 **United Nurses of Alberta**



Published by the United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 for our members

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# ARE UNIONS RELEVANT?

**U**NA has strived to be strong advocates and change makers for improved working conditions for all Registered Nurses in Alberta since the conception of the United Nurses of Alberta in 1977.

It is hard for many of us to remember a time when nurses only made \$6.28 per hour, but that was the case when we first sat down to bargain. Since that time, our collective agreement has seen improved changes to the language for the overall benefit of the nurse.

Some of the things that we attribute to the employer willingly giving to nurses are in fact hard fought victories that were won by UNA at the bargaining table. Improved scheduling provisions, shortened work weeks, no-working-alone agreements, Professional Responsibility and Occupational and Health committees, are but a few highlights of positive changes. This is not the only way that unions improve the work lives of our members.

We are an integral part of the labor movement in the province of Alberta, fighting for the social rights of all Albertans. Some examples of our current challenges that we are tackling; pay equality for women, racial equality, sustainable public health care for all. Further, Collective bargained agreements can be used as a standard

for other non-unionized workers, helping to increase the wages and benefits of other workers in the province.

Many people who will read this will think, that is fine and dandy, but what have they done for me lately? In May 2011 the Canadian Labour Congress held its triennial convention in Vancouver, addressing the relevance of Unions in today's workplace.

The basic realities that have led many workers to form unions have not changed. The employer and the union's interests are coming from two different positions. UNA continues to fight for fair worker conditions, a reasonable amount of time off between shifts, vacation entitlement and appropriate wages. Over the last 30 years the grievances haven't changed, only the volume.

It is important to be aware that everyday the union is working to protect nurses from unfair treatment. UNA is in a constant state of vigilance to protect the afforded rights provided under the current collective agreement. By creating and upholding these clear bargained agreements, it provides a better work environment for all. So the next time you agree to terms outside the collective bargaining agreement, please consider the impact that this has on all nurses and workers in Alberta!

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# Overtime and Call Back worked on a Named Holiday

The UNA Collective Agreement applies the following provisions to situations where Employees work overtime or are called back on a Named Holiday:

SITUATION	PAYMENT AND CALCULATION
Overtime worked on a regular Named Holiday	2 1/2x Basic Rate of Pay for overtime hours worked (1x for working + 1x overtime + 1/2x Named Holiday)
Overtime worked on a "Super Stat" (ie: Christmas Day or August Civic Holiday)	3x Basic Rate of Pay for overtime hours worked (1x for working + 1x overtime + 1x Named Holiday)
Call Back on a regular Named Holiday	2 1/2x Basic Rate of Pay for hours actually worked on the Call Back (1x for working + 1x overtime + 1/2 Named Holiday)
Call Back on a "Super Stat"	3x Basic Rate of Pay for hours actually worked on the Call Back (1x for working + 1x overtime + 1x Named Holiday)

Under *Article 18*, the following days are Named Holidays: New Year's Day, Alberta Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Boxing Day

"Super Stats" are named as Christmas Day and August Civic Holiday.

November 2011

UNA - CIP - Spotlight on Named Holiday - 01/2011



**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](http://www.una.ab.ca) •



SPOTLIGHT on your UNA contract

## Attention: Alberta Health Services Employees

Local Authorities Pension Plan, November 7, 2011



**A**lberta Health Services (AHS) is in the process of consolidating payroll from all former regional health authorities into one payroll system. Unfortunately, in some cases, this resulted in some employees receiving a notice with the wording "now that you are no longer with the Plan".

Please be assured that the consolidation of payroll has not disrupted your participation in LAPP. The only change is that you are being provided the opportunity to purchase any Leave of Absence now rather than after the end of the year.

Our administrator, Alberta Pensions Services Corporation, is looking into the matter and apologizes for any confusion this may have caused our members.

If you receive a LAPP Leave of Absence costing and you wish to have the period of the leave recognised as pensionable service under LAPP, you must take action immediately in order to meet Alberta Health Services processing deadlines. Alberta Health Services requires six weeks to ensure your payment is processed in time to meet the LAPP deadline quoted on the Notice of Cost.

## UNA Youth Initiative Project

United Nurses of Alberta, November 8, 2011

**T**his is a reminder about the Youth Initiative project that the Executive Board approved at the September Board meeting. Please note the deadline for applications to be submitted is **November 30, 2011 at 12 noon**.

- 1) UNA shall allocate ten thousand dollars \$10,000.00 to Youth Initiatives for 2011. Evaluation of this undertaking to be carried out prior to consideration of future funding in 2012. Application deadline will be November 2011 Executive Board Meeting. The Executive Officers will identify requests and undertake Board Polling as necessary.
- 2) Application for the New 2011 UNA Youth Initiative Fund will be as follows:
  - Individuals must submit a proposal to the Secretary Treasurer.
  - Applications must be received by November 30, 2011.
  - The proposal shall indicate the scope of the initiative, member involvement, the purpose of the initiative and anticipated costs.
  - The proposal shall indicate how the initiative will enhance young workers participation in UNA and understanding of the objectives of UNA.
  - The initiative shall not conflict with UNA Policies and Procedures.
  - The Executive Officers will forward requests to the Executive Board and undertake Executive Board polling as necessary.

The amount allocated to any single initiative shall not exceed \$3,000.00. The Executive Board shall evaluate the Youth Initiative Fund prior to any funds being allocated in 2012. Young Workers are defined as those who are 30 years and younger.



# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

**DECEMBER 14TH  
FROM 16:00 TO 18:00  
IN THE COOMBS  
AUDITORIUM**

Submit your nominations by December 7th at 1600h for the following Positions: Vice President, Secretary and PRC Committee. Voting will occur at the Local AGM Meeting.

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**NOMINATION FOR LOCAL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS:**

**NAME OF POSITION:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Nominations are open to anyone who is a member in good standing of the UNA Local)

**NAME AND ADDRESS OF NOMINEE:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

IF ELECTED, I AM WILLING TO SERVE: \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE

**NAME AND ADDRESS OF TWO (2) MEMBERS WHO ARE IN GOOD STANDING NOMINATING THE NOMINEE:**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# ER nurses provide solace to many, doctor says

Edmonton Journal, November 6, 2011

**R**e: "Still this patient waits, in pain," by Gloria Gogowich, Letters, Oct. 25.

As both an emergency physician at the University of Alberta Hospital and a son who has recently become attuned to the frailties of his own aging parents, I can empathize with the disquiet Gloria Gogowich experiences as her father copes with illness and a resultant prolonged recovery.

However, I do take exception to Gogowich's unjust and uninformed criticisms of my nursing colleagues.

Due to confidentiality regulations and respect for the patient's privacy, I cannot speak to the specific issues pertaining to this case. I can, however, attest to the quality of care provided by nurses at the University of Alberta Hospital emergency department and their selfless dedication to patients' well-being.

The paper trail that follows a patient through the hospital and the seemingly obsessive documentation process with which Gogowich takes issue is vital to ensure patient safety. The practice of medicine is increasingly complex.

Patients often present to the emergency department with one or two acute problems requiring immediate attention and a variety of chronic, yet significant, conditions

which must be managed in emergency.

Careful documentation prevents medication administration errors, potentially lethal drug interactions and ensures patients receive appropriate care in a timely manner.

Furthermore, emergency department patients have the potential to decompensate rapidly and require life-saving resuscitative treatment. The nurse's notes are a vital source of important and readily accessible information that is often used to guide resuscitation. A nurse's diligent and judicious record keeping ensures patients receive the best care.



As the complexity of the practice of medicine has increased, so has an emergency department nurse's workload. Because many components of nursing care are time sensitive, nurses must often skip their meal breaks during their 12-hour shifts to ensure important tasks are completed expeditiously.

Gogowich takes issue with nurses chatting with their co-workers, while "stalled" at the kitchenette. Due to infection control regula-

tions, staff are not permitted to eat in the emergency department.

Nurses routinely prepare small meals or snacks for their patients at the kitchenette, however, they do not cook for themselves. A brief casual conversation with a colleague while waiting for a patient's meal to come out of the microwave is often a welcome reprieve from a 12-hour work day that affords little opportunity for pause.

Although Gogowich asserts animals would receive better care at the hands of a veterinarian than a human being in our health-care system, my experience is quite the opposite.

My nursing colleagues provide sophisticated care in a timely manner with a seemingly limitless supply of compassion. On a daily basis, emergency department nurses care for some of the most marginalized or caustic members of our society and they do so in a caring and professional manner. Sadly, some patients die in the emergency department without family present. I am proudest of my nursing colleagues when I see them caring for these patients, providing solace and comfort in a time of great need.

I am quite moved when I consider some nurses do this more than once in the course of their work day.

Dr. M.J. Inwood, Edmonton

## Time to give nurses the power to say 'No,' says Linda Silas



*Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas at the UNA 2011 AGM.*

**I**t is time to give the power to nurses in their workplaces to say "No" to unsafe working conditions, Linda Silas, president of the [<http://www.nursesunions.ca>] Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, told the Annual General Meeting of the United Nurses of Alberta this morning.

"It is time that we have safe staffing in Canada," Silas told the participants in Day 2 of the AGM at Edmonton's Northlands Expo Centre.

"We need to develop collective agreement language on safe staffing models," she explained, noting that if pilots and bus drivers can have legislated hours of work in the name of public safety, so can nurses.

Silas challenged Alberta nurses to be part of the effort "to expand their knowledge of the impacts of very conservative governments. We know the dangers the public service faces, both federally and provincially. Are we the next Wisconsin? Are we the next Ireland?"

The leader of the national nurses' union organization, through which UNA is part of the Canadian Labour Congress, will be taking a message to the leaders of the industrialized West at their future meetings that nurses "are there to take care of real people, not bankers."

"Our message to the richest 20 prime ministers in the world will be 'Take your paws off our public services!' Medicare is not a charitable service. It's a right. Especially in countries as rich as ours!"

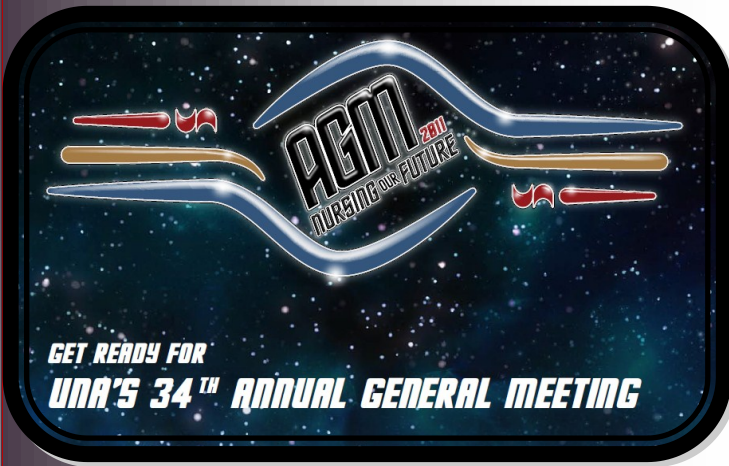
Good places to start, Silas argued, would be the creation of a national Pharmacare program and raising the alarm about what's happening in long-term care.

"What we're doing to seniors in long-term care in Canada is unacceptable and inexcusable," Silas stated. "We're not doing enough to protect our seniors."

"It's time we collect our energy and maintain a national campaign to protect seniors in long-term care," she concluded.



# AGM Sequel



Dear Local 115 Members:

The end of October is usually a time for trick or treating, putting on your winter tires, or going to the mountains to enjoy the magnificent colours of autumn. For UNA members around the province, the end of October is also a time to assemble and carry out the business of the union at our Annual General Meeting. This is the time when members' voices are heard the loudest. In between AGMs, the business of the UNA is carried out by the Executive Board, which is staffed with elected representatives from each district, along with the Executive Officers. At AGM, the members steer the direction of the organization, and this year was no exception.

Issues brought to the floor for consideration this year included Youth initiatives, attendees at non-UNA meetings, and pay inequality con-

cerns, among others. Guest speakers and panel discussions were also a highlight. One panel focused on the question "Do Unions Matter?" and the answer was a resounding "YES!" Unions in general, and public sector unions in particular, are in jeopardy of losing their fundamental rights to free collective bargaining by increasing government interference in the process. Another panel discussed the issue of failure of the Alberta Government to collect adequate revenues from the natural resources that belong to Albertans to help pay for the social services we cherish, and the fallacy of skyrocketing health care expenditures that make publicly funded and delivered health care appear unsustainable. The speaker on the final day of AGM challenged us to step out of our comfort zones, and recognize the important role nurses play in supporting those they care for through difficult times.

Local 115 would like to thank all members who attended AGM, as well as those who put their name forward but were not able to attend. Our Local 115 AGM is fast ap-

proaching on December 14th, and we hope to see as many members as possible in attendance. There are several new incentives being proposed to make attending meetings more accessible, as well as an educational opportunity that has been a century in the making.

In Solidarity,  
**Cameron Westhead**  
Treasurer, Local 115





**Alberta Federation of Labour  
Canadian Labour Congress**

**60 Years of Labour Education**



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

## **2012 Annual School The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge**

**Week 1:  
(Monday – Saturday)  
January 16 - 21**

**Week 2:  
(Sunday – Friday)  
January 22 - 27**



**ALBERTA FEDERATION OF LABOUR**

**10654 – 101 STREET  
EDMONTON, AB T5H 2S1**

**REGISTRAR: LINDA ROBINSON  
PHONE: 780-483-3021  
OR 1-800-661-3995**

**FAX: 780-484-5928  
EMAIL: [lrobinso@afl.org](mailto:lrobinso@afl.org) or [afl@afl.org](mailto:afl@afl.org)  
WEBSITE: [www.afl.org](http://www.afl.org)**

**O**nce again, UNA is sponsoring 15 members-at-large to attend the 2012 AFL/CLC Jasper Labour School. Preference will be given to those members who have never attended the AFL/CLC Labour School before. Complete the ballot form which is available on UNA FirstClass, or contact your Local Executive for assistance in entering your name for the draw. The deadline for submission of the ballot form is 1600 hours November 30, 2011.

## Local 115 FirstClass Tutorial

The Local 115 Executive is holding a FREE FirstClass “Class” for any members who would like to learn more about this UNA Communication tool (as well as those who would like to learn more). Contact the Local if you are interested!



## UNA Local 115 AGM

The local AGM will be held on December 14th at FMC auditorium. The positions up for election this year are Vice President and Secretary. Applications must be submitted to the local office 7 days prior to AGM. If you are interested in receiving information on the role of the VP or Secretary, please contact the local office. Alternatively, you can find the role outline in the UNA constitution, which is posted on the UNA provincial web page.

This year we will be accepting names to sit on

the PRC committee. Please consider letting your name stand. Individuals interested in participating in a committee will need to get their names to the local office 7 days prior to the AGM.

We are also looking for some individuals immediately who are willing to set aside some time to assist with some important work on our PRC committee. Recently, one of the members had to leave. PRC meets twice a month. If you are interested in getting involved with the local, this is a great opportunity. The PRC committee is responsible for the continued advocacy of patient safety. You will be compensated for your participation.