

# UNASTAT

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA NEWS UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

## Information on the new Provincial Collective Agreement

- More information on retroactive pay and implementation of the new 2007-2010 UNA Provincial (Multi-Employer) Collective Agreement is now available. Special UNA Spotlights cover when to expect back pay, when new benefits kick in and other features of the new agreement. A joint document produced with the Employers outlines how to get the 2% Long Service Pay adjustment.

Watch your UNA bulletin board for the documents. The information is also available in PDF format on the UNA website at [www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca) and of course on the UNA\*Net, the electronic conference system.

## Provincial round concludes new agreements for most other non-Health Region nurses

- New Collective Agreements have now also been ratified for most of the other Employers involved in the provincial negotiation round, including:
  - The Alberta Cancer Board
  - The Good Samaritan Society (including Stony Plain, Southridge, Pembina Village, Millwoods Centre, Dr. Gerald Zetter Care Centre, the Choice Program and Southgate Centre)

- Carewest Calgary
- Capital Care Edmonton, Youville Home St. Albert, St. Joseph's Hospital Edmonton
- St. Michael's Long-term Care Edmonton

Agreements have NOT yet been reached, but talks continue with: Bethany Care Calgary, Bethany Care Collegesside (in Red Deer) and Bethany Care Cochrane, as well as with Millwoods Shepherd's Care in Edmonton.

## Other negotiations

- Many other UNA Locals are also currently about to begin their bargaining, including:
  - Agecare in Medicine Hat
  - Salem Manor in Edmonton.
  - Victorian Order of Nurses
  - Extendicare
  - Central Park Lodges
  - Club Sierra in Medicine Hat
  - Agape in Calgary
  - Forest Grove Long-term care in Calgary

## Nurses were concerned about violence on Royal Alex psychiatric units

- The psychiatric department at the Royal Alexandra Hospital has had internal problems for some time,

UNA charged in a news release to the media after the homicide of July 30 became public.

UNA said that the nurses have been pushing for improved security and staffing for years, but the department has failed to take adequate safety precautions.

UNA asked for a meeting with top levels of Capital Health to discuss the concerns and that meeting is going ahead on August 16th.

Initially Capital Health officials were reported as saying the patient who attacked another patient had not had a violent history. But on the second day of news coverage, Capital Health acknowledged the murder suspect had been in a violent incident on the unit two weeks earlier.

"Nurses have been raising many concerns that more and more of the patients in the psychiatric units at the Royal Alex actually should be in a high-risk forensic unit," says UNA Vice President Bev Dick. "There has been constantly increasing acuity and increasing risk of violence."

The United Nurses of Alberta Local at the Royal Alexandra Hospital has filed Occupational Health and Safety complaints on behalf of nurses concerned about security and staffing.

"This tragic death could possibly have been prevented if some of the concerns of the nurses working on the psych units had been listened to," says UNA Vice President Bev Dick. "The nurses have been repeatedly requesting increased secu-

rity including a Special Constable on the unit and other safety improvements,” she said.

Morale levels and high turnover in staffing, high overtime, double-shifts, and inadequate staffing have also been major concerns for the nurses at the unit.

“We’ve raised concerns for several years and some of our members have suffered retribution because they have pushed for safety changes,” Bev Dick says.

“Sometimes we say, ‘Does somebody have to die before nurses concerns are taken seriously.’ Well, in this case, sadly someone has died,” Bev Dick said.

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## Nurses tell Premiers: act on the nursing shortage

■ For the past several years, unionized nurses have been making it a point to show up at the annual summer Premiers’ meeting dubbed the Council of Federation. In the past the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) has captured the Premiers’ attention and even had them talking about a national pharmacare program. This year, however, the Premiers were less interested in health care topics.

“Nurses and health care professionals from across Canada gathered this week to ensure that health care remained a part of the discussions,” says Linda Silas, RN and President of CFNU. “Unfortunately, the Premiers would not meet with us nor did they feel health care pertinent enough to put on their agenda. In our view, this is unacceptable.”

Vice-President Bev Dick represented UNA at the meeting.

The nurses called for an expanded health care system that includes a pan-Canadian Health Human Resources Strategy, the implementation of a national pharmaceutical program, expanded Home care and Long-term care services and improved Aboriginal health.

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## Action Alert on CMA position on two-tier health care

■ On July 30, 2007, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) released a policy statement calling upon the Canadian government to allow physicians to practice simultaneously in both public and private systems. Several organizations have called an action alert on the subject, urging everyone to write to Prime Minister Harper urging him to oppose a two-tier health-care system in Canada.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper can be reached at pm@pm.gc.ca or write or fax the Prime Minister’s office at:

Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2 Fax: 613-941-6900

For more resources on the Canadian Medical Association and Brian Day, visit the Canadian Health Coalition website: [www.medicare.ca](http://www.medicare.ca)

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## Province takes over East Central Health Region

■ The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) review on infection prevention and control issues at St. Joseph’s General Hospital in Vegreville and other acute care facilities in East Central Health

came out recently. Shortly after the release of the report, Health and Wellness Minister Dave Hancock relieved the Region’s Board of its duties and named Jim Saunders (of Health Resources Centre in Calgary fame) and Deputy Minister Paddy Meade to oversee the health region’s operations.

UNA took East Central Health to task when it ordered St. Joseph’s closed to new admissions in April. In a special letter to the East Central Health Board chair, UNA Vice-President Bev Dick wrote:

“We want to note that despite the many news reports about St. Joseph’s, East Central Health has no news releases or public statements on your website to correct any misapprehensions or misinformation in those news reports.

“In addition, East Central Health has failed to support and show confidence in the staff at St. Joseph’s and instead has subjected them to close scrutiny and questioning of many of the Hospital’s protocols.”

When he announced the takeover Health Minister Dave Hancock noted: “The relationship between East Central Health and St. Joseph’s General Hospital has proven to be unworkable and so, in the best interest of patient safety and quality assurance, I have appointed two official administrators to be responsible for every aspect of health care delivery in the region.”

The Quality Health Council report found that “lack of clarity” in responsibility between the Region and St. Joseph’s Hospital was one of the root causes of the problems, along with “lack of empowerment of staff to influence quality safety improvements.”

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