

# UNASTAT

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA NEWS UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

## Call to action on Florence Nightingale's birthday

- UNA is holding a rally on Monday, May 12th to pressure the Alberta government to do more to address the nursing shortage and its impact on health care in Alberta.

We will be presenting a Nursing Care Plan for Alberta Nursing to Alberta's Health and

Wellness Minister with recommendations for immediate action on the shortage.

"It is urgent that government act now, and there are things we can do to reduce the shortage," says UNA President Heather Smith. "Resources and innovative management can do a great deal to reduce the array of problems creeping into our health system because of personnel shortages. We do need to "grow our own" by

educating nurses and other health workers, but that takes years. We need action now."

The Rally takes place during National Nursing Week and on International Nurses' Day, May 12th which is Florence Nightingale's birthday.

More details will be available as they are finalized. Check with your Local or the UNA website, [www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca).



## Nursing Rally Call to Action!

**Noon - Monday  
May 12, 2008**

**Legislative Assembly  
Edmonton**

## Bargaining with long-term care employers

- UNA members are in bargaining with a number of long-term care facility employers. Extendicare, which covers several facilities around the province is back in mediation after three earlier sessions failed to reach an agreement. Forest Grove Long-term Care in Calgary has had several negotiations sessions. UNA is also now in talks with Rivera Inc. which operates five LTC facilities, most under the Central Park Lodge name.

UNA Locals are also opening negotiations for renewed contracts with Edith Cavell Long-Term Care in Lethbridge and with the Grande Prairie Care Corporation.

Talks for a first agreement will be beginning soon for the new UNA members at Touchwood at Wedgewood, a long-term care facility in west Edmonton. The nurses in the facility voted recently to join UNA.

## Vague health announcement raises concerns about privatization and a hidden agenda

■ New Health minister Ron Liepert's vague announcement about health changes this week raises concerns about health care planning in Alberta.

"Liepert tries to sound reassuring but Albertans should not be lulled by his lack of specifics," says UNA President Heather Smith.

What we needed to see from Mr. Liepert are more immediate steps to boost the capacity of our health system. Staff need to be found and beds opened, so Albertans can get the care they need.

"Bad government planning, budget cutting and neglect have created major difficulties in our health system. But this government cannot use their own neglect to justify turning more of our system into for-profit businesses."

She points out that warnings about shortages in the nursing workforce first came out ten years ago.

"We need action now to get more nurses working, not just a ten-year long-term plan. We need immediate action AND we need the long-term planning that the provincial government should have been doing ten years ago."

The nurses' union also has concerns about Liepert's threat to rearrange governance for the province's Health Regions.

"It would be a good thing to have the province directly and publicly accountable for the delivery of health services," says Heather Smith.

But she also pointed out that the Health Regions have done a great deal of good work in integrating health services.

"We need some strong evaluation before lurching through another change and again destabilizing our health system with repeated restructuring," she said.

---

## CARNA proposes all infected nurses MUST register

■ The College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) is proposing to change its policy on nurses infected with a blood-borne disease (i.e. HEPC, HEPB, HIV) so that ALL must register with the College and have their practice conditions reviewed.

The current guidelines state that "Reporting to CARNA is not necessary in all cases of an infection with a blood-borne pathogen." The proposed new guidelines would require reporting for EVERY positive testing nurse.

UNA has made a submission to CARNA on the change, noting that the requirement for all registered nurses who have tested positive is not supported by the research. The level of risk of transmission for nurses who do not engage in exposure-prone invasive procedures does not warrant the requirement.

CARNA's present and proposed policies both require positive-testing nurses to report and have their practise reviewed if they work with "exposure-prone procedures". Their identity is kept confidential, however. The province's Expert Review Panel for Blood-Borne Infections does the consultation on each nurse's practise.

The new guidelines will require all nurses who test positive to consult with the Panel on their practise, whether they work in "exposure-prone" environments or not.

CARNA acknowledges that the risk is low, and in fact world-wide there has only been one identified case in which a nurse has transmitted such an infection to a client.

UNA suggests CARNA encourage the implementation and use of passive safety engineered sharps devices and the use of "Hands-Free" sharps passing technique during surgical procedures. This would do more to protect the public and nurses than mandatory reporting of positive status.

---

## Day of Mourning Monday, April 28, 2008

■ Marked across the province in hundreds of workplace and community ceremonies, the Day of Mourning remembers all the people who have lost their lives or their health on the job. In Edmonton the Day of Mourning ceremony will happen at City Hall at 7 pm. Check with your Local Labour Council for Local events.

---

## 154 Albertans killed by their job

■ The Workers Compensation Board released statistics on workplace injury and death in the past year in preparation for the Day of Mourning April 28. The 2007 numbers show the number of "accepted fatalities" – that is deaths recognized as workplace related – rose by nearly 25% to 154 last year. In 2007 there were 124 recognized deaths.

In 2007, in Alberta:

- The number of workers covered by WCB was 1,744,522.
  - The lost-time claim rate was 2.1 (i.e., this is the number of workers per 100 workers who made claims for work-related injuries or illnesses).
  - The total number of new claims reported was 175,297.
  - The total projected number of new lost-time claims filed was 35,900.
  - The estimated total number of days paid out to workers was 1.38 million days.
  - The number of accepted fatalities was 154.
-