


## Labour mobilizes against pension plan changes

Union members urged to turn up heat on Stelmach

■ A coalition of Alberta unions including UNA began a campaign this week because recent changes in the rules governing the board of the Alberta Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) put at risk pension rights of 125,000 Albertans – including rights to early retirement, cost of living allowances and workers' ability to retire when their age and years of service add up to 85.

New rules for the pension Board break a long-standing agreement which required union approval for all significant changes to the policies or governance of the Plan – opening the door for decisions which are against the interests of working people.

The Labour Coalition on Pensions bought full-page ads in daily newspapers calling on members and pensioners to telephone their MLAs and Premier Ed Stelmach to overturn the changes. The coalition's website — [www.savemypension.ca](http://www.savemypension.ca) — has detailed information on the situation, including contacting politicians.



### IS YOUR PENSION AT RISK?

#### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

to retirees and members of Alberta's public pension plans

Recent changes to the rules governing decisions of the board of Alberta's largest pension, the Local Authorities Pension Plan, put at **risk**:

- Early retirement provisions
- Pension Cost of Living Allowance
- The '85 Factor'

Alberta's unions are fighting hard to protect your pensions. But we need **your** help.

**Call Premier Ed Stelmach and your MLA at 310-0000.** Tell them to fix the Local Authorities Pension Plan by putting it back the way it was before the changes were made in November.

For more information about what has happened to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, and the implications for other Alberta pension plans, go to [www.SaveMyPension.ca](http://www.SaveMyPension.ca)

## New innovative work programs ready to roll

- New statements issued by the Joint Committee of UNA and HBA Services mean that the new innovative retention strategies in the provincial contract are now ready to roll. The Joint Statements explain how the Weekend Worker, Retirement Preparation, and Pilot Projects will be implemented. The Pilot Projects may only be enacted at some sites. These include: the Flexible Part-time Positions, Seasonal Part-time Positions, and Benefit-Eligible Casual positions. The Joint Statements are available on UNA's website: [www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca) and on UNA~Net, the UNA email and conferencing system.

---

## Mediated settlement on Market Lump Sum questions

- UNA has agreed to a Mediator's recommendations on outstanding issues on how the Market Lump Sum works. The Recommendations are a good resolution that will put a stop to two problems: fulltime staff on EI or STD or LTD having their payments clawed back, and part-time staff lump sums being deducted for time spent on vacation, STD, LTD, or maternity leave. The Recommendations are accessible on UNA's website: [www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca) and on UNA~Net, the UNA email and conferencing system.

---

## Collective agreement booklets at the printer

- Published copies of the new Provincial Collective Agreement should be back from the printer and available in the next month. Photocopied versions have been available for some time, but the handy, printed and bound ones take much longer to produce.

## Major newspaper editorials

### Alberta realizes the nursing shortage hurts

- In December, the Alberta government announced funding to attract nurses who had left the profession to come back through refresher courses as well as support for "credentialing" of internationally-prepared nurses who live in the province.

UNA responded that these steps are not enough to deal with the current shortage of at least 1,400 Registered nurses in the province. And it's completely inadequate given the looming tide of retirement of Registered nurses.

Then in January, Alberta's two largest newspapers, the Calgary Herald and the Edmonton Journal, both picked up on UNA's message and sounded the warning about the nursing shortage in detailed editorials.

Both the Herald and the Journal wrestled directly with the shortage. "It's going to take more money, more classrooms and [Advanced Education Minister] Doug Horner must be prepared to ante up." wrote the Edmonton Journal.

---

## Labour preps for election with tough ads

- Tough talking ads about Ed Stelmach's record in government were launched two weeks ago by Albertans for Change, a coalition of the Alberta Federation of Labour and the Alberta Building Trades Council.

"The Conservatives have gotten a pretty easy ride during election campaigns over the last 20 years and we believe their record shows they've become complacent," AFL President Gil McGowan, told the Edmonton Sun. "There are three essential messages that we want people to think about: That the Tories are out of energy and out of ideas; that Albertans deserve to have real plans and real direction from their

government; and that we want to encourage people to believe that a change is possible," he said.

The ads can be seen on the Coalition's website: [www.albertansforchange.ca](http://www.albertansforchange.ca)

---

## Capital Health putting educators at bedside in crunch

- Capital Health announced last week it was asking nurse educators and clinical managers to volunteer for bedside roles because of a current bed crunch caused by the nursing shortage.

"Although they're not calling it a crisis, this is, in my view, the biggest staffing crisis the health regions have dealt with since regionalization was introduced in 1994," UNA President Heather Smith told the Edmonton Journal. "This is the most stretched the region has ever been."

Capital Health warned of surgery cancellations and continuing bed closures because of the nursing shortage.

Heather Smith said the province needs to educate more nurses as quickly as possible.

"The under-supply is certainly peaking in Alberta in a way that goes beyond what some of the other provinces are experiencing," she said.

---

## Hancock refuses to cover Health Region deficits

- Health and Wellness Minister Dave Hancock said recently the province would not be providing additional funding to offset budget deficits in the Health Regions that could top \$100 million this year. Meanwhile Capital Health announced more surgery cancellations and that it has "officially given up" trying to re-open 33 beds that had to be closed last summer.