



# United Nurses of Alberta

## Local 115

### Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

March 2007  
Issue 36

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## Message from the Treasurer

I am fortunate to be able to provide my first newsletter excerpt during the most welcome spring month of March. A fantastic season for Calgarian's where it is immensely important to keep a snow shovel, sunscreen and waterproof footwear available at all times.

Hats off to all the individuals who entered our draw to attend the 2007 Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions conference in St. John's, Newfoundland. Seven lucky local 115 members were chosen for this 4 day conference. A strong nursing organization that works to protect the health of patients and our national health system, and promotes nurses and the nursing profession at the national level.

With negotiations continuing we are working to keep our members informed and updated. For negotiation updates UNA has a fact line that can be accessed 24 hours a day. (1-800-804-4541) Also access an excellent UNA Website [www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca). Through this website, you can easily reach our Local specific website. We all need to consider which issues contractually are most relevant to you and your workplace. This information and your concerns need to be shared with your ward representative or you can contact your executive directly. You can also stay current with Local information by watching the Local notice boards for updates and information.

I was fortunate to revisit some and meet a few new attendees at the Local ward representative meeting held at the Southern Alberta Regional Office. We are always looking for more members to share information with. Please feel free to add yourself to our Ward Rep List. Feel free to contact one of us here in the Local office. These informal meetings continue to provide a fantastic opportunity to mingle directly with our union representatives who connect us with our members.

To conclude I cannot stress the importance enough the benefit to members in using our contracts allowance for RRSP contributions. Registered Nurses have the

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opportunity to contribute up to 2 % of regular earnings to an RRSP and an equal percentage will be matched by the employer. This realistically can work out to a contractual 2% raise! This percentage is based on all regular hours worked for the employer. If this is an advantage you haven't yet participated in, contact payroll immediately. This benefit is not retroactive.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you as your Local Treasurer. I always welcome questions from members. Please feel free to email me at [rpambrun@una.ab.ca](mailto:rpambrun@una.ab.ca).

Take care,

*Ross Pambrun*

Treasurer, Local 115  
United Nurses of Alberta

## Local 115 Meeting

March 12, 2007

1600 • 1800

Coombs Theatre

## S.O.S. Medicare Conference - Draw

Please be advised that UNA is funding 10 Members at Large to attend the S.O.S. Medicare 2: Looking Forward Conference in Regina May 3, & 4, 2007. These members will be chosen through a random draw.

This is a national conference that will explore the impact and significance of Tommy Douglas' vision for the future of Canada's health care system. This event will bring together experts in what Tommy Douglas referred to as the Second Phase of Medicare's development: changing the way health services are delivered and addressing the social determinants of health.

Some of the speakers at the conference are: Shirley Douglas, Monique Begin, Robert Evans, Michael Rachlis, Linda Silas, Roy Romanow and Stephen Lewis.


As you can see this will be a very exciting conference. UNA members interested in being funded by UNA to attend must complete the attached ballot and return it to the UNA Provincial office either by email ([enter2win@una.ab.ca](mailto:enter2win@una.ab.ca)), by fax (780- 426-2093) or by mail (900- 10611 98 Avenue, Edmonton, AB. T5K 2P7)

The ballot must be received no later than 1630 hours on April 2, 2007 Funding will cover travel, accommodation, registration, meals (as per UNA policy) and salary replacement for LOA's only.

Please note: This will be the only method of communicating information about this draw. All Local Presidents are requested to print this information and post it for your members.

*Bev Dick*

1st Vice-President  
United Nurses of Alberta

<b>CANADIAN HEALTH COALITION</b>	 Canadian Health Coalition	<b>TOMMY DOUGLAS'</b> <b>VISION FOR MEDICARE</b> S.O.S. MEDICARE 2: LOOKING FORWARD
		<b>May 3-4 2007</b> <b>Regina Saskatchewan</b>
<p>Yes, enter my name for the draw to attend the Tommy Douglas' Vision for Medicare Conference, May 3-4, Regina.</p>		
NAME: _____		
ADDRESS: _____		
CITY: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____		
PHONE: _____ LOCAL #: _____		
SEND ENTRY FORM TO: <a href="mailto:enter2win@una.ab.ca">enter2win@una.ab.ca</a> • FAX (780) 426-2093 • UNA PROVINCIAL OFFICE, 900-10611 98 AVENUE, EDMONTON, AB T5K 2P7 <b>DEADLINE: 1630 HOURS ON APRIL 2, 2007</b>		



## Message from the President

As March rolls in and the time changes we wish for sunshine and a nice Spring. But we all know in Alberta and in Calgary that could be anything. A few days left for you to submit your vacation requests on the Vacation Planner as it comes down on March 15/07.

The Attendance management program seems to be coming up on some units again. If you are called to a meeting about your attendance or directed to OH & S, call our office for advice and help. Your medical information and reasons for your Sick Time are private and confidential. Attention to the Spotlights included in this Newsletter about Sick time and your rights.

Congratulations to the winners of the UNA Local 115 draw to attend CFNU. A wonderful opportunity for union education, and a conference that will be informative and helpful, so you may become more interested and involved in your union.

Rotation changes are occurring on many units- lines should be picked by seniority according to your FTE and shift length. If you have concerns about the compliancy of your rotation call our office for assistance.

There are some other provincially funded conference opportunities - read in this Newsletter and tap into the UNANET- your UNA information system.

As Negotiations continue and the committee is busy at work, it is important to stay updated to the progress - read the NEGS Fanouts. Stay in touch with your Ward Rep and Local Executive.

We UNITED NURSES can work together towards a safer and healthier workplace for nurses and patients.

In solidarity,

*Michelle M. Senkow*

President, Local 115  
United Nurses of Alberta

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## Congratulations!

CFNU draw and lucky winners are:

1. Heather Dark- Hanson
  2. Marcia Shewchuk
  3. Val Lymer
  4. Katherine Doherty
  5. Chloe Anderson
  6. Shelley Morlock
  7. Heather Dean
- 



## On the Lighter Side Weighing In

Whenever my aunt went to the doctor, she would complain to me about the long delay she always endured. One day, when my aunt's name was finally called, she was asked to step on the scale. "I need to get your weight today," said the nurse.

Without a moment's hesitation, my aunt replied, "One hour and 45 minutes!"



UNA Negotiation Fact Line:  
(800) 804-4541

UNA Negotiation Email:  
negotiations@una.ab.ca

## 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.

### On-Line Video about RN Care



Canadian Health Services Research Foundation  
Fondation canadienne de la recherche sur les services de santé

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation has released an electronic video documentary (eVD) titled "A short film about how nurses save lives."

This on-line documentary features a patient, an oncology nurse, a nurse manager, and a leading researcher in the field of nurse staffing, who express the importance of nurses' contribution to health and healthcare and how higher levels of nurse staffing lead to improved patient outcomes.

The video is based in part on a new paper from the Foundation Staffing For Safety: A Synthesis Of The Evidence On Nurse Staffing And Patient Safety. The paper reviews the extensive research showing the importance of RN care.

The eVD is viewable on the internet at: [www.chsrf.ca/research\\_themes/nlop\\_staffing\\_e.php](http://www.chsrf.ca/research_themes/nlop_staffing_e.php). The link for the video appears about half-way down the page.



## Public Interest Alberta tackles the province’s “democratic deficit”



Public Interest Alberta has released a discussion document and is hosting public forums in eight centres across the province to raise the questions about our democratic process.

“Alberta’s democratic deficit is at least as large as its infrastructure deficit, and the consequences are every bit as problematic,” says Larry Booi, Chairperson of Public Interest Alberta. “We need a lot more democracy in this province, and we need to get started now. The goal has to be to renew and revitalize democracy in comprehensive and systematic ways.”

Public Interest Alberta’s document, *Democratic Renewal In Alberta*, focuses on nine major areas of the democratic deficit. PIA’s Democracy Task Force proposes more than 80 suggested solutions that are designed to spark discussion across the province.

“We have an opportunity to engage the diversity of our province to create a system we can all participate in and is truly reflective of all Albertans,” said Samantha Power, U of A Students, Union president. “If we really want to get young people, women and others who are frustrated and excluded from our democratic system to participate in our democracy, then now is the time for all of us to consider these proposed solutions and to act on them.”

Public Interest Alberta announced that they will kick-start the discussion with eight public forums across the province. The forums will be held in Red Deer (March 3rd), Lethbridge (March 10th), Medicine Hat (March 11th), Athabasca (March 16th), Edmonton (March 17th), Camrose (March 23rd), Calgary (March 24th), and Grande Prairie (March 31st).

To view the discussion document and to register for one of the eight public forums, please visit PIA’s website at [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org).

## Health Region Looks to Fast-Track Training

By Bill Kaufmann – Calgary Sun

Published: Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Desperate to recruit skilled staff, CHR officials say they’re ready to forge contracts with local medical schools to fast-track training.

In an unprecedented move, the Calgary Health Region would spend about \$2 million from its hiring fund to ensure more nurses and physicians are trained at the University of Calgary, Mount Royal College, SAIT and Bow Valley College. (Continued next page)

## Health Region Looks to Fast-Track Training

(Continued from Previous page)

CHR president Jack Davis said they can't wait on a provincial plan to bolster student spots.

"We have to take some action on our own," said Davis.

"I think it is unusual, but our situation with respect to workforce issues is unusual -- we have to do this on an urgent basis."

The CHR has entered into discussions with the schools, said Davis, and hopes to have a program set up for this fall.

"We don't want to lose another academic year," he said.

## Nurses See Red to Cut Drug Error

United Kingdom: Nurses in charge of distributing medications at Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow wear red tabards when dispensing drugs.



Staff and patients at the hospital are told not to speak to the nurses when they have the garment on. Nurses reported that wearing the tabards stopped constant interruptions and have proved to be successful with the staff.

Studies have suggested that as many as one in 10 patients experience some kind of drugs mix up. The National Health System (NHS) in Scotland does not record how many mix ups result in fatalities, but a report in England and Wales found there were 1,200 deaths in one year alone.

Mistakes also add to the time each patient spends in hospital. Estimates have put the annual cost to the NHS in Scotland at £50M.

Clare McRae, a nurse in Gartnavel's gastroenterology unit, said the system helped staff cope with the increasing numbers of medications being taken by patients.

"We have to make sure the drugs that the patients are on don't interact with one another and that the doses they are being prescribed are the correct doses", she said.

"Due to frequent interruptions and the drug rounds not finishing until quite late on, we had to introduce something that would be of benefit."

 ***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.

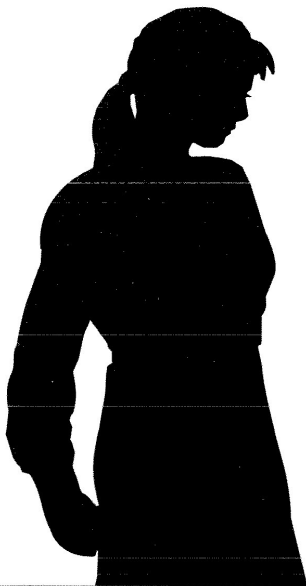
This solidarity protects nurses from being played off against each other. For example, it helps prevent a manager from saying, “If you don’t want the extra hours at straight time, someone else will.”

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!



**Being  
SICK  
is not a  
Crime!**



## **Don't be intimidated!**

Sick leave is your  
right, guaranteed  
by your contract.

If you are called to  
any meeting  
about sick leave...

**CALL  
YOUR  
UNION!**

## **New employer ATTENDANCE programs**

The Calgary Health Region has begun a new "program" to reduce the sick leave of employees. Other health employers may be close behind.

Employees are **NOT** obliged to report to Occupational Health and Safety for interviews or medical examinations. You have the right to ask for a union representative at any meeting.

If you are asked to sign any type of waiver or release for your personal medical information, you should contact **UNA**.

If you are on sick leave and are phoned at home by your Employer and feel harassed, call your **UNA Labour Relations Officer**.



*United Nurses of Alberta*

UNA Calgary 237-2377 1-800-661-1802

UNA Edmonton 425-1025 1-800-252-9394





# United Nurses of Alberta Local 115

## Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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