



## Local 115 Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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**UNA Local 115 Newsletter - Dec 2010**

**Web Site: [local115.una.ab.ca](http://local115.una.ab.ca)**



### Message from the President

Kevin Champagne

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks for the support that the membership has given to the Local executive over these last two years.

Looking back at the extreme changes that have faced the nurses in the province, one would believe we are reading a horror script.

Together we have faced many challenges. The down turn in the economy has been used as an excuse to fuel further cuts, in what many stakeholders see as an attempt to further the hidden agenda of privatization. Affiliates of UNA, Friends of Medicare, are asking the public to contact the government, (403 310 0000) and provide a clear message, "We support Public not private Health care".

Dr Duckett and the Hon Ron Liepert were given the task of streamlining Healthcare in the province. As usual, this translated to a direct attack on the nurses of Alberta. We were asked to work short, while continuing a backbreaking pace attempting to maintain patient safety. Nurses have been loud and clear, with their message, the current state of Health care is not going to be sustainable, unless the government commits to supply the resources needed.

With the signing of a new collective agreement, Alberta Nurses paved a way for all labor movements here and in the rest of the Canada. Taking no roll backs was a clear message sent to the government and AHS, that Nurses want to be valued

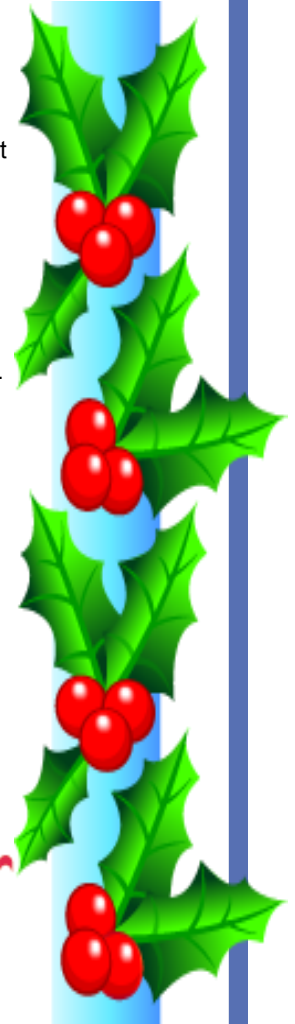
for the work they do on a daily basis. Not only did we take no rollbacks, contract language has been added to the agreement laying the foundation for a strong future for all RNS in Alberta. The new collective agreements shall be handed out in the early part of the New Year. An electronic copy is now available on the UNA web page.

The government was forced to reassign Mr. Leipert to a different portfolio, due to his outspoken disdain for Nurses. The new Minister of Health, Hon. Gene Zwozdesky, was strategic in establishing working relationships with the various stakeholders of health. He did something that no Minister of Health has done. The Hon. Gene Zwozdesky went to the UNA Provincial office to meet with the Executive officers. Further, he has been open to meeting with all nursing advocate groups to hear concerns. Yet it remains to be seen how he will play out his role in the debate on Private versus public health care.

For Albertans and Nurses to be successful in this struggle to improve health care, it is key to become active in the discussions related to change. It is our responsibility to be advocates for the patients we represent. I would like to challenge all nurse to attend one local Union meeting to hear the current concerns that are facing the health care system.

I would like to remind all nurses to review your Collective bargaining agreements. Know your rights.

**Kevin Champagne**  
UNA Local 115 President  
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#### UNA Local 115 Meetings

(every 2nd Weds from 1600-1800)

⇒ **DEC 15, 2010 (LOCAL 115 AGM)**

- ⇒ Jan 12, 2011
- ⇒ Feb 09, 2011
- ⇒ Mar 09, 2011
- ⇒ Apr 13, 2011
- ⇒ May 11, 2011
- ⇒ Jun 08, 2011

If you have any news that you would like to add to this newsletter, please contact us at the head office.

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**Saturday December 4, 2010 1:00 PM**

**Alberta Legislature  
10800 97 Ave, Edmonton**

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Raj Sherman, MLA Edmonton Meadowlark
- Elaine Fleming, Whitemud Citizens for Public Health
- David Eggen, Friends of Medicare
- Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta

Invite your friends to the Rally on Facebook



**Now we know!**

Bill 17 is part of the plan for two-tier health and private insurance!

- Raj Sherman fired for speaking out
- The Duckett Fiasco
- Leaked plan for two-tier health and private insurance

Bring any and all supporters for public health.

For more information visit [www.friendsofmedicare.org](http://www.friendsofmedicare.org) or call 780-423-4581

## Message from UNA Local 115's Past Treasurer

Alas, with the change to the satellite structure for Local 115 I have moved on to another local here in southern Alberta. I greatly appreciate the time given to me to have represented you on the local executive this past two years. I met so many great people, not only in the local but around the province. I have learned to understand the differences and the diversity of nurses in Alberta.

You have a fantastic executive who are smart, caring and passionate as to what they do for you, the members. Please appreciate the hard work they do, dealing with the Employer on your behalf, which is not always easy. I'll always hold them in high regard, and will miss them terribly. There are those unsung members who work just as diligently for the local also: committee members, ward reps and those who come out on regular basis just to support the local. I will miss many of you so much too.

So keep the good works going, help out where you can, and keep the solidarity strong! Good luck in the future, so long Kevin, Kathleen, Ruth and Cam. 🍷

Sincerely,

**Malcolm Weisgerber**

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## Message from UNA Local 115's Interim Treasurer

Dear Members of Local 115,

It has been an honor to serve you as Interim Treasurer since Malcolm's departure. I would like to thank you for providing me with several orientation days with Malcolm; the experience has been invaluable. The Treasurer role suits me well as I am detail oriented, and promote prudent spending practices while maintaining a balance to provide for the needs of members.

In addition to my fiscal responsibilities, I am able to support the membership by attending meetings, answering inquiries, and assisting my fellow executives with their duties. I am proud and excited to be part of the 115 executive team, and hope to continue in this role into the future. 🍷

Sincerely,

**Cameron Westhead**

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## Getting on with solutions



The pressing problems of nurse and bed shortages that force many Albertans to wait too long for care, are still there today, says United Nurses of Alberta President Heather Smith.

"Removing Stephen Duckett is not going to somehow magically repair our health system," she said.

Heather Smith and Director of Labour Relations David Harigan met today with Alberta Health Services to discuss the new plan to respond to urgent pressure in emergency departments.

AHS has identified a list of "triggers" which will activate a new "push" response (surge protocols). The push is not limited to moving patients out of emergency departments to other nursing units, currently called "overcapacity" (eg. hallways, three people in a two-bed room) but can also result in transfers to continuing care sites, creating overcapacity placement in those facilities as well. Home care is also expected to provide rapid activation of services.

"Unless appropriate staffing and support is provided in each and every environment, we are simply showing the problem out of the emergency departments and hiding it across the continuum," Heather Smith says.

"We don't agree with 'pushing' more patients in to overcrowded or inappropriate beds or conditions. This is like the Tokyo subway system where they hire big men with white gloves to push more people into train cars. It is just that wrong," says Heather Smith.

Nurses note that real expansion of capacity, opening significant numbers of beds and ending the constant squeeze and reduction of our public health system, is the only real solution to the problems.

"We've got to expand the health workforce, you can build buildings and buy beds, but if you can't staff them, you're never going to deal with the real emergency issue."

"It really is past the point of just trying to do more with what we already have," Heather Smith says.

## Locals must ask detailed questions about new AHS plan

AHS says the plan to address urgent pressures will be worked out on a local basis by December 20th. AHS told UNA nurses will be consulted. Nurses should ask specific questions about staffing implications:

What are the "triggers" specific to your site or program? □

Will more regular beds (not overcapacity spots) be opened?

What authority will nurses have to call in additional staff to maintain safety?

This urgent pressure plan will be implemented in acute care, and also in long-term care (including assisted living) and even home care. The new plan will also "push" fast-track discharged patients into overcapacity beds in community or home settings. Home care and long-term care Locals should be asking these same questions. Will staffing be increased to maintain patient safety?

### Overcapacity Protocol – even more load on nurses?

"Overcapacity Protocol (OCP) involves placing patients in spaces that are not regular inpatient rooms or care spaces and extending the nurse-to-patient ratio, usually using the existing nursing complement."

– From a briefing document, Peak Pressure in the Health System, which was presented at the AHS Friday Nov. 19, 2010. AHS told UNA this OCP definition was NOT specifically discussed. Nurses should be sure to ask if this is what the local protocol involves. 🎉



## NEW BENEFIT PLAN




### for Retired UNA Members



The United Nurses of Alberta has worked with Johnson Inc., a national insurance provider and the Alberta Retired Teachers Benefit Plan administrator to probe a number of options to best meet the diverse travel and health & wellness needs of our retired members at an affordable cost. The most feasible option from a cost and plan design standpoint was to join an established benefit plan sponsored by a group of similar nature and scope as our own. Therefore, we are pleased to announce that starting September 1, 2010, retired UNA members are eligible to join the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) Health & Wellness Benefit Plan as Affiliate ARTA members. We encourage you to review the benefits available through our partnership with Johnson Inc.

The Health & Dental Plan renews automatically on September 1 each year. The ARTA program includes a number of voluntary benefits available to you, including Extended Health Care (with or without Emergency Medical Travel Insurance), Dental Care, Life Insurance, Long Term Care, and stand-alone Trip Cancellation/Interruption. Each of the benefit plan options are available separately to meet the needs of you and your spouse. The plan details are outlined in this document (LINK)

There will be a one-time open enrolment for anyone who is retired from UNA to enrol in ARTA between September 1, 2010 and January 31, 2011 without a medical. When retired UNA members apply during this period, they will be able to access their benefits on the first day of the following month.

From then on, when you retire, you have 60 days to enrol without a medical. If you are using your spouse's benefit plan and they retire and lose their plan, you have 60 days to enrol without medical. 

For more information, visit the UNA Website at:  
<http://www.una.ab.ca/resources/benefits/arta>

## Links



[www.cuttingnursescuttingcare.ca](http://www.cuttingnursescuttingcare.ca)



[wrongway.ca](http://wrongway.ca)



[thinknursing.ca](http://thinknursing.ca)

## UNA Local 115 Contact information

### Local 115 Executive

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#### Kevin Champagne

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#### Cameron Westhead

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## The coming Alberta Health Act



Friends of Medicare Submission on the Alberta Health Act

<http://albertahealthact.ca/>

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