



United Nurses of Alberta

Local 115

Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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Issue 24

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Message from the President

Welcome to February and Family day Weekend. I hope you get to spend some time with your family during the weekend. The units at Local 115 and satellites are very busy and I know the overtime that many nurses are doing is tremendous. Please remember that if you are asked to VOLUNTEER to do something, you could be asked to waive your rights in the contract.

I will draw your attention to Article 3.03 - No Employee shall be required or permitted to make any written or verbal agreement which may be in conflict with the terms of this agreement. Please call us if this happens; or you have questions about what is being asked - an example is X days or overtime. Under the contract you are entitled to many things which you may not be aware of. An example is if you work a DOUBLE shift - a second 8 hour shift - the Employer is to pay for your meals. And those 16 hours is the maximum number of hours you can work. Shift schedule problems are happening frequently: you are entitled to 15.5 hours OFF DUTY between shifts. Please call us if you have questions - the UNA interpretation of articles is important for you to know.

Nurses deserve BREAKS and they deserve VACATION. It is important that you take your breaks, and if required to work overtime to complete your nursing work - you do so. IF you are refused overtime to complete your work - CALL US. And you are permitted to request for overtime in pay or time back. Nurses have professional and ethical obligations to fulfill to their patient care. Stand up for your patients and your rights.

Vacation planners are up and a reminder put in blocks of Vacation for the entire year from May 1/06 - April 30/07 - by the MARCH 15th deadline. Your vacation planner should clearly state how many RN's/RPN's can be off per day or shift.

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Many concerns have been brought up to PRC re: lack of beds, short-staffing, overcapacity or lack of orientation. If you have a concern, when you document a PRC to UNA please put your name and number so that a UNA member of the committee may contact you to discuss.

Please remember the motto of UNA is Strength and Unity. When we work together we can achieve gains for our patients and our profession. ❖

Happy Family Day!

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

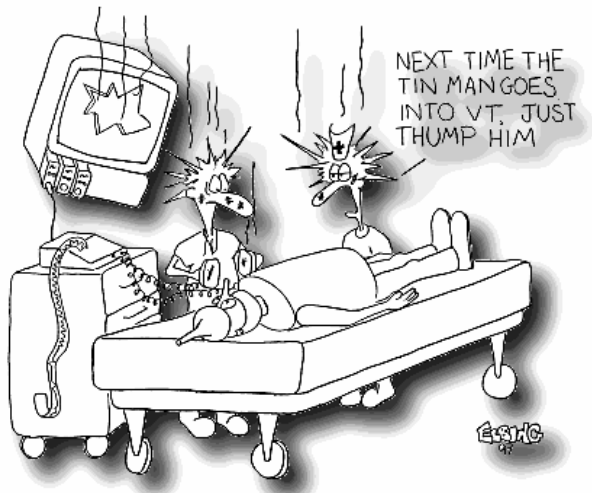
Important Information on Health and Prescription Benefit plans

APRIL 30 DEADLINE FOR FILING DENIED DRUG BENEFIT CLAIMS



The Joint Committee of UNA and the Health Boards of Alberta Services has released a "Joint Statement that resolves important supplementary health benefits issues, including coverage for medication prescriptions for nurses under the provincial Collective Agreement.

The Committee's Joint Communication also gives a detailed listing of how benefits will be "leveled up" to be equivalent to the Health Organizations Benefit Plan (HOBP). Many nurses will get improved coverage for paramedical services, like massage, with this "leveling up". For more information go to <http://una.ab.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. ❖



Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Day

Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness day is held on **February 28th** to increase awareness of the tragedy of repetitive strain injury among workers.

RSI is the name given to a variety of musculoskeletal disorders, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow and tendonitis.

RSIs are an increasing problem in health care and occur due to inadequate workstation layout, lifting heavy or unbalanced loads and performing repetitive tasks.

Many workers ignore the problem or are taking pain medication to deal with the symptoms. Not addressing the problem in the early stages can lead to temporary and eventually permanent disability which affects the individual work and home life. ❖

Klein Going Wrong Way Don't Spend the \$400 yet

The Alberta government's "third way" plan to bring in more private insurance and a parallel for-profit health business would end up costing Alberta families a great deal, says the United Nurses of Alberta.

"Don't spend that \$400 – you'll need it to start paying for Ralph's "third way," says UNA President Heather Smith. "Forcing people to rely more and more on private insurance from big corporations will cost everyone, businesses and citizens," she says. "As much as the Premier attempts to deny this is American-style health care, private insurance is just that," she says.

The nurses point out that the United States has a lower life expectancy and lower measures of overall health with their private for-profit insurance system.

"The "third way" is not innovative, it's not forward looking, it's going back," Heather Smith says. "Increasing the need for private insurance is jumping back nearly 50 years to the bad old days when some people could afford or get some health services and many others couldn't. That was proven to be the wrong way."

"The only business that would benefit would be the insurance business," Heather Smith notes.

The government is already paying AON, the American insurance giant, \$1.5 million to prepare the blueprint for the "third way" and private insurance.

All over the world, Registered nurses advocate for universal public health plans because they work best for most people. In the United States nurses are campaigning right now for a public single-payer health system, precisely because it provides the best care for the most patients.

"They look to Canada, and our higher measures of overall health, as a good model," Heather Smith points out. "Mr. Klein's plan just doesn't make sense." ❖

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

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

Nurses need their breaks.

Safe nursing practice includes meal periods and breaks. They are essential to good practice and our Collective Agreement specifically safeguards Employees' breaks. The Agreement specifies that every Employee gets full breaks, or if it is absolutely not possible, they must be paid for scheduled work during breaks and paid double time if the break is not re-scheduled.

Article 7.01

(c) Notwithstanding that the meal period is to be excluded in the calculation of regular hours of work, if the Employer requires an Employee to be readily available for duty during his or her meal period, the Employee shall be so advised in advanced and be paid for that meal period at the Employee's basic rate of pay.

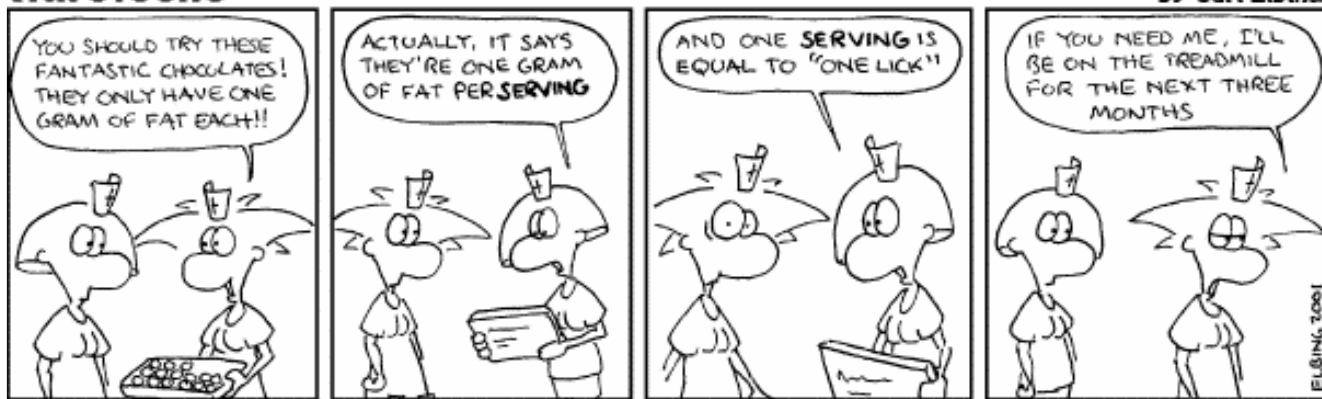
(d) If an Employee is recalled to duty during her or his meal period or rest period the Employee shall be given a full meal period or rest period later in the Employee's shift, or, where that is not possible, be paid for the meal period or rest period as follows:

- (i) for a rest period, at two times (2X) the Employee's basic rate of pay rather than at straight time; or
- (ii) for a meal period for which the Employee is entitled to be paid in accordance with Article 7.01 (c), at two times (2X) the Employee's basic rate of pay rather than at straight time; or
- (iii) for a meal period for which the Employee is not otherwise entitled to be paid, at two times (2X) the Employee's basic rate of pay.

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Nurstoons

by Carl Elbing



www.nurstoons.com



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