

# UNASTAT

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA NEWS UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

## NURSES HEAR FROM UFCW STRIKERS AT AGM

- The striking Lakeside packing plant workers have won a first collective agreement in a stunning victory for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

Just two weeks ago three of the strikers were telling their story in front of over 600 nurses at the UNA Annual General Meeting. "If you get sick, you can be fired. If you are injured you get fired," said Edil Hassan a young woman from Edmonton who told her story of suffering a dislocated shoulder at the huge meat packing plant in Brooks.

"Tyson was surprised by the ability of the strikers to shut down the plant and by the strong support from the public," says Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan. Tyson Foods of Arkansas, the world's largest meat processor, owns the Brooks plant. The Federation was in the process of launching a major campaign including rallies and a walk from Brooks to Edmonton, when news came that Tyson was prepared to deal. "There was a public outcry," Gil McGowan said. "All the calls and emails MLAs received made a difference."

Many members were visibly moved by the dramatic story of conditions in the Lakeside packing plant. UNA invited the UFCW workers to come to speak and to receive a contribution of \$20,000 along with \$2,000 in cash donations collected at the meeting.

"It's shameful that in this province that people have to go into such a bitter strike to try to get their basic working rights protected," said UNA President Heather Smith.



## LETHBRIDGE NURSES SPEND NIGHT IN A BOX TO PROTEST NURSING HOME CLOSURES

- UNA Nurses from Extencicare Lethbridge, nursing students and other supporters spent the night of Friday, October 21 in cardboard boxes on the street in front of the Chinook Health Region offices. The nurses held the "granny-in-a-box" to protest the Region's decision to close St. Michael's Health Centre and Extencicare Lethbridge and almost all the full-service nursing home beds in Lethbridge.

"This will be the end of almost all full service nursing home beds in the city. Are we going to end up just keeping Grannie in a box?" asked Dolly Deringer, President of the UNA Extencicare Local. "Chinook Health Region is moving fast to completely close the full-service nursing home beds in Lethbridge. With plans like this, it is no wonder we have a crisis in care in the province," she said.

## ALBERTA HIRES MULTINATIONAL GIANT TO SELL ALBERTANS SOMETHING THEY DO NOT WANT: FOR-PROFIT HEALTH INSURANCE

- The government has hired one of the biggest global insurance corporations to plan the move back to private health insurance. That should be a clear sign to Albertans that huge corporate interests lie behind the government's insurance plan, says the United Nurses of Alberta.

"The government is hiring AON, one of the world's largest insurance corporations, to help them sell Albertans something we do NOT want," says UNA President Heather Smith. "We need a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a government that actually listens to what their citizens want."

Over 59% of Albertans oppose the Alberta government's proposals to move to more private insurance coverage of health care services, according to a survey of Albertans commissioned by UNA.

Fully 78% of Albertans agreed that "Private insurance companies are more concerned about making profits than about paying for the medical services people need. That's a good reason for me to oppose the Alberta government's plan," according to the survey of 400 people, which was conducted in October by Viewpoints Research Ltd. from Winnipeg.

## WHERE IS THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA'S LONG-TERM CARE ACTION PLAN?

- “Where is the Government of Alberta’s long term action plan?” asks Harvey Voogd, Coordinator for Friends of Medicare. “November 9 was the 6 month anniversary of the May 9th release of the Auditor General’s scathing indictment of long term care in Alberta. Health Minister Iris Evans and Seniors Minister Yvonne Fritz accepted all the Auditor’s recommendations and promised to have an action plan in place within six months.”

Government spokesman Howard May said the response is targeted for the New Year, but would not review details and would only say improvements will be made.

“The only response to date has been the report of the MLA long term care committee. Though the MLAs made some excellent recommendations such as staffing, their work has not been formally accepted as government policy. The staffing recommendation included funding to restore personal care services, nursing, rehabilitation and recreation therapy. The MLAs also called for better wages, benefits and more full-time work for staff. FOM supports these recommendations because they should lead to much better continuity of care.”

## SASKATCHEWAN NURSES GET AN AGREEMENT

- After 7 months of bargaining, the 7,700 registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses, represented by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, have a tentative agreement with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO).

The agreement was announced October 28. SUN said it is confident the agreement meets the needs of their members. In the fall of 2004, SUN members made it clear that their next agreement needed to address retention and recruitment of RNs and RPNs in the province through enhanced working conditions, maintaining extended health benefits, and competitive salaries.

- Provisions to employer’s to hire new nursing graduates in supernumerary full-time positions for up to 1 year;
- A 12% increase in Northern Allowances over the life-time of the agreement;
- Signed Letter of Understanding to explore research opportunities for Nurse-to-Patient ratios
- Funding of Extended Health Benefits and maintenance of benefits throughout the lifetime of the agreement;
- 7.5% in wages and retention allowances over 3 years

## NINE OUT OF TEN CANADIANS SAY MEDICARE DEFINES CANADA

- A poll that can be found at [www.cric.ca](http://www.cric.ca) shows that Medicare defines Canada. Almost nine-out-of-ten Canadians believe that eliminating public health care would fundamentally change Canada for the worse.

Canadians see this as a more damaging development than any other scenario, including abandoning Canada’s two official languages, according to a recent poll conducted by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada.

Furthermore, 74 per cent of Canadians see more spending on health care as a high priority for making the country work better – second to protecting the environment (78 per cent) but ahead of having a balanced budget (73 per cent). More health care spending was the highest priority for respondents in Ontario, second in Quebec and third in the Atlantic region and Western Canada.”

## ARE YOU GETTING FULLY PAID? CHECK YOUR PAY RECORD!

- Employers’ payroll departments frequently make errors in calculating regular pay, overtime pay, charge pay, vacation accrual and other components.

Check your pay record and make sure you are receiving your full payment and entitlement. Under the Collective Agreement you have 10 days from receiving your pay record to file a grievance on an error.

## ON THE LIGHT SIDE

### BLINDED BY SCIENCE

The following are actual submissions on a series of quizzes, tests and essays.

“Nitrogen is not found in Ireland because it is not found in a free state.”

“H<sub>2</sub>O is hot water, and CO<sub>2</sub> is cold water.”

“To collect fumes of sulfur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube.”

“When you smell an odorless gas, it is probably carbon monoxide.”

“Water is composed of two gins, Oxygen and Hydrogin.

Oxygen is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.”

“Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes and caterpillars.”

“The body consists of three parts -- the branium, the borax, and the abominable cavity. The branium contains the brain, the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abominable cavity contains the bowels, of which there are five -- a, e, i, o and u.”

“Blood flows down one leg and up the other.”

“Respiration is composed of two acts, first inspiration, and then expectoration.”

“The moon is a planet just like the earth, only it is even deader.”

“Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire.”

“A super saturated solution is one that holds more than it can hold.”

“Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.”

“The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects.”

To have a mistake corrected you need to bring it to your Employer’s (supervisor, or payroll) attention within ten days. If they do not agree to correct the error you should advise them you are filing a grievance and contact your Local or your Labour Relations Officer.