

UNA STAT

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA NEWS UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

Edmonton nurses take joint PRC to Capital Health

- Capital Health nurses took a joint Professional Responsibility Committee (PRC) presentation on inadequate nurse staffing to Capital Health on Monday, September 25.

“You tell us to hang on, hang on, hang on, but we can’t hang on any more,” said Betty Ann Emery, President of Local #301 at the University of Alberta. The nurses highlighted the steadily growing number of PRCs that nurses are filing in unsafe conditions. “And 99.9% of these complaints deal with understaffing, working short,” Betty Ann said.

The joint presentation came from the new Bargaining Unit Council of UNA Locals in Capital Health. Other Local executive members at the presentation were: Collette Mattson and Cari Smith from Local #33, Sherry Stone and Deborah Gillies from Local #85. Provincial President Heather Smith also attended.

The group gave specific examples of problems. Another representative, Melinda Devaney from Local #196, Capital Community, explained that the Health Link phone bank sometimes runs so short of staff that up to 45% of the people calling in for help hang up because of the wait. “They must then head off to the Emergency Room,” she noted.

The nurses asked Capital Health for immediate action on the problem and made four recommendations, including realistic staffing baselines, no opening of new beds without staff in place, and better communication, including respecting nurses when they indicate there is a problem.

Capital Health’s Michele Lahey, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and the other representatives from the Region expressed their appreciation of the nurses’ information and indicated they would be responding with a follow up meeting in the near future.



Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR NURSES

UNA sending members to CFNU Biennium

The biennial Canadian Federation of Nurses’ Unions convention will be held in St. John’s Newfoundland June 4 to 8, 2007.

UNA will fund up to 49 delegates to attend the convention. Confirmation of the UNA delegate entitlement will determine the exact number. UNA’s delegates will be chosen as follows:

- 13 members from Locals with 500 or more members, ensuring at least one from every District.
- 20 members through a random draw
- 16 Executive Board members including the Executive Officers

Details of the draw will be published soon.

UNA Scholarship deadline coming Oct. 13

- The deadline comes up October 13 to submit for the UNA scholarship for 1st year nursing students. Applicants must be sponsored by a UNA member who is related to them and must write a brief essay. Five scholarships of \$750 each will be awarded this year. See the full information and application form on the UNA website, under Members at: www.una.ab.ca/subpages/nursingscholarship.shtml

Committee settles appeals of prescription denials

- A special Joint Appeal Panel has resolved all but one of over 75 appeals of prescription claims. The single remaining appeal for a prescription will be going to the umpire stage for a final ruling.

The UNA Provincial Agreement covers all prescriptions, which has now been agreed includes: any substance administered orally, by injection, absorption or inhalation, provided that it is prescribed by a physician or dentist to correct or treat a medical condition based on a diagnosis and is dispensed by a pharmacist.

If the medication is rejected at the pharmacy and the plan does not cover the cost, members can appeal - either directly to the employer designate or members can call their Labour Relations Officer, who will assist with the appeal. If the matter is not resolved at that level, it may be submitted to the Joint Appeal Panel for review. (The Joint Appeal Panel is a provincial union/employer committee).

See UNA’s website for more information, a copy of the appeal form and a list of employer designate contacts. Click on Prescription Benefit Appeal.

Feds not moving on national pharmacare

- The intergovernmental task force recently released its progress report on a National Pharmaceutical Strategy. While it praised the strategy, the Canadian Health Coalition said the federal government has been refusing to act on it.

“A key element appears to be stalled due to lack of federal commitment to finance expanded drug coverage,” said Kathleen O’Connors who is the spokesperson for the Coalition.

The Coalition says Canada needs a national Pharmacare plan to:

- Replace our patchwork U.S.- style drug insurance plans that drive up spending and leave millions without access
- Provide universal, first-dollar coverage for cost-effective and safe drugs
- Pay only for what’s safe and works – save lives, money and competitiveness

“Fifty years of waiting for Pharmacare is long enough. Pharmacare makes sense in terms of equity, economic efficiency and improving prescribing – it’s time we mustered the political will power at the federal level and just got on with it,” said Joel Lexchin, MD, of York University’s School of Health Policy and Management.

More at: www.healthcoalition.ca/moreforless.pdf

LPNs hit with Disputes Inquiry Board at Youville Home

- The government appointed a Disputes Inquiry Board to intervene at Youville Home long-term care facility in St. Albert. United Steel Workers Local 5885 has been negotiating for a first agreement for over 100 Licensed Practical Nurses and nursing aides at the facility.

The LPNs do have the legal right to walk out, however

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A man was wheeling himself frantically down the hall of the hospital in his wheelchair, just before his operation. A nurse stopped him and asked, “What’s the matter?”

He said, “I heard the nurse say, ‘It’s a very simple operation, don’t worry, I’m sure it will be all right.’”

“She was just trying to comfort you, what’s so frightening about that?”

“She wasn’t talking to me. She was talking to the doctor!”

Human Resources and Employment Minister Mike Cardinal said he is “very concerned about the implications of labour unrest on the health and safety of patients at Youville Home.”

The union cannot legally strike and the employer cannot lockout employees while the Board is in place.

Government forced to release further Bill 27 details

- This week the Information and Privacy Commissioner ordered the Alberta Labour Relations Board (LRB) to release approximately 200 records to the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) on the controversial Bill 27, which restructured health care labour relations and stripped health care workers of many rights.

The LRB must disclose portions of documents that reveal who was involved in creating, drafting, editing or commenting on legislation, as well as the dates of those communications. The Commissioner also ruled the LRB failed in its legal duties under FOIP by issuing an incomplete response and by delaying the release of other documents.

“For three years the LRB has stonewalled and hidden behind a veil of secrecy around Bill 27. We are pleased the Privacy Commissioner recognized the important right to access these documents,” said AFL President Gil McGowan.

It’s no palace: casino workers strike

- Workers at the Palace Casino at West Edmonton Mall have gone on strike for a first agreement. The workers say they are forced to work up to 20 minutes a shift without pay, have no sick leave, and report high levels of respiratory infections. The owners, Gateway Casinos out of Burnaby BC, have refused to negotiate for over a year. People wanting to show support can join the picket line at West Edmonton Mall. Or contact West Edmonton Mall Manager Gary Hanson(780 444-5200) to ask why they allow Palace to treat its employees this way. Or contact the Palace Casino, 780 444-2112, email: info@palacecasino.com.

Website Tells the Truth about CLAC

- What do you do when you have got a bad case of the CLAC? A new website launched this month answers workers questions about who Christian Labour Association of Canada is, what they do, and who they represent. The site, set up by a coalition of concerned groups, offers factual information about CLAC’s origins, links and philosophy. It also offers comparisons between CLAC contracts and other union contracts. It deconstructs how CLAC gets into a workplace, and offers legal options to workers who want CLAC out. Want to know more about CLAC? Check out the website at: <http://thetruthaboutclac.ca/>