



United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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Message from the President

Hello nurses- it is hard to believe that it is 2006. Are you getting used to writing it yet? This month the Vacation Planner should be up on your unit. Be aware that each month from May 01, 2006 to April 30, 2007 is inclusive. **NO special Christmas or summer calendars.**

Please read the Joint Committee handout circulated about the Vacation Planner. Nurses are encouraged to write BLOCKS of time they request off e.g. Nov1 to 14 inclusive - so that ALL days you are scheduled to work will be holidays. This is beneficial to you - many units are changing rotations, and marking BLOCKS of time will cover this. We encourage you to keep copies of all paperwork submitted to the employer (e.g. vacation Requests and the Employers written response). If a situation occurs where you are repeatedly being refused to take time off etc., the evidence you keep will benefit your situation.

Please make sure that you use your Professional Development Days (3) per year to be taken by MARCH 31/06. These cannot be carried over - so please use them. If you make a request and are refused or have any questions please call our office at 670-9960.

Michelle Senkow

Michelle M. Senkow RN, BScN
President
UNA-Local 115

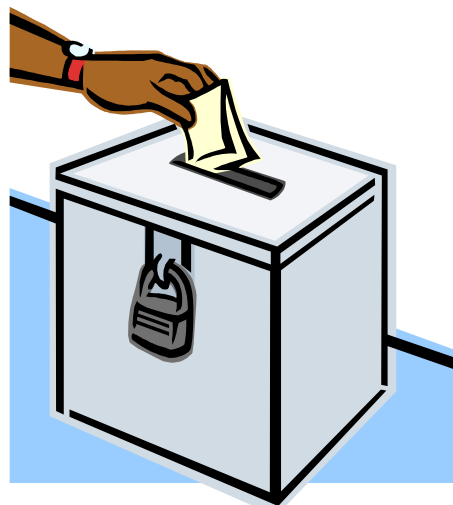
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Have you read this Newsletter?

Enter your name in a draw for a

Prize!



Send in your name by Email, UNA Box or drop it off at the SARO Office

CFNU poll shows Canadians want PUBLIC health care

A majority of Canadians do not think they could afford even basic surgical procedures in a privatized system, says a new poll on health care done by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. Nine out of 10 agree that access to healthcare should be exactly the same for everyone, regardless of income.

“When health care, the number one issue for Canadians, has come up in this election campaign, the leaders are telling us that they will defend public health care” says Linda Silas, RN, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. “They are telling Canadians what we want to hear, but will they do what we want to see?”

The poll, conducted by Ipsos Reid shows that 8 of 10 (83%) Canadians believe that if government got its act together there would be enough money available to fund an excellent health care system without allowing people to pay for enhanced services. Great support exists for 7 solutions including: shortening wait times for surgery by opening unused or under-used operating rooms (94%), hiring more nurse to decrease wait times for surgical and medical attention (94%), and expanding publicly-insured services to include access to home care, long-term care, mental health care and drug benefits (91%), but the parties have not committed to most of them.

Public solution to waiting lists

The news came out recently that both the Capital and Calgary Health Regions had amazingly cut the time between the first orthopedic consultation and surgery from 47 weeks to 4.7 weeks. Prominent health policy commentator Dr. Michael Rachlis must be shrugging his shoulders. Rachlis has been criss -crossing the country for years, telling anyone who would listen that there are solutions to waitlists and other health system problems easily achieved in the public system. “Canadians tend to assume that if there is a wait for health care, there isn't enough of it,” Rachlis says. “However, most delays are due to poorly designed services. “We need to look at delays through the ‘lens of flow’. “His most recent publication Public Solutions to Health Care Waitlists is available on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives website at: www.policyalternatives.ca/



The elected committee meets once month to discuss the issues brought forward by UNA members. Please submit your staffing, patient safety concerns to UNA Local 115 office by e-mail, mailbox or telephone. Minutes of each meeting are circulated to the Patient Care Managers, who should then POST them on the unit for staff to read



UNA says Alberta's Labour Relations Board rulings on Bill 27 are biased after reports in the media of a Board Vice-Chair drafting parts of the law in consultation with health employer lawyers.

“The Labour Relations Board is supposed to be an impartial referee that fairly resolves disputes but when they are obviously collaborating with employers, it makes the whole process a farce,” said **David Harrigan**, UNA Director of Labour Relations.

Bill 27 made massive restructuring in the labour organization of the Health Regions, a process that hurt the interests of many of the province's unionized health workers including Registered Nurses. “We have had concerns for years that the Board is biased toward employers, now we have what you can call smoking gun evidence of it,” concluded Harrigan.

2006 UNA Membership Cards

Just to let you know to watch for your 2006 Membership Card in the mail. If you have not received your card in the next 3 weeks please contact Provincial Office at 1-800-252-9394 or (780)425-1025.



UNA Locals in contract talks

Negotiations have commenced at the Beverly Centre in Midnapore south of Calgary. This is the facility where RNs, RPNs and LPNs have been recognized as being in the same bargaining unit. In their in-going proposal, the nurses have asked for just one classification for all their members: nurse, which would have LPNs and RNs paid at the same rate. They have asked for provincial salary rates.

LPNs' voting on mediation recommendations

Licensed Practical Nurses and auxiliary nursing Employees are voting soon on mediator's recommendations for a new collective agreement. The recommendations are for a four-year agreement running to March 31, 2008 and for 3% salary increases each year. But the mediator also added a new step seven, at \$21.89 an hour as of April 1, 2006 and a new step eight commencing April 1, 2007 of \$23.45 an hour. The starting rate for LPNs rises from \$16.07 an hour in 2004 to \$17.91 an hour in 2007.

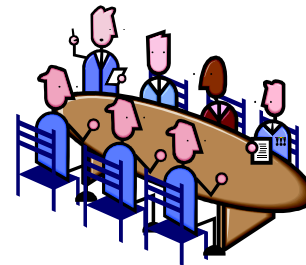
The mediator was also dealing with issues resulting from the Bill 27 amalgamation of bargaining units, which made it necessary to combine different collective agreements.

The LPNs also would get an increase in night shift differential to \$2 an hour. The evening differential remains at \$1.75.

There were also improvements in vacation that bring LPNs to the same vacation entitlement as the UNA provincial agreement, with the exception of supplementary vacation.

The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) will be conducting a ratification vote shortly for the LPNs, nursing attendants and other health assistant categories covered by the agreement.

Local 115 – General Meeting



Date: February 16, 2005

Time: 1530 – 1730

Place: AGW 2.

Symposium on Environmental and Occupational Carcinogens

You are invited to attend the upcoming Symposium on Environmental and Occupational Carcinogens on Friday, March 31, 2006 at the Calgary at the Delta Calgary Airport Hotel.

The symposium is co-hosted by the Alberta Cancer Board (ACB) and the National Committee on Environmental and Occupational Exposures (NCEOE). The ACB is a Provincial Health Authority operating cancer facilities and programs in Alberta. Programs and services include cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, research and education. The NCEOE is a tripartite and multi stakeholder sub-committee of the Primary Prevention Action Group of the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control.

If you work in the area of occupational and environmental health or cancer prevention, please plan to attend this conference. The symposium features national and provincial speakers who will focus on primary prevention of exposure to cancer-causing agents in the environment and at the workplace.

Conference Website and Online Registration:

www.timewiseevents.com/acb2006

Conference Agenda:

<http://www.timewiseevents.com/acb2006/agenda.pdf>

The symposium registration fee is \$75.00 and the deadline to register is March 17, 2006. Please forward this notice to anyone else you feel would be interested in attending.



SPOTLIGHT on your UNA Contract

Vacation

Employers can not pay out vacation

Content: Vacation

Agreement: Facility and Community Agreements 2001-2003

Date: February 2004

Some health Employers tell nurses that if they do not take their vacation, they will pay it out. But under UNA Collective Agreements Employers are NOT permitted to pay out unused vacation hours.

Vacation is earned one year to be taken in the next year (or in the months after it is earned). The vacation year for most Employers runs from April 1 to March 31 and Employees who do not use up their full vacation entitlement can request in writing that the unused time be carried over to the next year and their request cannot be unreasonably denied.

Employers are not permitted to make arbitrary rules like: no more than five days can be carried over; all unused vacation must be paid out, etc. That would be unreasonable denial.

Employees who have attempted to schedule vacation but have had their request(s) denied, cannot be reasonably denied a request to carry over that vacation time to the next year. Employers could be justified in denying a carry over if an Employee has NOT attempted to schedule or use their vacation hours. Even then, however, the Employer is not allowed to simply pay out the hours.

– *Article 17.03 (c) Facility and Community Agreements*

Different Rules For Overtime

Employers normally MUST pay out banked overtime hours, unless it is mutually agreed to carry the hours over after March 31.



SPOTLIGHT on your UNA Contract

Professional Development

- Three paid days for professional development
- Twenty-three hours a year for in-services
- Up to five days leave, without loss of pay, for attendance requirements in a degree program

Three days for Professional Development (Article 35)

Three paid days for education or professional development must be made available “upon request”. The days are available to all Employees, full-time, part-time or casual. Professional development days are not “banked” from year to year. Employees must apply in advance in writing. Nurses may also be paid costs including transportation, registration, subsistence or other expenses, if the Employer approves them. A travel expense provision, Article 35.05, makes it mandatory for Employers to pay travel and expenses for staff to attend compulsory educational activities.

Twenty-three hours a year for in-services

The Employer must provide annual compulsory, paid time, in-services on: CPR, Anaphylaxis, Fire, Evacuation and Disaster Procedures, as well as Proper Lifting and Prevention of Back Injuries. In addition to these compulsory in-services, Employees must have the opportunity to attend at least 23 paid hours of in-service education provided by your employer each year. Home study time also paid! For any compulsory education, the Employer must pay all fee and material costs, an Employee’s course time and home study time if it occurs. Nurses have been paid 20 hours and more of home study time, in addition to course time.

Up to five days leave for study towards a degree (Article 22.05)

Employees must be granted up to five days leave without loss of pay (e.g. no pay for education on a scheduled day of rest) for attendance requirements in a university or college course as part of a degree relevant to nursing practice. Employees must inform the Employer in writing of the days they need for their educational program requirements.

Article 35, 22.05

Facility & Community Agreements*

*Other UNA Agreements often have different provisions. Check your Agreement or with your Local for details.



SPOTLIGHT on your UNA Contract

Fairness in Vacations— Article 17 in our Collective Agreement ensures that vacation time is scheduled fairly

The Vacation Planner

- Your manager must post a Vacation Planner on your unit by January 1st of each year. You submit in writing the time period you wish to take your vacation(s) by March 15th.
- The manager must post the approved Vacation Planner by April 30th.
- Seniority provides the guiding principle for allocating vacations.
- the Employer may not “carve out” a specific time period in which Employees are not able to request vacation e.g. Christmas and New Years. The vacation year includes the whole calendar year and you are entitled to request vacation anytime throughout the year.
- Vacation requests after April 30th must be submitted in writing to the manager. They must respond within 14 days of your request.
- If your vacation request was not approved (or not responded to or delayed) by your manager, you have 10 working days to contact your UNA representative to raise your concerns regarding your vacation request and to file a grievance, if necessary.
- Your manager may not cancel or reschedule your vacation unless there is a critical, unforeseen emergency and the Employer can demonstrate that a bona fide attempt was made to address and resolve the emergency situation.
- If your manager does cancel your vacation, you are entitled to receive double time (2X your basic rate of pay) for all shifts worked during the period of vacation cancelled by the Employer. In addition, the Employer shall reimburse all non-refundable costs (e.g. airline or other tickets) related to the cancellation of the vacation.

VACATION ENTITLEMENT DEPENDS UPON YOUR YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT.

- To calculate the amount of your vacation entitlement, please refer to Article 17 of the Collective Agreement.
- If you do not use all your vacation entitlement during the calendar year you may make a request in writing to carry it forward to the next vacation year, which must not be unreasonably denied.

Article 17.03 (b)(i) “Where the number of Employees indicating a preference for a specific time period exceeds the number of Employees that can be allocated vacation during that period, vacation time is to be granted in order of seniority.”



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