



# United Nurses of Alberta

## Local 115

### Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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Southern Alberta Regional Office, Local 115, Suite 300, 1422 Kensington Road NW, Calgary AB T2N 3P9.

Web site: <http://local115.una.ab.ca> Phone number: (403) 670-9960



**Nurses vote 82% to accept recommendations**

## Alberta nurses overwhelmingly accept contract

CBC News, July 12, 2007

Alberta's nurses have become the highest paid in the country after overwhelmingly approving a three-year contract.

About 80 per cent of the province's 24,000 nurses voted Wednesday in favour of a mediator's deal, which will see senior nurses make more than \$43 an hour in the third year of the three-year agreement, up from just under \$37.

Heather Smith, president of the United Nurses of Alberta, said she hopes the agreement will help address the nursing shortage in the province.

"We aren't looking to poach nurses, we are looking to retain the graduates from Alberta programs and encourage the current workforce to continue to participate."

The agreement gives all nurses a five per cent raise annually. Those with more than 20 years on the job will get seven per cent. Under the contract, nurses also will get a yearly payment ranging from \$1,500 to \$1,750.

Nurses who work only on weekends will put in fewer hours, but get paid for the full day.

Provisions in the contract allow retiring nurses to continue to work part time and still get full

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contributions to their pensions. Smith said there are more than 5,000 nurses who could retire at any time.



### Nurses to be given free screenings of 'Sicko'

Updated Thu. Jul. 12 2007 9:10 PM ET - Canadian Press

TORONTO -- Nurses across Canada will be able to see Michael Moore's new documentary "Sicko" for free for a limited time beginning next week.

The move by distributor Alliance Atlantis all started with a group of nurses in Alberta.

The United Nurses of Alberta decided to purchase 150 tickets to the movie to distribute to the public.

When filmmaker Michael Moore heard about it, he announced that he'd reimburse the cost of the movie tickets to the organization.

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Moore says the nurses know that once a Canadian sees his film, the last thing they will want is an American-style approach to health care.

"Sicko" criticizes the U.S. health-care system and compares it to countries with universal coverage, such as Canada.

Alliance Atlantis jumped on board with the free ticket offer for all Canadian nurses. Between Monday, July 16, and Thursday, July 19, nurses showing proper ID can see "Sicko" at no cost at any Cineplex Entertainment, Empire or Landmark Theatre.



## 2007 UNA AGM – Local 115 Members to Attend

### 115 members funded to attend the AGM

Estrada Amparado  
Chloe Anderson  
Jocelyn Bandaual  
Sandra Bilodeau  
Heather Dean  
Jacalyn Elias Tarnasky  
Natalie Hanlon  
Colette Huck  
Carrie McDonagh  
Esmeralda Mercader  
Charlotte Parkinson  
Al Perreault  
Tammy Pye  
Ann – Marie Rowland  
Brenda Seifried  
Stephanie Tucker  
Dora Turk-Boutilier  
Marietta J Samin  
Dianne Schwabb  
Jaya Shummogum  
Karyn Solar  
Lisa Symonds  
Wanda Tomaszewski  
Eliena Vlassova  
Daphne Wallace  
Sue Weatherhead  
Joan Wright  
Clara Wu  
Doris Wu

Madona Atkinson  
Shannon Beaudoin  
Celia CarringtonJones  
Heather Dark Hanson  
Lisa Douglas  
Nancy Fehr  
Marlene HahnBennet  
Erika Haley  
Coleen Huckle  
Char Janik  
Clarence Kort  
Jan McAdam  
Heather McCulloch  
Christie Richardson  
Tina Scott  
Michelle Senkow  
Shirley Soyland  
Carol Thome  
Sandy Verones

## Local 115 General Meeting

Thursday, July 19, 2007

1600-1800

Coombs Theatre, FMC





## **Nurses say yes to deal, early results show Union warns staff being lost to cost of living**

JAMIE KOMARNICKI - CALGARY HERALD Thursday, July 12, 2007

As Alberta nurses ratified a new three-year contract Wednesday, union officials warned the high cost of living is still driving workers out of the province. Final vote totals weren't available, but the deal "carried solidly," said Keith Wiley, a spokesman for the union.

More than 160 United Nurses of Alberta locals representing 24,000 registered nurses provincewide voted on the three-year deal Wednesday that will hike their salaries by 15 per cent — and in some cases 27 per cent — making them the highest-paid members of their profession in Canada.

But in Calgary, especially, nurses say wages are still not enough to keep up with the city's explosive growth.

Members were divided on the contract going into Wednesday's vote, and that will have to be dealt with in the future, said the union's secretary treasurer Karen Craik.

"Some members are saying they think that the mediator's recommendations are livable — let's put it that way — for the next three years. Not necessarily the best, they were hoping for more, but some say they'd be willing to live with it," she said.

"But there's quite a few members saying it's not enough, it doesn't go far enough, it doesn't address concerns regarding mandatory overtime, increases in charge pay," said Craik.

The deal includes a "special market adjustment" payment of around two per cent a year, plus another two per cent annual salary increase for senior nurses with 20 or more years experience.

That means senior nurses could make as high as \$39.27 an hour in the first year of the contract.

But leftover issues such as overtime and shift differential could continue to dog labour relations, said Janet Fex, a 20-year nursing veteran who works on an acute medicine teaching unit at the Peter Lougheed Hospital.

The province is projecting a shortage of 5,000 registered nurses in coming years. "Right now we have such a bad shortage that patient care is getting to a dangerous place. How are they going to keep people in the province?" said Fex.

The vote came on the same day Saskatchewan health-care professionals ended a two-week strike after reaching a tentative agreement for a four per cent wage increase each year until 2009 — including an extra 2.5 per cent adjustment for senior staff with more than five years on the job.

Faced with the country's highest inflation rate — and an \$8.5 billion provincial surplus for the last fiscal year — the contract for Alberta nurses isn't easy to accept, Craik said. Increased cost of living in Alberta's hot economy, paired with lack of affordable housing, especially in Calgary, has seen nurses simply pack up and leave the province, taking advantage of incentive bonuses provided by employers such as Saskatchewan, Craik said.

"It's disturbing to me because I see some of my colleagues who are extremely good nurses and they can't stay here to work. They have to leave in order to have an affordable life," said emergency nurse Carey Chudleigh.

But the union, which remained neutral on whether the agreement should be ratified, will support its members' decision, Craik said. Negotiators for the regional health authorities declined comment Wednesday.

"We're not commenting until after it's official," said Shannon Larkins, spokeswoman for Alberta's health regions, before the final vote tally. The two sides have been negotiating since January. The union will inform the mediator and employer today if the deal has been accepted, Craik said.



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

It is unreasonable for employers to demand a note from the doctor for every employee absence because of illness. Labour law precedent is clear that is unreasonable and all Human Resource departments should be well aware of this.

Employers are allowed to require a doctor's note for any sick leave absence under the terms of Article 19.04 in the Provincial Collective Agreement. However, arbitrators have ruled that blanket requirements for doctor's notes are unreasonable. The employer must decide whether a note is necessary on a case-by-case basis.

"Attendance management" programs that require doctor's notes for every absence are effectively intimidation campaigns to prevent employees from reasonably using their sick leave benefits. If an employer is demanding a doctor's note for all sick leave absences and there appears to be a blanket policy in place, please contact your Local executive or Labour Relations Officer. It may be necessary to file a grievance.

### **Employers must pay all fees for doctor's notes**

Some doctors charge administrative fees for providing a note for sick leave.

If an Employer requires a nurse to provide proof of illness such as a doctor's note, or any other reports, the Employer must reimburse the nurse for the costs. (*Article 19.04*)

### **Protect your privacy**

If you are off sick with an illness the doctor's note only needs to confirm that you are unable to work and indicate how long you will have to be off. You are NOT obliged to give information about the diagnosis or treatment. Under some circumstances, such as extended absences or returning to work with limitations, you or your doctor may need to supply additional information. You can contact UNA or your Labour Relations Officer if you are asked to provide more medical information.



## Contact Information

### Trustees

**Karen Craik** [karen@una.ab.ca](mailto:karen@una.ab.ca)  
Secretary Treasurer

**Teresa Caldwell** [karen@una.ab.ca](mailto:karen@una.ab.ca)  
NCD Rep / Vice President Local 301

**Blanche Hitchcow** [blanche@una.ab.ca](mailto:blanche@una.ab.ca)  
SCD Rep

**Tanice Olson** [taolson@una.ab.ca](mailto:taolson@una.ab.ca)  
SCD Rep / 2nd Vice President Local 1

### Grievance Committee

Kevin Champagne [kchampagne@una.ab.ca](mailto:kchampagne@una.ab.ca)  
Barb Lauzon [mblauzon@una.ab.ca](mailto:mblauzon@una.ab.ca)  
Jacalyn Elias-Tarnasky [jelias-tamasky@una.ab.ca](mailto:jelias-tamasky@una.ab.ca)  
Mary-Jane Szigety: [mjszigety@una.ab.ca](mailto:mjszigety@una.ab.ca)

### PRC Committee

Kevin Champagne [kchampagne@una.ab.ca](mailto:kchampagne@una.ab.ca)  
Jacalyn Elias-Tarnasky [jelias-tamasky@una.ab.ca](mailto:jelias-tamasky@una.ab.ca)  
Melanie McLeod [mmcleod@una.ab.ca](mailto:mmcleod@una.ab.ca)  
Heather McCulloch [hmcculloch@una.ab.ca](mailto:hmcculloch@una.ab.ca)  
Charlotte Parkinson [cparkinson@una.ab.ca](mailto:cparkinson@una.ab.ca)  
Tina Scott [tschott@una.ab.ca](mailto:tschott@una.ab.ca)

### OH & S Committee

Dianne Schwab [dschwab@una.ab.ca](mailto:dschwab@una.ab.ca)  
Malcolm Weisgerber [mweisgerber@una.ab.ca](mailto:mweisgerber@una.ab.ca)

### Membership Secretary

Carrie McDonagh [cmcdonagh@una.ab.ca](mailto:cmcdonagh@una.ab.ca)

### Newsletter Committee

Al Perreault [aperreault@una.ab.ca](mailto:aperreault@una.ab.ca)

### Southern Alberta Regional Office (SARO)

Suite 300, 1422 Kensington Road, NW, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 3P9

Mon – Fri: 8:30am to 4:30pm (Sat, Sun, Holidays: Closed)

**SARO Phone: (403) 237-2377, Local Office Phone: (403) 670-9960, Fax: (403) 270-5749**

**Local 115 Web Site: <http://local115.una.ab.ca>**