNU President Linda Silas

NURSE PRACTITIONERS CAN BE CANADA'S SOLUTION TO HEALTH CARE GAPS: CFNU STUDY

■ **NURSE** Practitioners can be the solution to Canada's longstanding shortage of primary care providers, the country's issues with long wait times and access, and the challenges of helping underserved populations, a new study by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions published at the end of June indicates.

The report – *Fulfilling Nurse Practitioners' Untapped Potential in Canada's Health Care System* – was presented to Canada's health ministers and policy advisors on June 29 at their meeting in Winnipeg.

“The findings in this report chart a path forward for governments to tap into the potential of NPs and improve access, from primary and long-term care to mental health and acute care,” CFNU President Linda Silas told policy makers at the annual Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers Summit.

The CFNU commissioned the study to understand why Canada has failed to take advantage of NPs' full potential. It looked at how limited employment opportunities, inappropriate remuneration, outdated funding models, lack of inter-professional collaboration and legislative and regulatory barriers can negatively impact NPs.

“The evidence reveals that NPs improve access to holistic, cost-effective, high-quality care that reduces wait times and costs throughout the broader health system,” said Lisa Little, the study's lead researcher.

She added: “With a supply of only about 14 NPs per 100,000 Canadians – one fifth of the per capita supply in the U.S. – there is a great potential for NPs to meet Canada's growing health care needs.” 🍷

“The evidence reveals that NPs improve access to holistic, cost-effective, high-quality care.”

– CFNU President Linda Silas

For a link to the full report, visit una.ab.ca.

UNA honours CANADA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

■ **UNA** marked National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21 by honouring the contribution of First Nations, Inuit and Métis to our union, our province and Canada.

UNA is proud to represent many nurses of Indigenous heritage, including those employed by the Blood Tribe Department of Health in Stand Off, near Cardston, and by Aakom Kiyii Health Services of the Piikani Nation at Brocket.

Each year, UNA encourages members to take part in the National Indigenous

Peoples Day events held in communities across Alberta.

National Aboriginal Day was proclaimed by then Governor General Romeo Leblanc in 1996 and was renamed National Indigenous Peoples Day in 2017. It takes place each year throughout Canada on June 21. The observance provides an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about Indigenous people and show their respect for their vast contribution to Canada. 🍷

Each year, UNA encourages members to take part in the National Indigenous Peoples Day events held in communities across Alberta.

UNA APPLICATION TO REPRESENT NURSE PRACTITIONERS CONTINUES

■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta's application for a determination of the Alberta Labour Relations Board to represent Nurse Practitioners employed by Alberta Health Services is continuing.

In mid-July, after considering submissions by stakeholders, the ALRB determined it is the most appropriate forum to determine the constitutional issues raised by the UNA application. This was the last significant decision in the application process.

This ALRB decision stemmed from a request by AHS asking the Board to examine if it was the best forum for this issue, or if the constitutional question should be sent to the courts for determination. The Board followed up by asking all parties to make submissions on that question.

On July 3, it said in a statement to stakeholders it had determined it is the most appropriate forum for the constitutional question.

Case management is the next step in the Board's process. Case management is a facilitated dispute resolution process intended to promote settlement discussions.

UNA filed the application in April, arguing that the Alberta Labour Code ban on union membership by NPs violates Charter's freedom of association guarantee.

UNA's request for determination noted that in no other Canadian jurisdiction are Nurse Practitioners precluded from organizing under the provincial labour code or from participating in collective bargaining. The Alberta exclusion resulted from amendments to the Labour Code passed by the provincial Legislature in 2003.

UNA also argued it has a strong community of interest with Nurse Practitioners because of its long history of representing Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses, the similar

educational requirements of RNs and NPs, the fact members of both medical professions must register with the same regulatory college, and because NPs must first be RNs.

UNA's request for a determination arises from the concern that with union representation Nurse Practitioners can safely raise issues with AHS about client care.

AHS employs more than 300 NPs in hospitals, home living, facility living, supportive living, palliative care and as members of Emergency Community Urgent Response Teams.

UNA's application was controversial among Nurse Practitioners, with supporters and opponents of the process airing their arguments through the ALRB's process.

UNA has created a web page devoted to the issue and has provided all interested parties with access to a record of official public correspondence and statements related to the process that is as complete as possible. The page can be accessed online at: una.ab.ca/nursepractitioners. 🍷

Find more information at una.ab.ca/nursepractitioners

BYE-BYE birdie

noisy, messy magpie finally flies the Royal Alex coop

■ A magpie that took up residence in the six-storey atrium of Edmonton’s Royal Alexandra Hospital’s in June finally discharged itself from the facility, staff were told on July 15.

“It is with mixed emotions that I announce the departure of our pet magpie,” Royal Alex facilities director Cliff Richards told staff in an email.

“Though few will miss the squawking, dive-bombing and excremental artwork,

our feathered pet of the last month did seem to attract a following of ... staff and patients,” he told his colleagues in the farewell memo.

The bird refused to be tricked by a baited trap, but was eventually lured out a door by a savoury cheese bun from a plumber’s lunch. “In the evening time, one of the housekeepers here saw the bird fly out and some of the cheese bun was gone so I assume that worked,” Blake Blouin told the CBC. 🐦



□ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

This is where the federal government comes in. Canada’s nurses are calling for strong federal leadership through legislation, appropriate funding, and ensuring the massive system-wide savings are redistributed fairly so that provinces, patients and our public health care benefit.

This was the message delivered to premiers at the CFNU policy event by nurses’ union leaders from across the country, including Pauline Worsfold of CFNU; Jane Sustrik, UNA; Tracy Zambory, SUN; Darlene Jackson, MNU; Vicki McKenna, ONA; Paula Doucet, NBNU; Janet Hazelton, NSNU; Mona O’Shea, PEINU; and Debbie Forward, RNUNL.

Pharmacare received top billing in the premiers’ final communique, which called for adequate and sustained federal funding, maintaining provincial and territorial responsibility for the administration of the plan, and the right for provinces and territories to opt-out of the plan with compensation.

The willingness of this group of premiers to move forward with the development of a national pharmacare plan, with some qualifications, is a victory for nurses’ decades-long advocacy on this issue.

As Hoskins noted during the proceedings, Canada’s medicare system was also voluntary in the beginning. And that’s not bad company to keep. 🐦

TAKE ACTION: 15 Minutes for Pharmacare

Fill out the government’s online questionnaire to add your voice for pharmacare that is:

1. Public
2. Universal
3. Single-Payer
4. Includes a national formulary.

To participate, go to:
www.letstalkhealth.ca/pharmacare

UNA members on Panama mission commute by boat to bring health care to isolated communities



■ **GETTING** to and from work in a 15-metre motorized canoe-like boat called a cayuco is not a normal commute for most Alberta nurses, but in April and May it was part of the regular work day in Panama for nine nurses from Calgary.

The two-week medical mission to the Bocas Del Toro region on the Central American country's Caribbean coast by members of Edmonton-based non-profit Young Nurses Take Action, working with the U.S.-based Floating Doctors organization, was aided by humanitarian grants from United Nurses of Alberta. The Floating Doctors' regional base is located on the island of San Cristobel, a 40-minute boat ride from Bocas Town.

Work started early most days, recalled RN Lyndsay Rutt, a member of UNA Local 1 at the Peter Lougheed Centre, as the team would load their cayuco for the 15-minute to four-hour trips to villages in the region that are served by Floating Doctors, which describes its mission as bringing acute and preventative medical care to "forgotten coastlines," including Panama's.

"We would arrive in the village and immediately set up our clinic," she recalls. Families and individuals would gather and "treatments were based on the minimal information we could acquire without the abundance of diagnostic tools we are so accustomed to in Canada. It would also depend on the medications available, which we would boat into the clinic that day."

Rutt explained that when serious cases were discovered, Floating Doctors volunteers would sometimes refer patients to hospital and pay for their treatment, as most can't afford either transportation or the cost of treatment.

Another participant in the 2018 mission, Louise Liu of Local 115 at the Foothills Medical Centre, described the way the teams worked together as "a well-oiled machine."

"We saw 60-70 patients each clinic day," she said in her report to UNA. "Diagnosis would vary from things like headaches and pain to chronic diseases. It was common to see people with dehydration and worms."

For more information on Young Nurses Take Action, visit ynta.ca.

For more information about Floating Doctors, visit floatingdoctors.com.

□ CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Photos from the 2018 Young Nurses Take Action mission to Coastal Panama.



CONTRACT WORD SEARCH



UNA Labour Relations Officer Katie McGreer continues to create entertaining – and educational – puzzles for readers of UNA NewsBulletin. This one, her third, is a word-search puzzle designed to help you learn about and navigate the ins and outs of UNA's Provincial Collective Agreement. This time, you'll need to find the words hidden in the block of letters. All the words in this puzzle can be found in Articles 37 to 44 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, as well as the agreement's letters of understanding. □ THE ANSWER KEY IS ON PAGE 19.



Welcome to new UNA members Chris Arum, Adeyinka Adedeji, and Cindy Xui from the new unit at the Carewest Signal Pointe facility in Calgary. Application for Registered Nurses employed at this worksite were certified to join UNA on April 6, 2018 🇨🇦

Fill in the blank in each sentence below and find it in our word jumble. We draw from words that are found in Articles 37 to 44 of the Provincial Collective Agreement as well as the letters of understanding at the back of the book.

1. You can be part of the _____ salary plan if you would like to take a leave with benefits in the future. (LOU 5)
2. If you work an extended work day, then you have a _____ work week. (Hint: article 37)
3. If you work _____ duty and you happen to travel more than 35 _____ from your work, you get \$50 per round trip. (article 41).
4. A _____ change will alter the way tasks are completed and equipment is used. (article 38)
5. The retirement _____ program allows nurses to take on _____ assignments, in which they guide advise or counsel other employees. (LOU 7)
6. If you believe you are improperly classified, you may request a _____. (article 39)
7. Your Employer may ask you to go to _____, which is an overnight activity, to enhance patient care. (article 43)
8. Your Employer may try to retain experienced nurses through the long _____ pay _____. (LOU 7)
9. There is _____ Committee which determines whether it is appropriate for the Employer to create a multi-site position. (article 44)

SOLIDARITY STORY:

The day the nursing students rose up in Lethbridge

■ WHEN two nursing students were caught sneaking back into the residence at the St. Michael's School of Nursing in Lethbridge, the nursing sister in charge suspended the two young women, who had already completed their coursework and were preparing to write their RN exams. It seemed harsh. It was unacceptable.

It was the summer of 1958, former UNA member Marilyn Wall recalls. It sparked an “uprising” of solidarity.

“There we were, entrusted with the very lives of our patients, but presumably not having the sense to get enough sleep!”

“It was a ridiculous ruling. It was well known that most of us had been ‘sneaking in’ for months,” she added recently. “In retrospect, it seems we were being trained for the nunnery and not as mature citizens of the world!”

As is often the case in such situations, this happened when the director of student services was away, her job filled by a nursing sister. “As I recall,” said Wall, “this replacement nun was scarcely older than we students.”

Well, the Class of 1958 didn't know much about organizing, but they decided to protest the injustice by not wearing their uniforms to morning prayers, then to refuse to work until their classmates were reinstated. Of the 22 members of the class, only one declined to take part.

“We were reacting to injustice. We took this action with great fear and trepidation. Two classmates recall we were threatened with mass dismissal, expulsion. Yet we stood firm in our conviction. Firm, though wobbly and fearful.”

The uprising brought the director of nursing students back in a hurry and the rebellion settled down. The suspended students were reinstated. But there were consequences.

Wall and a fellow student were called on the carpet and accused of being ringleaders. The entire class (but for the one) was denied the right to wear the coveted black stripe on their nursing caps, the sign they had completed their training.

“We were a bunch of young women, proud of our success, symbolized in part by our black bands; preparing for the big exams, ready for our freedom and intent on having a good time,” she said. And by the way, she noted, “we all passed the RN exams at the first try.”

Wall was an active UNA member from 1982 to 1996, the year she retired from the Edmonton General Hospital. After retiring, she did union organizing work for AUPE. 🍷

“We were reacting to injustice. We took this action with great fear and trepidation.”

— Marilyn Wall

Marilyn Wall, now and then





PRC FILED AT ROCKYVIEW HOSPITAL prompts clearer diagnoses and appropriate reception in surgical units for patients

■ A Professional Responsibility Concern filed by members of United Nurses of Alberta Local 121 at the Rockyview Hospital in Calgary has resulted in clearer diagnoses being provided for patients who have experienced miscarriages when they are received in the hospital's surgical units.

In some cases, the need for induction to deliver the fetus was not made clear regarding women admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of "miscarriage" or "incomplete miscarriage." In addition, some surgical units did not have the knowledge, equipment or skill for this procedure and there was a lack of clear policy about which surgical units such patients should be admitted to.

As a result of the PRC submitted by Local 121 an improved admission policy for such patients and clearer diagnostic language to ensure appropriate admission was developed by management and communicated to affected RNs, LPNs, charge nurses and unit clerks.

Formal debriefings for nurses were offered as a direct result of the Local's PRC, said Local Vice-President and PRC Committee Co-Chair YooRee Keller. At the local's July joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee meeting with hospital management, the local reminded employer representatives of the need to provide such debriefings without waiting for staff to request them. 🍷

□ CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 14

There are more than 25 communities in the region that Floating Doctors personnel visit over a three-month rotation. Typically, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are for village clinics, and Thursdays and

Fridays were spent at care facility closer to the Floating Doctors base.

Both described their visits to patients' homes as among the most moving experiences of their volunteer effort.

"The two weeks spent working at the many clinics, seeing and treating hundreds of patients, was truly life changing," wrote Rutt. "All these experiences will truly change how I see the world." 🍷



Alberta Health Services vacation policy is always subordinate to UNA's collective agreement

■ **AFTER** United Nurses of Alberta filed a policy grievance on behalf of members, Alberta Health Services and the union signed a Memorandum of Understanding in mid-May stating the Employer's vacation policy is subordinate to the terms of any collective agreement in force between UNA and AHS.

The Memorandum of Understanding further states: "To the extent the Policy contradicts the terms of the Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement prevails."

UNA's policy grievance relied upon Article 17.03 of the Provincial Collective Agreement as well as on the argument that Employees reaching retirement were disproportionately impacted by Articles 5.1 and 5.2 of the Employer's Vacation Policy Document #1114 and "therefore the policy has a discriminatory impact on the basis of age."

The parties recognized that:

- Article 1.2 of the policy does not apply to UNA members.
 - *(Employer Vacation Policy Article 1.2 states: "Requests to use Vacation shall not exceed the number of vacation hours accrued to the date of the request, unless agreed to in advance by the respective manager.")*
- In applying Article 5.1 of the policy to a UNA member, the "last date

that the Employee works" can be a vacation day in the event employment terminates during or at the end of a vacation.

- *(Employer Vacation Policy Article 5.1 states: "Upon termination of Employment, accrued unused Vacation is paid out in full, subject to applicable tax and other deductions. The termination date is the last date the employee works.")*
- In applying Article 5.2 to a UNA member it is understood that:
 - If a UNA member has been approved for a specific vacation period, and that member subsequently gives notice of resignation with an effective resignation date during or immediately following the vacation period, AHS will not rescind the vacation period.
 - If a UNA member has given notice of resignation, and that member subsequently requests a vacation period ending on, after, or immediately before the effective resignation date, the impending resignation is a significant operation consideration AHS can consider in deciding whether to grant or withhold the vacation request.
 - *(Employer Vacation Policy Article 5.2: "Vacation shall not be used to extend the termination date.")* ❖

KNOW your Rights



Report from
Director of Labour Relations
David Harrigan

ANSWERS:

CONTRACT PUZZLE ON PAGE 16

1. DEFERRED
2. COMPRESSED
3. AMBULANCE; KILOMETRES
4. TECHNOLOGICAL
5. PREPARATION; LEADERSHIP
6. REVIEW
7. CAMP
8. SERVICE; ADJUSTMENT
9. RELOCATION



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

The UNA App provides access to:

- all UNA collective agreements.
- an easy way to report Professional Responsibility Concerns and Occupational Health and Safety concerns.
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