



Message from the Secretary

Ruth Duffy

Now that spring is here, at least for today, there is much happening and not just in Nature. There have been a number of conferences lately, and CFNU on the horizon. I was recently very fortunate to have my name drawn to attend the AFL Biennial as well as the Public Interest Alberta meeting. What a wonderful learning opportunity!

We have all heard of the attacks on Public Services in Wisconsin (i.e. Privatization of all their public services) . It may be tempting to think that the problem is confined to Wisconsin, or to the USA, and is not a problem in Canada, but in fact the same attitudes are being discussed in the corporate boardrooms of Bay Street and the political backrooms on both Edmonton and Ottawa. Sadly, what happens in Wisconsin is unlikely to stay in Wisconsin!

Nursing in Alberta is now enjoying a period of stability, thanks to our new Collective Agreement, but Health Care is still under attack, as Opposition Parties and the Physicians are now demanding a public inquiry into intimidation and cover-up of issues affecting patient care.

In negotiating our Collective Agreement, the government actually "robbed Peter to pay Paul" by making massive cuts to Education and Social Services. Teachers and Social Workers are facing even heavier workloads with even fewer support staff. Class sizes are increasing and programs for Special Needs children are being eliminated entirely. Spending on Social Services has actually been reduced by an unbelievable 30% of the spending in the early 1990's while corporate profits in Alberta have grown by an astounding 370%. In that time, personal and corporate taxes have been reduced! Little wonder that our Public Services are starving to death!

The federal election results have now been determined but a provincial election is looming and both governments

make decisions upon strongly expressed public opinion. As nurses and patient advocates, it is our duty to fight for cuts not only to health care, but also to other public services that impact health care, such as Education and Social Services.

If we are to ensure a healthy and safe environment for our families and the population as a whole, we MUST become more involved in the political process and make our voices heard. Without vocal public input, it is the voices of the corporate elite and special interest groups that will prevail.

I encourage us all to increase our awareness of issues facing all public services and to become actively involved in public hearings, rallies and activities. A very effective means of keeping up to date is via the "news" in UNA.net. If you are not currently following UNA on Facebook and Twitter, I also encourage everyone to become involved.

As summer approaches, I wish you all a fabulous summer season and warm sunny vacations!

In solidarity,

Ruth Duffy
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UNA Local 115 Meetings
(every 2nd Weds from 1600-1800)

Follow us (Twitter & Facebook)

Contact the local if you would like assistance on how to do this!



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



Nurses playing role in setting staffing

New "regularization" project gives UNA Locals say in creating nursing positions

It's a first for UNA. Starting this year, nurses will be taking part in a staffing process that aims to reduce reliance on overtime, extra shifts and casual hours. The process is called "regularization" and it comes out of a Letter of Understanding that UNA negotiated in the current provincial Collective Agreement (p. 151).

The province-wide project will identify worksites and units that use heavy overtime or extra hours and increase FTEs or post new positions to convert those hours into regular staff hours. "Regularizing" these hours will help control costs, and provide a big boost to continuity of care and also of course, to quality of care.

UNA also hopes that creating more positions and boosting FTEs will help to cut down mandatory overtime, and working short staffed, both of which are highly stressful for nurses.

Since November, a joint UNA-Alberta Health Services provincial steering committee has been developing a provincial process to undertake this "regularization". The official name is the Joint Workforce Regularization Provincial Project Steering Committee, or, the JWRP Provincial Committee.

The provincial steering committee has set up the process, but the actual work begins at the local level where joint union and employer JWRP committees will prioritize the units and areas to examine for extra hours, where regularization might bring the most benefit.

Creating more regular nursing positions

Two new UNA videos about "regularization"

In the first video, UNA's Director of Labour Relations, David Harrigan, outlines the new regularization process to convert extra overtime, extra shift and casual hours into regular nursing positions. In the second video, David Harrigan discusses how the preliminary data about overtime and casual hours can help Local Joint Regularization Committees choose the work areas that will be looked at first in the process.

Visit <http://local115.una.ab.ca> to view both of these videos.

at your side Advocating for Albertans!

It's an important part
of being a nurse!

Everyday nurses speak up for safe staffing, for safe practices and for good care for all of our clients, residents and patients.



at your side
on your side!

May 9-15 is National Nursing Week.

It's a time to celebrate the contributions Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses make to the well-being of our families and our communities.



The union of 25,000 Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and allied health workers.



United Nurses of Alberta

www.una.ab.ca

Alberta Registered nurses: Anita Suleman, Meiri Gordon, Lisa Hein



UNA Media Release

May 9-15 National Nursing Week, celebrating Nurses

UNA survey shows nursing still desperately short Joint project will improve staffing



Nurses and their employers will be holding special events all this week to recognize the tremendous contribution nurses make to the recovery and well-being of our patients, clients and residents.

“Nurses provide care in our homes, in our communities, in nursing homes, in correction facilities and in hospitals. From the youngest babies, to our oldest most vulnerable seniors, nurses are there to help,” says United Nurses of Alberta President, Heather Smith.

“National Nursing Week is set aside to celebrate the great contribution of all this vital work,” she says.

The shortage of nurses has been a long-standing concern in Alberta. In April, UNA conducted a survey of 1,500 nurses which shows they still are working many extra hours, extra shifts and overtime.

“We have a special project with Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health to convert many of the extra hours nurses work into new nursing jobs, or into added hours to current part-time jobs,” says Heather Smith.

“Increasing the proportion of regular hours will have significant benefits in health workplaces. We are looking for a more balanced workload, increased job satisfaction, fewer unplanned schedule changes and improved continuity of care for patients. It will also cut overtime costs.”

UNA’s randomized telephone survey showed that most weeks, 75% of the province’s nurses work over and above

their scheduled hours. 64% of full-time nurses and 81% of part-time nurses reported working additional hours. Over 55% work six or more extra hours, most of it not at overtime rates.

“The extra, unplanned hours represent a major stressor in nursing,” Heather Smith points out.

Over 15% of nurses work 6 or more hours of paid overtime in an average week, which represents a significant cost for Alberta’s health system.

“We hope our new process of converting extra hours into regular positions will help cut down on this and put nurse staffing on a more regular footing. It can make it more sustainable – financially and physically for nurses,” Heather Smith says.

But the union also points out that more nurses are needed now. Sixty-eight per cent of nurses report that their regular workplace schedule is one or more nurses short of what they believe they need to be safe.

“Alberta will still have to educate and recruit far more nurses to keep care levels up to a high and safe standard,” Heather Smith says.

“Nothing’s changed much. We still have thousands of nurses retiring over the next few years,” Heather Smith points out.

“The good news is that overall nurses are less insecure and more satisfied with their jobs, than in the last couple of years,” Heather Smith says. “We feel like we’ve turned a corner and we are working with employers to improve the nursing situation as much as we can,” she says.



Retroactive Payment of Overtime and Call Back Worked on a Named Holiday

Effective December, 2010, the parties agreed to the following application of UNA Collective Agreement provisions to situations where Employees work overtime or are called back on a Named Holiday:

In order to resolve the 50+ individual, group and policy grievances on this issue dating back to 2005, the parties have agreed to the following process for retroactive payment, where applicable:

Situation	Payment and Calculation
Overtime worked on a regular Named Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 ½ X Basic Rate of Pay for overtime hours worked (1X for working + 1X overtime + 1/2X Named Holiday)
Overtime worked on a "Super Stat" (i.e. Christmas Day or August Civic Holiday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective April 1, 2009, 3X Basic Rate of Pay for overtime hours worked (1X for working + 1X overtime + 1X Named Holiday)
Call Back on a regular Named Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 ½ X Basic Rate of Pay for hours actually worked on the call back (1X for working + 1X overtime + 1/2X Named Holiday)
Call Back on a "Super Stat"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective April 1, 2009, 3 X Basic Rate of Pay for hours actually worked on the call back (1X for working + 1X overtime + 1X Named Holiday)

- Employees who worked overtime or were called back to work on a Named Holiday, and who were compensated at less than the applicable amounts outlined above, are asked to identify themselves to their UNA representative, indicate which Named Holiday(s) they worked overtime or call back, the amount of time worked and what they were paid. **Employees have until May 31, 2011 to contact UNA in order to be included on the list of Employees potentially eligible for retroactive payment.**

(Note: Employees who have filed individual grievance on this issue are considered to be already identified for purposes of retroactive payment. However, in order to ensure that no one is missed, it is recommended that Employees who previously filed individual grievances on this issue also contact UNA in order to confirm that they are on the list and to identify/confirm the applicable Named Holiday and rate of payment previously paid.)

- UNA will compile the list of Employees requesting retroactive payment and provide the list to AHS Corporate Labour Relations by June 15, 2011.
- AHS will double check with available payroll records to confirm eligibility for payment and will then issue payment to eligible Employees.

The full document can be viewed from the <http://una.ab.ca> website. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

For the United Nurses of Alberta Members:

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 Director of Labour Relations
 United Nurses of Alberta
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 Email: harrigan@una.ab.ca

For Alberta Health Services Management Representatives:

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 Labour Relations and Negotiations
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Casual Employees

Employer **CANNOT** require Casual employees to work a minimum number of shifts.

Some managers are requiring casual employees to be available to work a work a minimum number of shifts (e.g. at least one a week) in order to remain on the Casual list.

They cannot impose this requirement.

Alberta Health Services has stated it has no policy on minimum required number of shifts for casual nurses.

Under the UNA Provincial Agreement there is no provision for requiring casuals to work a certain number of shifts.

Please note, however, that casual nurses must keep updated on certifications and communications in the area in which they work.

Contact your UNA Local or your Labour Relations Officer if any manager is attempting to require any Casual employee to work any shift.

Article 30.03 a) i) "No casual employee shall be scheduled except with the employee's consent."

SPOTLIGHT on your UNA contract

January 2011



**Questions?
Contact your United Nurses of Alberta Representative:**

• Provincial Office: (780) 425-1025 or 1 800 252-9394 • Southern Alberta Regional Office: (403) 237-2377 or 1 800 661-1802 • www.una.ab.ca •



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