

UNASTAT

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA NEWS UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

SPECIAL UNA PROVINCIAL MEETING ON APRIL 19 IN EDMONTON

- Delegates from all UNA Locals will be attending the special UNA provincial meeting in Edmonton on Tuesday, April 19th. The meeting will take place in two parts, one to take care of some UNA business on Local funding and delegate entitlement and the second part to consider the Employers' offer to extend the contract by one year.

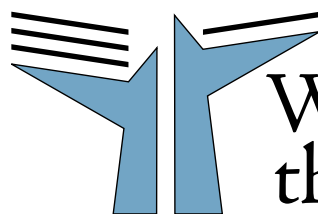
The main business for delegates will be considering the offer to extend the agreement one year with a 3% salary increase. If they support it delegates can take the extension plan to a ratification vote of all the affected members.

More details on the offer to extend the agreement are in the current NewsBulletin which should arrive shortly or available from your Local.

The short business section of the meeting will handle two motions that iron out how dues and delegate entitlement are handled with the new larger bargaining units of all Employees of each Health Region.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AT BETHANY CARE IN RED DEER

- Tuesday, April 12th, nurses at the Bethany Care Society's Collegieside facility in Red Deer voted to join UNA and form their own Local. Once the new members have set up their Local, they will ready to begin negotiations for a first contract. The facility is run by the Bethany Care Society of Calgary, which also operates the large Calgary facility and the Cochrane long-term care facility.



Weighing the evidence

International Experience with Health Care Reform

COMEDIAN GREG MALONE'S TAKE ON ALBERTA'S HEALTH DEBATE

- Veteran Newfoundland comedian Greg Malone takes on the great health care debate at the Friends of Medicare's Weighing the Evidence conference April 30 and May 1. Malone will provide his incisive view as the guest speaker at the Saturday evening conference banquet.

Malone is, of course, one of the original founders of CODCO TV series and his wicked impersonations of political icons like Jean Chretien, the Queen and, of course, Barbara Frum. He has received many awards for writing, performing and directing, including a dozen Gemini Awards.

UNA is paying the \$70 registrations for up to 50 UNA members who want to attend the conference. Members who want to go can contact Executive Secretary Sherry Shewchuk at 780 425-1025 or via email, sherry@una.ab.ca.

CALGARY REGION FINALLY HAS A PLAN FOR PAYING CAR ALLOWANCES

- Calgary Health Region is finally putting in place a plan to pay the \$130 a month vehicle allowance for nurses who are required to use a car in their work. UNA has filed grievances on the issue and retroactive payment of the allowance will be part of the Region's plan.

The Region is asking all its managers which Employees qualify for the allowance and who should have been receiving the allowance since June 9, 2004 when the Collective Agreement provision came into effect.

Watch for more details through your UNA Local.

WATCH FOR DAY OF MOURNING EVENTS ON APRIL 28

- The Canadian Labour Congress established the Day of Mourning for Dead and Injured workers on April 28, 1984. Every year ceremonies on the day recognize the injustice and suffering caused by workplace injuries. The continuous efforts of labour activists have brought us stronger laws and better collective agreement provisions. Still, every year, hundreds die and thousands are injured.



In addition to mourning those who have died it is important that we also renew our efforts to fight for a safe and healthy workplace for living.

A number of District Labour Councils have special events planned to commemorate this important day. Contact your local Council for details.

FACTS DON'T SUPPORT CLAIM THAT PENSIONS ARE UNDERPAID

■ Many UNA members have seen recent advertisements by the Alberta Society for Pension Reform and have asked UNA for more information. The Society has filed a statement of claim against the Government and Employers for greater Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) benefits. Filing a lawsuit does not necessarily indicate the claim has merit or any chance of winning. The LAPP has a solid legal case and the lawsuit will in all likelihood be dismissed. More information on LAPP is available on the front page at the UNA website, www.una.ab.ca.

\$600 VISION CARE BENEFIT EVERY TWO CALENDAR YEARS

The benefit for vision care in the provincial collective agreements covers \$600 for corrective lenses, glasses or contacts, every two calendar years. This is over and above coverage of the costs of eye exams, which is covered once each year.

THE \$600 BENEFIT RUNS OVER TWO CALENDAR YEARS. TWO EXAMPLES:

An Employee who claimed up to \$600 for lenses in 2005 will be eligible for another \$600 in corrective lenses expenses beginning January 1, 2007.

An Employee, who claims for \$450 in 2005, and a further \$150 in 2006, is again eligible for \$600 benefit starting January 1, 2007. It is the first claim that starts the two calendar year countdown.

RETROACTIVE VISION CARE BENEFIT FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2004

Nurses have to June 30, 2005 to resubmit vision expenses that may have been denied for first half of 2004

After a recently reached settlement with Health Boards of Alberta Services (HBA) nurses who may have had vision care expenses over \$300 in the first half of 2004 can now submit them for reimbursement.

Nurses have until June 30, 2005 to apply for reimbursement for vision care claims up to \$600 for the first half of 2004.

With the new provincial agreement vision care benefits increased from \$300 to \$600 every two years. The new higher benefit took effect as of July 1, 2004, but nurses who spent over \$300 for lenses earlier in 2004 can now resubmit their claim.

HAVE YOU HAD TWO POSITIONS COMBINED? YOU COULD BEING UNDERPAID.

Some Employers may have miscalculated the step on the salary scale for nurses who have had two positions combined.

Most Employers have simply put nurses who had two positions combined at the higher increment of the two positions. But the combined years of experience from the two positions could be higher, and should put nurses at a higher increment.

If you have had two positions combined, all your hours worked in both positions should count in the calculation of experience for salary scale increment purposes. For example, a nurse who had two positions combined, one at Year 3 on the increment scale and

ON THE LIGHT SIDE

A man walks into a Doctor's office. He has a cucumber up his nose, a carrot in his left ear and a banana in his right ear.

"What's the matter with me?" he asked.

"You're not eating properly." replied the Doctor.

one at Year 4, could deserve to be at Year 5 or higher, when the total hours worked are combined.

Nurses who believe they may have been put at the wrong salary step after combining positions should contact their Local or a UNA office.

CALGARY NURSES TAKE ON OH&S

■ Question:

When is a Regional Union/ Management Occupational Health and Safety Committee most effective?

Answer:

When Management leaves!

Things got interesting when a number of OH&S activists from UNA (with facilitation from UNA staffer Janice Peterson) attempted to observe the Regional Occupational Health and Safety committee meeting at Calgary Health Regional Headquarters in Southport recently.

When the management co-chair entered the room, he quickly let the nurses know they were not welcome and should leave. But the nurses didn't ...so he did and with him the other management members and the phone company (Telus) guys. Luckily the meeting commenced with co-chair Holly Heffernan at the helm.

The union members remaining (including HSAA, AUPE as well as UNA) had a productive meeting addressing the concerns of the observers. Some of the concerns were the terms of reference for the committee, the lack of a "site" committee for the Community nurses, and the failure to review the harassment policy for a number of years.

With OH&S and human resources being operated by Telus Sources, the committee members also asked, "who is the employer, CHR or the phone company?"

The AUPE and HSAA members at the meeting were pleased with the concern and interest shown by the observers.
