



United Nurses of Alberta

Local 115

Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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Message from the President

Hello everyone as we start the New Year, best wishes for a healthy and prosperous year. 2007 started with a personal crisis with the death of my father - Thank You to all the kind and compassionate people for their condolences and caring. Reality when your loved one is the patient.

Entering 2007 we are in the worst Nursing Crisis we have ever experienced and we all know and are living it. PRC's are at 35 already for this year and situations are continuing. We endeavor to do all that we can do to help. Retention of staff is vital and CHR must play their role to remedy. Many changes in CHR personnel and staff seem to be occurring this month.

I'd like to draw your attention to some issues: Vacation Planner - read the Joint Committee document and mark in blocks for the ENTIRE year all your vacation - that comes down to March 15 and on April 30 for them to say YES/NO to your requests. It should be visible so you can see what all your staff are requesting by seniority. There is NO Vacation Payout in the UNA contract - nurses are to have paid Vacation - time off - we want you to have paid time off - downtime. If you want to carry-over vacation you were unable to take - make a written request to carry-over vacation by March 31/07 - there are NO LIMITS but you must indicate when in the New Year you will be taking it. If you want to carry-over banked overtime hours again make a written request to carry-There

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are no limits, and indicate when you'll be using them. If any of these requests are refused, call our office and we will advise re: next steps.

Remember when submitting any written requests - keep a copy for your records-anything- OT, etc.

There is a wonderful opportunity in a draw to attend the CFNU - Canadian Federation of Nurses Union conference in June - get involved in your union and enter the draw!

Take care,

Michelle M. Senkow

President, Local 115
United Nurses of Alberta

Check out the CFNU Poster & Draw in this Newsletter!



Nurses meet on negotiation proposals

Contract negotiations for the vast majority of the provinces Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses are slated to begin January 23. UNA and the Health Boards of Alberta Services (HBA Services) will be exchanging proposals that day for the provincial agreement that covers nurses working in the province's Health Regions.

UNA and HBA Services have already booked 29 days for negotiations over the next three months.

The provincial contract expires March 31, 2007. It had been a three-year term, beginning in April 2003, but nurses voted to extend it a further year. Contracts with many long-term care employers and the Alberta Cancer Board will also be expiring at the same time, and negotiations with these other groups will begin shortly as well.

UNA and HBA Services have undertaken NOT to negotiate through the news media, and although there is NO "media blackout", the expectation is that details of the talks will not be made public. All Health Region-employed nurses as well as many long-term care nurses, and Alberta Cancer Board nurses are included in the provincial negotiating round.



UNA has launched a poster campaign on transit trains and buses across Alberta. The ads feature three UNA members commenting on how they view their work and its importance for their patients. The campaign will also be growing to cover much of rural Alberta through smaller newspaper ads.



Britain Faces Severe Nurse Shortage

Leaked government documents forecasting a glut of National Health Service (NHS) specialists and an acute shortage of nurses have created controversy in that country. A draft workforce strategy from the Department of Health said the NHS in England is forecasting shortages of 14,000 nurses, 1,200 GPs and 1,100 junior doctors, enough to cause serious disruption of services to patients.

It also predicts a surplus of 3,200 specialists by March 2011 and there would also be 16,200 too many therapists, scientists and technicians.

Officials admit that government policies are contributing to huge swings in demand for staff. After a 2.7% cut in the workforce in the current financial year to eliminate NHS overspending, there will be a recruitment surge to prepare health services to meet a December 2008 deadline to reduce maximum waiting times to 18 weeks. Demand for nurses and doctors would then dip after the deadline passes.

The document proposed radical changes to doctors' gratings, local bargaining to reduce nurses' pay in low-wage areas and the deliberate use of unemployment to "create a downward pressure on wages".

Stelmach puts priority on health workforce shortages

New Premier Ed Stelmach made some of his plans for health care public in December with his series of letters to his new cabinet ministers. Stelmach's letter to new Health and Wellness Minister Dave Hancock asked him to:

- Implement health care productivity reforms and long-term sustainability initiatives in consultation with health care professionals and regional health authorities.
- Implement a comprehensive workforce strategy to secure and retain the health professionals needed over the next 10 years.
- Implement a new pharmaceutical strategy to improve the management of government drug expenditures to ensure that Albertans have access to sustainable government drug coverage.
- Strengthen public health services that promote wellness and injury and disease prevention and provide preparedness for public health emergencies.



Stelmach also had priorities for seniors, which included expanding long-term care and improving the standards of care.

Calgary health officials launch international search for nurses

Michelle Lang (mlang@theherald.canwest.com) - CanWest News Service; Calgary Herald

Published: Sunday, January 14, 2007

CALGARY -- Calgary health officials are launching their first serious push to hire nursing staff from other countries as they battle a growing shortage of medical professionals that is closing beds at hospitals in the southern Alberta city.

Three Calgary Health Region representatives are traveling this weekend to Ireland, England and two Persian Gulf countries in a bid to recruit between 50 and 60 registered nurses to work in the local health system. During the two-week recruitment trip, officials will interview about 110 candidates in several cities, including Dublin and London as well as Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Doha, Qatar.

The trip comes as more than 30 beds are closed every day in Calgary hospitals because of shortages of nurses and other health professionals. CHR estimates it has job openings for between 400 and 500 registered nurses.

Noreen Linton, associate chief nursing officer for CHR, and two other officials will conduct the interviews, offering qualified candidates conditional employment, based on their ability to meet Canadian immigration criteria.

"We have a situation where supply is not keeping pace with demand," said Susan Cassidy, executive director of workforce strategies for CHR. "International recruitment is one strategy aimed at attempting to increase the supply of qualified staff into the organization."

But the trip is renewing debate about the ethics of "poaching" medical professionals from other countries.

"You don't want to leave a less fortunate country with a massive shortage" of nurses, said Michelle Senkow of the United Nurses of Alberta. "We should be dealing with the problem within our own country."

Linton said the CHR's trip is within the ethical policies of the Canadian Nurses Association. The policies allow international hires in developed countries and regions that have enough medical staff. "We're not poaching. We're meeting with individuals who have chosen to immigrate here," said Linton.

In a bid to lure more nurses into the system, CHR has been ramping up its recruitment efforts. A "hiring blitz" in December allowed the health authority to conduct group interviews and conditionally hire large numbers of health professionals, pending confirmation of their qualifications.

Similar events are planned for January and February.

CHR is launching an ad campaign next weekend in newspapers around the country to attract nurses from other provinces, and the health authority has advertised for medical professionals in international journals.

The University of Calgary has also increased the number of nursing students it is training.



Nurses are the worst paid public sector professionals, says RCN

United Kingdom: Nurses are the worst paid professional group working in the public sector, according to new evidence from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) released on Tuesday, November 21st, 2006.

Nurses and midwives in the public sector earn 20% less than primary teachers and 24% less than secondary teachers

The RCN is releasing its evidence on nurses' pay on the same day that staff-side unions representing 750,000 NHS workers give their oral evidence to the independent Nursing and Other Health Professionals Review Body (NOHPRB), which sets nurses' pay.

In its written submission to the pay review body, the RCN provides evidence of how nurses' pay compares unfavorably with other public sector workers, including teachers and police officers. The submission cites data from the 2006 Labour Force Survey which show that nurses and midwives in the public sector earn 20% less than primary teachers and 24% less than secondary teachers.

Nurses and midwives in managerial roles also earn significantly less than teachers and police officers without management responsibilities: 24% less than primary teachers; 27% less than secondary teachers and 14% less than police officers.

The RCN's submission also identifies a high number of nurses forced to take second jobs to make ends meet. Independent research carried out on behalf of the RCN in August found 68% of nurses surveyed online saying they had taken on temporary work to supplement their incomes.

The RCN is calling for nurses to be given a morale-boosting pay award in 2007 to help bridge the current pay gap with police officers and teachers.

Nurstoons



www.nurston.com



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 eg. 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.”

Facility and Community Agreements 2001-2003.

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



LOCAL 115 DRAW!

We are holding a draw for 7 members of Local 115 in good standing to attend the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) conference from June 5-8, 2007, in beautiful St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Submit your entry form (below) in writing to the Local 115 mailbox or by mail to:

United Nurses of Alberta
Local 115
Suite 300,1422Kensington Road, NW,
Calgary, Alberta T2N 3P9

Included for this trip is airfare, accommodation, registration and 2days wage replacement. For the additional 2days of education, the member will need to take professional development days, etc.

- The theme for the conference this year is Solidarity Without Boundaries.
- Come and meet nurses from across the country.
- Learn, plan, strategize and laugh together.
- Together is how we make a difference.

For more information about the conference, please visit the CFNU website at:
http://www.nursesunions.ca/cms/index.php/2007_convention

ENTRY FORM:

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LOCAL 115 – CFNU Draw

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____
UNA#: _____ **Signature:** _____

Drop this Entry Form into the UNA mailbox or by mail. Entries must be received by Wed. Feb 28 @ 1300.



United Nurses of Alberta Local 115

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