



# United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 Newsletter

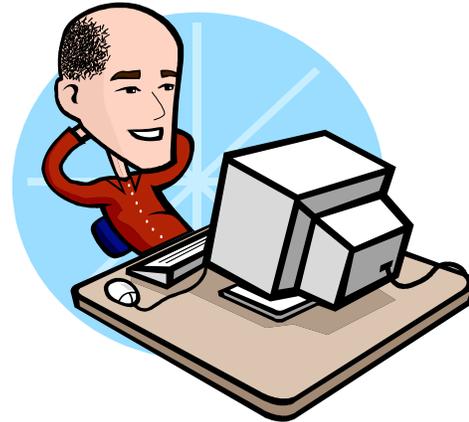
Issue 18

Local 115 Website: <http://local115.una.ab.ca>

August 2005



## Message from the President



### COMPUTERS AT WORK!!!

Remember when you are at work, these are employer computers to be used for WORK ONLY.

### DO NOT USE WORK COMPUTERS FOR PERSONAL BUSINESS or RESOURCE

CHR is monitoring you at all times. ❖

Welcome August and hope you are enjoying summer. Some problems still exist with PAYROLL - it is important that you know your rights under the Collective Agreement. Refer to Art 32B- page 106 to know about Compensation Overpayments.

Remember when you visit your family physician to ask for a prescription for any over the counter drugs which you may require: e.g. Vitamins, cough syrup, Ibuprofen... The drug benefit coverage for UNA covers medications prescribed by a physician. The computer at the drug store will process automatically the 80% coverage. If you run into problems call us at 670-9960 or 237-2377.

It is important as unionized workers to support our fellow workers that are on STRIKE. Come walk the line to support.

Take care, ❖

*Michelle M. Senkow RN, BScN*

President - UNA-Local 115

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Message from the President
- 1** Computers at work
- 2** CFNU invites UNA to welcome premiers to Banff
- 2** UNA Research Poll / Telus Strike / OH & S
- 3** Long Term Care articles
- 4** Local 115 Web Site / Lethbridge Shuffle of LTC residents
- 4** UNA Net
- 5** Spotlight on your contract
- 6** Local 115 Contacts

## CFNU invites UNA to welcome premiers to Banff

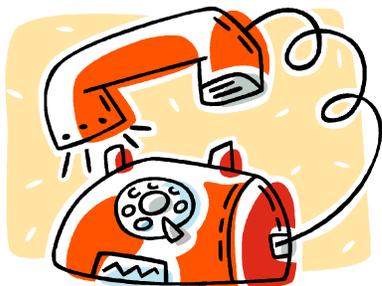
The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions invites all UNA members interested to join in a news conference welcoming the Premiers to Banff for the first ministers' summit meeting. CFNU's President Linda Silas will be in Banff to remind Premier's nurses do NOT want privatization to creep in to our health system.

CFNU is presenting the Premiers with four important policy papers in Banff. They will bring the author of one of papers, prominent health policy consultant Steven Lewis, will speak on how to "court-proof" medicare.

UNA will be represented at the conference by Vice President Bev Dick. Debra McPherson, President of the British Columbia Nurses Union and Linda Haslam-Stroud, President of the Ontario Nurses Association will also be there.

There will be other media activities as well during the Premier's summit and nurses are welcome to join in.

The news conference will be at 10:30 am Thursday, August 11, 2005 at the Banff Ptarmigan Inn - 337 Banff Ave (403) 762-2207. ❖



## UNA Research is polling members

UNA has contracted with a research firm to do a telephone poll of members on the services and structure of the union. The company will be calling over 1,000 UNA members over the next few days and asking a range of questions about members' satisfaction and expectations of their union.

The extensive survey is part of the research mandated by UNA's provincial Executive Board to determine how UNA might restructure. This all follows up the major changes to Health Region bargaining units that were legislated by the provincial government.

The survey gives members a chance to express their views on what's good – and on what needs to be improved – with their union.❖



**TWU workers at Telus  
fight to save good jobs  
and a union contract**

## TELUS LOCKS OUT WORKERS, TRIES TO IMPOSE CONTRACTS

Many UNA members have been out on the Telecommunications Workers Union picket lines since Telus locked out its BC and Alberta Employees on July 22. The more than 13,000 phone company Employees have gone without a raise since 2000 and have been in negotiations for over five years.

TWU has asked Telus users to protest by calling Telus and canceling or making changes to some of their calling services. For more details you can go the Alberta Federation of Labour website at: [www.afl.org/news/default.cfm?newsId=326](http://www.afl.org/news/default.cfm?newsId=326)

Rallies at Telus picket lines are being held regularly in centres around Alberta. More information is available on UNA\*Net News, through TWU at [www.twu-canada.ca/](http://www.twu-canada.ca/) or by calling your local Labour Council. ❖

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## OH & S Concerns:

N95 Mask fit testing schedule continues to be discussed. Renovations and clutter on units is an ongoing agenda. It is imperative that you read the new OH & S "Alerts" and report concerns to your Local contacts. If you experience or have any concern about your health and safety, please call the Employer OH & S Hotline at 234-7799 and your Local 115 union office at 670-9960. ❖



## **Reverse the Long-term care crisis, UNA tells MLAs proposed standards completely inadequate**

Long-term care standards must include firm requirements for qualified staffing, UNA Vice President Bev Dick told the MLA Panel on Long-term care at a hearing in Edmonton July 25.

“It is time to reverse the crisis in continuing care – by requiring measurable, clear standards for reasonable levels of qualified staffing, including staffing by Registered Nurses,” Bev Dick said.

The three MLA panel is considering input into proposed “standards” for the province’s long-term care facilities. Unfortunately, the draft standards contain no firm measures on staffing.

“Beyond referencing the Nursing Home Act Regulations, they set no specific levels of clear limits on how many residents any one nurse should be responsible for,” Bev Dick told the MLAs. She said the panel should consider clear nurse-to-resident ratios that can be used to gauge adequate staffing.

“Auditor General Fred Dunn’s report detailed the crisis of care,” Bev Dick said. “Staffing by professional Registered nurses is often inadequate and leads to the problems cited by the Auditor General. Many RNs find they are in charge of an entire wing or facility, with 80, 100 or more residents,” she said. “It is not surprising that the Auditor General found there is little regulation of medications, or resident care management planning – services that are supposed to be provided by Registered nurses.”

## **UNA Poll: Government is Failing long-term care residents**

Albertans think that long-term care services for the frail and elderly should be provided by government and they think the province is failing to do it, a public opinion survey released by the United Nurses of Alberta today shows.

“The government is letting vulnerable residents down, and Albertans know it,” says Heather Smith, president of the provincial union of Registered nurses.

The Alberta Survey fielded over the last two months by the Population Research Lab from the University of Alberta shows that about one in five Alberta households has a family member in long-term care. “We have about 26,000 people in long-term care, that’s equivalent to the cities of Lloydminster and Brooks combined. The government is not guaranteeing safe care and protection for these people,” says Heather Smith.

A strong majority of the 1200 Albertans surveyed said the government is failing to adequately regulate quality in long-term care.

“It looks like the government was the last one to realize they had a serious problem,” says Heather Smith. “Only 23% of Albertans said they think that the government adequately regulates quality in our long-term care system.”

### **Nurses: Call the MLA panel on long-term care**

UNA members concerned about conditions in long-term care should contact the MLA panel today!

The MLA task force seeking input on the Continuing Care Health Service and Accommodation Standards invited Albertans to attend public sessions in Edmonton on August 3, 2005 or Calgary on August 5, 2005.

Through the use of telehealth technology, video-conferences on August 9, 2005 will ensure that Albertans across the province also have the opportunity to provide feedback to the task force.

The TeleHealth facilities are being made available in southern Alberta from 1-3 pm in Medicine Hat, Brooks, Pincher Creek and Raymond. For the evening session TeleHealth facilities are apparently being made available in Northern Alberta the session runs from 7-9 pm. Barrhead, St. Paul, Viking, Grande Prairie, Peace River, Fort McMurray and High Level.

Pre-registration is not required. However, for more information about accessing TeleHealth facilities, call 310-4455 toll-free. ❖

## Local 115 Web Page



Please have a look at our site on the web, and send us your feedback. Our URL is: <http://local115.una.ab.ca> ❖

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### **LETHBRIDGE plan would shuffle vulnerable long-term care residents off to lower standards of care**

A new plan to shuffle residents in the St. Michaels auxiliary hospital in Lethbridge to a new “designated assisted living” facility is a prime example of cuts in standards and services in long-term care says the United Nurses of Alberta.

“This is a prime example of the huge cuts in services that has caused the crisis and horror stories in Alberta’s long-term care system,” says UNA Vice President Bev Dick.

“The residents at St. Michaels are in an approved hospital because they need a high level of nursing care,” she says. “Now they will be shuffled off to designated assisted living with no registered nursing care.”

St. Michaels Health Centre currently has 200 auxiliary hospital patients and the plan is to move them to a new assisted living facility or to other nursing homes. However, the two licensed nursing homes in Lethbridge have only 12 vacancies.

“This is just the latest instance of long-term care residents switching to assisted living where there is no on-site professional nursing care,” Bev Dick points out. “The Auditor General Fred Dunn pointed out in his report that inadequate staffing is one of the main problems creating the scandalous conditions.”

“Adequate Registered nurse staffing is critical to protecting residents and ensuring safe care,” Bev Dick says.

“The MLA Task Force looking into the long-term care crisis, should look at this happening right now, even as they are considering what the standards should be, these vulnerable residents will see their level of care drastically cut.” ❖



**Are you on UNA Net?**



UNA Net is a private communication system available only to UNA Members. Current information regarding contract negotiations, your local and UNA events is available on UNA Net. You'll also have the opportunity to present your opinions and thoughts about negotiations as well as professional issues. Join us and communicate with your fellow registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses in Alberta.

### **What to do if you require an account?**

Send an email including your name, address, local number, and your UNA ID number to [systems@una.ab.ca](mailto:systems@una.ab.ca). They will need to know what operating system is on your computer (Windows or Macintosh) and if you have high speed or dial up access to the internet.

Once your membership has been verified you will be given immediate access to the system.

### **Logging in with software or a browser**

The UNA Net is accessible using a web browser or client software.

To log in with your web browser, go to <https://www.unitednurses.org/login> and enter your User ID and Password.

Even better though, the client software provides a desktop application that is optimized for fast, streamlined access to the First Class server. It is easy to install and use, by choosing the software download html link.

### **Windows & Macintosh Software Link:**

<http://www.unitednurses.org/clientDownloads/>

### **Technical Support:**

The technical support team is available by email [systemsupport@una.ab.ca](mailto:systemsupport@una.ab.ca) or by phone toll free at (800) 252-8384 during regular office hours. ❖



## ***SPOTLIGHT on your UNA Contract***

### ***Overtime***

#### **What to do when you are asked to work for free!**

Many care managers ask nurses to work overtime at straight rates. They are asking them to volunteer time, to “help out”.

But anyone who is working beyond regular hours is going to be less safe in their work. Working unexpected hours can mean working more fatigued. It can leave nurses resentful or worried about how they have to adjust their family’s life – daycare, even getting dinner ready.

Nursing managers must be encouraged to schedule adequate staffing and be prepared for reasonably predictable absences. If they don’t do it, then the Employers should pay the costs, not nurses and their families.

UNA Collective agreements specifically prohibit “sweetheart deals” or special arrangements between the Employer and individual Employees. Articles in the UNA agreements (Article 3.02) ensure that terms of employment must be negotiated through the union. That protects individual nurses from being pressured into working more, working cheaper or working in a less safe environment.

This solidarity protects nurses from being played off against each other. For example, it helps prevent a manager from saying, “If you don’t want the extra hours at straight time, someone else will.”

If no one works for free, managers can’t say this.

#### **What do you say, when a manager asks you to work for free?**

**It’s simple: No!**



# **United Nurses of Alberta**

## **Local 115 Contacts**

(President - Michelle Senkow is ex-officio to all committees. Please call the local office to speak to her about any of these committees or concerns)

### **Executive Members for 2004-2005**

<b>President</b>	Michelle Senkow	<a href="mailto:msenkow@una.ab.ca">msenkow@una.ab.ca</a>
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<b>Secretary</b>	Laurie Hermann	<a href="mailto:lhermann@una.ab.ca">lhermann@una.ab.ca</a>

### **Membership Secretary for 2004-2006**

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### **Grievance Committee for 2004-2005**

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### **PRC Committee for 2004-2005**

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### **Newsletter 2004-2006**

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