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JOINT COMMUNICATION

Multi-Employer/UNA Collective Agreement Determination of Canadian Equivalency for International Nursing Degrees

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BACKGROUND:

The Multi-Employer/UNA Collective Agreement provides an educational allowance for RNs with a Baccalaureate Degree [Article 26.01(a)]. The Collective Agreement requires that, in the case of a nursing degree, in order to be eligible for receipt of the educational allowance, the degree be recognized by the Nursing Education Program Approval Board (NEPAB) or the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) [Article 26.01(c)(i)]. The Collective Agreement also provides that a degree other than nursing, but still relevant to the practice of registered nursing, must be recognized as equivalent to a Canadian degree by the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) in order to qualify for payment of the educational allowance. NEPAB and CARNA have advised that they no longer evaluate foreign degrees for the purposes of registration, making it impossible to apply the exact terms of the Collective Agreement in order to assess equivalency of an international nursing degree.

MULTI-EMPLOYER/ UNA AGREEMENT:

The Multi-Employer/UNA Joint Committee discussed the issue and concluded that the most effective and credible means of obtaining satisfactory proof of the equivalency of an international nursing degree is to obtain an assessment from IQAS, the entity already providing the evaluation for non-nursing degrees.

The parties also agreed that, where an Employer previously (i.e. prior to the January 16, 2009 Joint Committee discussions) granted an educational allowance for a degree in nursing to an Employee based on proof satisfactory to the Employer at the time, such allowance should not be revoked solely on the basis of a future IQAS assessment for another Employee that assesses the degree in question is not equivalent to a Canadian nursing degree.

In accordance with Article 26.04 of the Collective Agreement, the onus, including any related costs, of utilizing the IQAS to provide proof of the Employee's qualifications rests with the Employee. Once proof of the qualifications has been received, payment of the educational allowance is then payable retroactive to the date that the Employee completed the qualifications or the date of employment, whichever is later.

If you have any questions regarding the resolution of this issue, please contact your applicable representative, as follows:

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