

# THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE:

**Over 100 years  
of Alberta's  
nursing history**

**1916**

The creation of the Alberta Association of Graduate Nurses later known as the AARN comes up with standard of training and practice for nurses.

**1925**

AARN adopts a standard 12- hour period of duty, down from 24 hour.

**1930**

Nurses are beginning to be hired as Employees. Employer-Employee relationships become more common. Prior to 1930 most hospital nurses were volunteer members of religious orders

**1944**

The Canada Nurses Association (CAN) endorses nurses right to bargain collectively with the professional associations as their bargaining agent.

**1950**

Nurse associations begin to appear in hospitals: \$8 dollars a day the typical pay.

**1961**

Full-time nurse earns about \$285.00 a month. Factoring in inflation that would be \$2984.33 in 2025. The AARN with it's no strike policy agrees to a 3-year wage freeze in exchange for a promise of a pension plan.

**1972**

AARN abandons no strike policy.

**1973**

The Supreme Court of Canada rules nurses can establish Unions independent of their professional bodies.

**1977**

UNA founded May 6 when the AARN let its collective bargaining arm become a separate organization-UNA. UNA begins a strike involving 2500 nurses. Judge awards a 9% wage increase. New nurses paid \$6.0+28/ hour

**1978**

UNA holds first Annual General Membership Meeting.

**1980**

6400 nurses strike achieves a 39.8% increase over 2 years, Professional Responsibility Committee, and fifty other contract improvements. (Nurses starting pay now \$ 12.11/ hour)

**1982**

6000 nurses strike at 69 hospitals eventually getting an arbitrated settlement of 14% increase over 1 year.

**1984**

Government Legislature bans all hospital workers the right to strike.

**1988**

14,000 nurses strike at 98 hospitals. UNA fined \$426,750.00. (the largest fine ever given to a Union at the time) Heather Smith elected President.

**1990**

UNA negotiates a 27% increase in pay and benefits.

**2001**

Most nurses starting wage is \$21.54/hour.

**2005**

UNA fights Ralph Klein's attempts to privatize healthcare. (the Third Way) Stopped by overwhelming public opposition lead by healthcare unions.

**2010**

Nurses starting wage now \$32.34/ hour.

**2015**

UNA launches a court battle claiming ban on strikes for public hospitals unconstitutional. Newly elected NDP government redrafts the law allowing strikes.

**2018**

Nurses starting salary is \$36.86/hour.

**2022**

Nurses in Alberta remain the best paid nurses in Canada earning \$39.22-\$52.49/ hour.

**2025**

After one of UNA's toughest rounds of Negotiations. Nurses get increases of approximately 20% By 2027, staff nurses will be earning 45.90-65.32/ hour.

**UNA**  
United Nurses of Alberta