



United Nurses of Alberta

Local 115

Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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Message from the Trustees

(January 2008)

Happy New Year to all the members of local 115! 2008 promises to be a year of educational opportunities for members and ward reps. Local business meetings will be held every other month starting in January. The alternate months will focus on membership education. All meetings/educational sessions will be held on the second Thursday of the month in the Coombs Lecture Theatre starting at 1600 hrs. The first educational is scheduled for February 14. Marilyn Vavasour, the local Labour Relations Officer, will be present for a contract interpretation session. Please bring your questions! Your first question is going to be "When are we going to receive our new contract booklets?" We are hoping to have them in the hands of the members by the end of January. They will be distributed by the employer.

Submit your names for educational draws! In 2008 the local will fund a total of eight members (2 per district meeting) to attend four South Central District meetings. This opportunity will be for members who have not yet attended a District meeting. Although District meetings are open for any member in the district to attend, funding is not available for all members. Funding will allow the member to take a union leave from the employer for the day. Each of the District meetings has time set aside for education. The next SCD meeting is scheduled for February 21st. The educational session will be generational diversity. The deadline for submitting your name is January 25th.

The local is hosting its own special Ward Rep workshop April 8th at the Olympic Volunteer Centre in Calgary. Ward Reps will be funded to attend the daylong session. Ward Reps from our out of town satellite units will be funded for travel expenses as well. If you are interested in becoming a Ward Rep please contact us.

The Canadian Labour Congress is holding its triennium May 25 - 30th in Toronto. Local 115 is able to send two locally funded members to attend this conference. To be eligible to submit your name for this draw, the member must have previously attended a Provincial UNA AGM as a voting delegate.

United Nurses of Alberta is holding its own Labour School June 11, 12, 13 in Red Deer. The local is hoping to send eight locally funded members. We will receive provincial funding for two members plus youth delegates. A youth is defined as "30 and under". If you fall into this category, let us know.

Two local members will also be drawn to attend the June UNA Executive Board meeting. This is scheduled for June 23 - 26 in Edmonton. June is the planning meeting for our Provincial

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AGM. This provides an opportunity for members to know issues and items that will be discussed at the provincial meeting. Preference will be given to members who have not previously attended a UNA Executive Board Meeting.

Please email the trustees (our addresses are located on the back of the newsletter) or call the local office at 670 -9960 if you are interested in any of the educational opportunities.

Local 115 Contract Education Open Session

Date: Feb 14, 2008

Time: 1600-1800

Place: FMC Coombs Theatre



Winners from the draw to attend the South Central District Feb 21, 2008 Meeting are Charlotte Parkinson and Heather McCulloch. Alternate was Christie Richardson. Congratulations!

IS YOUR PENSION AT RISK?

See Page 2 for Details

 **UNA Media Release****Labour mobilizes against pension plan changes**

Union members urged to turn up heat on Stelmach

Is your Pension at Risk? (See Ad at the back of this issue)

A coalition of Alberta unions says recent changes in the rules governing activities of the board of the Alberta Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) put at risk pension rights of 125,000 Albertans – including rights to early retirement, cost of living allowances and workers' ability to retire when their age and years of service add up to 85.

The Labour Coalition on Pensions has purchased full-page advertisements in Alberta daily newspapers today calling on members and pensioners to telephone their MLAs and Premier Ed Stelmach to overturn the changes. The coalition has registered a Website — www.savemypension.ca — where detailed information on the situation is available.

The Coalition also commenced legal action to overturn the changes in governance rules for the LAPP Board on December 19, 2007.

"While our legal action continues, we believe this is fundamentally a political problem that can be solved quickly by the Premier and cabinet," the Coalition said today in a statement.

At issue is a new employer-dominated system of governance brought in despite union opposition at a November 15, 2007 meeting of the LAPP Board.

The coalition says the new rules break a long-standing agreement which required union approval for all significant changes to the policies or governance of the Plan – opening the door for decisions which are against the interests of working people.

The old rules, established when employers and unions bailed out the plan's unfunded liability in the early 1990's, required a two-thirds majority and a quorum of eight members of the board, which had to include four employer representatives and four employee representatives. Now only a simple majority is required and there need not be a single labour representative present.

The new rules were passed surreptitiously using the requirements of the new rules rather than those of the existing rules.

"We urge all public service pension plan members and retirees to contact the government and demand that this decision be reversed," the Coalition members said. "Existing early retirement provisions, COLA provisions and the '85 factor' are all at risk because of this change," the unions said.

The coalition is made up of the Alberta Federation of Labour, the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Association, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, the Amalgamated Transit Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Health Sciences Association of Alberta and United Nurses of Alberta. It represents approximately 125,000 members of the \$15-billion LAPP.

UNA and HBA Services have released details on several new Provincial Agreement Provisions

These statements give detailed guidelines on how these new strategies will be implemented.



Joint Statement Re: Weekend Worker

The Letter of Understanding in the new Agreement allows an Employee to agree to work every weekend. In doing so, the Employee would work approximately a 0.8FTE, but would be paid as though she was full time. PDF Available on UNA Local 115 website.

Joint Statement Re: Guidelines for Pilot Projects

The new collective agreement contained a Letter of Understanding on Pilot Projects, including: Flexible part time Employee, Benefit Eligible Casual Employee, and Seasonal Employee. PDF Available on UNA Local 115 website.

Joint Statement Re: Retirement Preparation Program

The new collective agreement contained a Letter of Understanding Re: Retirement Preparation Program. This program allows an Employee to maintain their FTE, but reduce their clinical hours. The remaining hours would be used for special projects, research, leadership assignments, etc. PDF Available on UNA Local 115 website.

Market Lump Sum Issues, Mediator's Recommendation and UNA explanation

UNA believes that this is an good resolution of the two problems that we had (a) that fulltime staff on EI or STD or LTD would have their payments clawed back, and (b) part time staff were being deducted for time spent on vacation, STD, LTD, mat leave. PDF Available on UNA Local 115 website.



Controlling the Deficit Monster

Solving the CHR's budget woes will take more than simple cuts

Calgary Herald - Tuesday, January 08, 2008

The Calgary Health Region's \$85-million deficit is a many-tentacled monster, for which there is no quick or simple fix, and one whose origins were spawned more than a decade ago.

No single factor created the problem, although the immediate reaction to the CHR's budgetary woes is a statement proposing a single-factor solution, that usually begins with: "If only they'd -- ."

But if only "they'd" what?

Hire more nurses so they wouldn't have to rely on overtime from their too-small pool of already overworked staff, overtime which is projected to cost \$63 million for an expected 940,000 hours in 2007 to 2008?

Where are these nurses to come from, when back in the early to mid-90s, spaces in Alberta nursing schools were capped, laying the groundwork for a shortage just as Calgary's population was starting to swell?

Figures from the United Nurses of Alberta show the extent of the nursing crisis in the province -- while thousands of nurses retire every year, only 1,400 new nurses graduate and enter the workforce to replace them, and these nurses are now the most highly paid in Canada.

Their last salary hike added \$13 million in unplanned-for expenses to the budget.

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Cut their salaries or propose a freeze in the next round of contract negotiations and more of them will seek better-paying jobs elsewhere.

To compound the problem, Calgary's rapid growth means the CHR must expand its facilities and its staff.

The new Children's Hospital was built with capital funding, but it had to be staffed and equipped with state-of-the-art technology -- as will the south Calgary hospital when it is built.

Keeping up with rapid technological advancements in health care is a hugely expensive proposition, and the CHR can certainly make judicious decisions as to what technology it will acquire, but it can't go without, either.

If only they'd -- cut their administrative costs? Often cited as an example of excess is the CHR's communications department with its more than 20 employees.

There is always room for improvement in line-by-line budget costs, for trimming the fat in bloated departments and for making cutbacks in discretionary spending, but since administrative costs account for only three per cent of the CHR's \$2.8 billion annual budget, any dents made in the deficit will be small ones.

Replacing outgoing CEO Jack Davis with Dr. Chris Eagle is a good first move towards examining the budget from a new perspective -- that of someone who's been on the front lines and has seen in the course of his work where economies can be made.

Solving the staffing and overtime problem is the most burning financial issue if the deficit is to be significantly slashed, but that's not an overnight fix or even a next-year fix.

The creation of spaces in nursing schools simply has not kept up with the need for nurses in a booming economy like Alberta's.

The province must open up opportunities to train nurses and other professionals, so that more are available for full-time employment.

It is completely unacceptable that people who want careers in nursing are turned away from schools year after year because the number of spaces has not expanded, despite the fact their services and skills are urgently needed.

The province must also look at solving the doctor shortage.

While their salaries do not impact the CHR's budget, since they are paid directly by the province, it is vital to fast-track foreign doctors seeking their credentials here and at least begin the debate on a Canadian Medical Association proposal to cut undergraduate medical students' education to three years.

It may not be feasible to slay the deficit monster, but it is possible to bring it to bay.

IS YOUR PENSION AT RISK?

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

to retirees and members of Alberta's public pension plans

Recent changes to the rules governing decisions of the board of Alberta's largest pension, the Local Authorities Pension Plan, put at **risk**:

- Early retirement provisions
- Pension Cost of Living Allowance
- The '85 Factor'

Alberta's unions are fighting hard to protect your pensions. But we need **your** help.

Call Premier Ed Stelmach and your MLA at 310-0000. Tell them to fix the Local Authorities Pension Plan by putting it back the way it was before the changes were made in November.

For more information about what has happened to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, and the implications for other Alberta pension plans, go to

www.SaveMyPension.ca



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