



Local 115 Foothills Medical Centre & Satellites

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UNA Local 115 Newsletter - FEB 2011

Web Site: local115.una.ab.ca

Message from the Treasurer

Cameron Westhead

Money Talks...Duckett Walks

It's a new year, and there's a "new" plan to fix our crumbling health care system. According to a recent article in the Edmonton Journal, the nascent Over Capacity Protocols are being used on a daily basis in many hospitals. Unfortunately, most UNA members are all too familiar with Over Capacity; this is not news to us. Caring for patients in hallways, near fire exits, and in over crowded ward rooms has been the status quo for years in Alberta. Hallway nursing is so commonplace that the former Calgary Health Region created posters with the title "Hallway or Private Room, Our First Priority is Your Health." Now AHS has rebadged this poster.

What the posters don't admit is that hallway nursing puts patients and staff at increased risk. Receiving patient care units are usually short staffed to begin with, and cannot augment to handle the increased workload. A fire in one over capacity bed at FMC injured staff and could have potentially injured patients because the makeshift curtains blocked the activation of the sprinkler system. Clearly, over capacity spaces are not well suited for the safe, quality patient care Albertans deserve.

The Local 115 Executive has worked hard over the past year to eliminate over capacity beds. We have been successful at shutting down 11 of 65 beds, some of which were blocking fire exits or had no readily available resuscitation equipment like suction and oxygen. We rely on all UNA members to identify situations where patient care is jeopardized in any way by filing PRC reports. Similarly, members can file OH&S reports if they feel their personal safety is at risk due to blocked hallways etc. Local 115 is always looking for members to get in-

involved with PRC and OH&S committees, so call the office for more information. Both the PRC and OH&S reports are powerful tools for change and are available on the UNA website or by contacting the Local office. These committees meet regularly and if issues are not resolved to your satisfaction they can be escalated all the way to the CEO.

Speaking of CEOs, we have exported our Cookie Eating Officer Stephen Duckett back to Australia. In his farewell speech, Duckett openly criticized the Tory government's management of health care over the last decade. During this period, he stated, Alberta reduced its per capita spending on non-acute facilities, creating a backlog of seniors in acute care beds leading to increased wait times in the ED. Now health care professionals are left to deal with the fallout this inept government has created.

Many would argue that Duckett's cookie incident did not warrant his dismissal. We are left to wonder if it was worth it to him to enjoy one last boardroom baked good. As far as I'm concerned, the only cookie fiasco worth getting fired for is a TimTam Slam. Coincidentally, TimTams are Australian chocolate covered wafer cookies. To enjoy a TimTam Slam for yourself, take a small bite off each end of the cookie, drink a hot beverage through the it like a straw, then pop the whole hot, molten mess in your mouth; **now** you have a good reason not to talk to the media. 🍪

In Solidarity,

Cameron Westhead

Treasurer, UNA Local 115

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UNA Local 115 Meetings

(every 2nd Weds from 1600-1800)

- ⇒ Feb 09, 2011
- ⇒ Mar 09, 2011
- ⇒ Apr 13, 2011
- ⇒ May 11, 2011
- ⇒ Jun 08, 2011
- ⇒ Jul 13, 2011
- ⇒ Aug 10, 2011

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

Email: local115exec@una.ab.ca

Phone: (403) 670-9960



Upcoming Conferences & Workshops

AFL Convention

April 28 - May 1, 2011, Calgary AB

Nurse Abuse Workshop

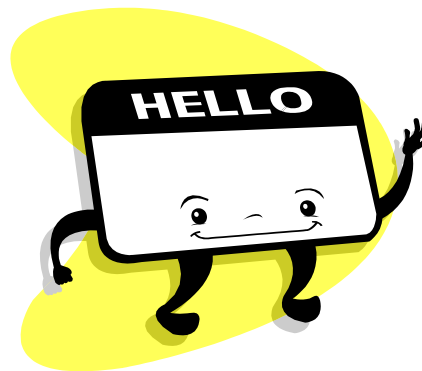
March 22, 2011, Calgary, AB

CLC Convention

May 9-13, 2011, Vancouver, B.C.

CFNU Convention

June 13-17, 2011 Winnipeg, MB



Enter the draw to attend the 2011 CFNU Convention in Winnipeg.



The [2011 Canadian Federation of Nurses Union \(CFNU\) Convention](#) will be held June 13 - 17, 2011 in Winnipeg. UNA Members have an opportunity to put their names into a draw to attend as one of the UNA Delegates.

UNA will be funding 29 general members:

- 13 members (one per Local) from Locals with 500 or more members (this includes Local #37 as the largest Local in North District).

- 20 members through a random draw.

Funding will include Salary Replacement for LOA's only. Members whose collective agreement provide for Professional Development Days are encouraged to apply for the 2 Education days of the convention as Professional Development. Funding also includes registration, travel, accommodation and meals as per UNA policy.

If you would like to enter the random draw, please complete the ballot found in the next edition of the UNA News Bulletin which will be mailed later in February. **All entries must be on a ballot.** They may be mailed, faxed, emailed, hand delivered but must be on a ballot. **Entries Not on a ballot will be disqualified.**

Ballots must be received at the UNA Provincial Office by 1630 hours March 14, 2011. 

**SPOTLIGHT on your UNA Contract**

Content: Shift Cancellation

Agreement: Provincial Agreement 2010-2013

Date: February 2009

Shift Cancellation

Casual & Part-time nurses must be paid at least 4 hours for any fully or partially cancelled shift.

If you report to work and any part of your shift is cancelled, you must be paid for four hours as "cancellation pay". If any part of a shift is worked and the balance cancelled, the Employee must be paid the hours worked plus the penalty four hours. If there are less than four hours remaining in the shift, the Employee must be paid for the full hours of the shift.

Examples:

Some Employers have told nurses when they come in that the entire shift is cancelled, but since they have to pay them for four hours anyway, the nurse must work for four hours. **WRONG!** If they were asked to work part of the shift, they would be paid for the hours worked plus a four-hour penalty, or for the full balance of the shift if it was less than four hours.

If a nurse is sent home after working, for example, 5 hours of a 7 3/4 hour shift, he or she must be paid for the 5 hours worked plus the 2 3/4 hours left in the shift.

If a nurse works just 2 hours of a shift, she or he must be paid for the hours worked plus the four hour penalty.

Article 30.03 (a) iv

(A) In the event that a Casual Employee reports to work as scheduled or called and the Employer cancels the Employee's Shift, the Employee shall be paid four hours pay at the Employee's Basic Rate of Pay.

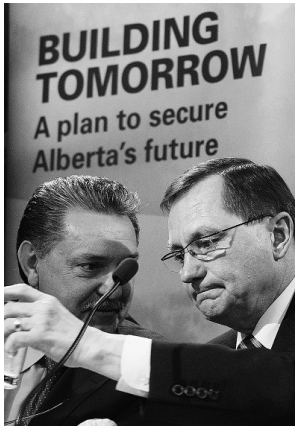
(B) If fewer than four hours remain in the scheduled Shift, the Employee shall be paid for the remaining hours of the Shift at the Employee's Basic Rate of Pay. This does not apply in situations where the start time of the scheduled Shift has been changed.

UNA Provincial Agreement 2010-2013 , Article 30

Health a minefield for next leader

Questionable plan to amalgamate regional boards started PC slide, analyst says

By Jodie Sinnema, Edmonton Journal January 27, 2011



If the next leader of the Progressive Conservatives is determined to deliver a balanced budget, doing so by revisiting its five-year funding commitment to the health system would be politically dangerous, say several health analysts.

"I think they're locked in to staying the course for a while," said Steven Lewis, a health policy consultant with Access Consulting in Saskatoon. "You don't want to shine a new spotlight on it by proposing a restructuring

or any change to the deal. That just puts it on the front page again. It looks like you don't know what you're doing."

He suggested the government's handling of the health portfolio and the amalgamation of the nine former health boards into Alberta Health Services played a huge part in destabilizing the PCs in the first place, culminating in Premier Ed Stelmach's announcement Tuesday that he will step down as leader.

"In terms of political risk and the spending down of political capital and the cracks in the aura of invincibility that had survived for four decades in the Conservative machine, I think the health (portfolio) was probably the most damaging," Lewis said.

"How did (Ed Stelmach) lose it all so quickly? How did he squander his political capital within the party? My interpretation, as soon as they de-regionalized (the health system) thoughtlessly with no plan on how this is going to shake out, I thought this was going to be a big, big political headache for the government, and I think it has turned out to be."

Lewis said the government was "grossly incompetent" when it forced the former CEO of Alberta's health superboard to find \$1.3 billion in savings, then did an about-face and set up a five-year funding commitment of six-per-cent increases in the first three years, followed by 4.5-per-cent increases the next two.

Finance Minister Ted Morton -- a potential leadership candidate -- may see that type of spending as irresponsible at a time when, sources close to the government say, he wants to balance the budget at all costs.

Tom Noseworthy, a health economist at the University of

Calgary, suggested that while the five-year plan was a recognition of the need for predictable funding, it may have gone too far.

"They way overdid it -- matching the inflation rate would have been enough," Noseworthy told the Calgary Herald. In a follow-up conversation with The Journal, he said, "Their generosity was setting a bad example of extravagance. ... I won't say we're spending too much, but we're spending enough money on health care, certainly.

"Whatever happens now, we need some cost control."

Lewis passed along a warning.

"(The health situation on the ground) would have to be really bad and really dire for them to squander more political capital and look more incompetent by reneging on the five-year funding deal than to limp along with a higher deficit than anyone would desire."


Heather Smith, president of the United Nurses of Alberta, said the infusion of cash into the health system wasn't too generous if the province is committed to reducing wait times and improving access to care and bringing in reform.

"If that commitment evaporates or a new leader decides not to follow through, a whole lot of the effort and work in the system to address emergency wait times, surgical wait times, ... I think will be jeopardized," Smith said, referring to new protocols being refined to help hospital staff avoid a "potential catastrophic collapse" of emergency care, as described by emergency physicians. "We have to rebuild capacity, and that's not free. It wasn't just a matter of status quo and cost of living."

Richard Plain, a health economist in St. Albert, said the inevitable debate about the health super board in the run-up to the PC leadership should include reintroducing healthcare premiums to provide more stable funding.

"There's no question that whoever gets in there, if they're going to make some marked changes in healthcare spending, there's no way that marked reductions in health-care spending aren't associated with reductions in access of services and increased cost shifting on the sick and the old, or longer waits," he said. "If anyone is going to cut big spending in the belief we're not going to increase taxes, you've got to deal with health. It is the single largest major area of expenditure from the government's side so (if) you have to revisit that (then) you have to revisit that with an axe."

But spending can't be cut in tune with the oil and gas price cycle, he said.

"We need some stability. We cannot take another episode such as we had when Duckett arrived" to cut \$1.3 billion. 

UNA reacts to the announcement of Stelmach's departure



Premier Ed Stelmach and his wife, Marie, at the press conference announcing his decision to resign before the next election.

On January 25, Ed Stelmach announced he will be resigning as Premier of Alberta.

In reacting to his decision and remarks, United Nurses of Alberta President Heather Smith said: "We are encouraged by Mr. Stelmach's statements on political honesty and full discussion of important public policies."

In his statements today, Premier Stelmach said:


"There is a profound danger that the next election campaign will focus on personality and US style negative, attack politics that is directed at me personally.

"The danger is that it could allow for an extreme right party to disguise itself as a moderate party by focussing on me personally.

"This type of US style wedge politics is coming into Canada, and it comes at our peril. "Albertans deserve to have better level of public debate on our policy options."

United Nurses of Alberta is also encouraged by the Premier's commitment to maintain funding for health care and other vital services in the coming budget.

"All Albertans have benefitted from the promise of predictable, stable funding for health care for five years that began with Mr. Stelmach's *budget* last year," Heather Smith said.

"We hope that this important commitment does not fall by the wayside in the future," she said. 

Links



www.cuttingnursescuttingcare.ca



wrongway.ca

[thinknursing!ca](http://thinknursing.ca)
Towards a Better Workplace

thinknursing.ca

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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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