

SUMMER 2023 VOLUME 47, NUMBER 2

NEWS Bulletin UNA

United Nurses of Alberta



BARGAINING 2024

Page 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Page 2

BARGAINING SURVEY

Between pages
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In UNA's 2024 negotiations,
members have key role ensuring
**'WE SAY WHAT WE MEAN,
AND WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY'**

■ **WHEN** United Nurses of Alberta enters negotiations for a new collective agreement,
“we say what we mean, and we mean what we say.”

This is because every one of the contract proposals we put forward comes from UNA members and truly represents our needs and aspirations.

I want to stress to you the importance of *your* input into the bargaining process as we prepare to enter negotiations in 2024.

Our negotiating process starts with you, individual UNA members, submitting individual proposals.

UNA has created an on-line version of the member bargaining survey in addition to the paper form included with this edition of UNA NewsBulletin.

Your input will go to your Local leadership, who will use it to develop Local proposals. Those Local proposals must be supported by two-thirds of the members who attend your Local Demand Setting Meeting.

Your Local proposals and proposals from all other UNA locals involved in Provincial Negotiations are reviewed by the Provincial Negotiating Committee to develop recommendations to the Provincial Demand Setting Meeting (DSM), which will be held November 21-23, 2023, in Calgary.

By attending your Local DSM in advance of the Provincial DSM and providing direction to your Local delegates, you have a say in determining UNA's “Incoming Proposal Package,” which will be presented to employers. That package will be subject to a full membership ratification vote in January 2024.

So your participation at each step is valuable and important. Please attend Local meetings and provide your input. You are encouraged to share and discuss the recommended proposal at every step with your co-workers.

Much has changed in our province, our work-life and our profession. We need to face these challenges together.

In this round of collective bargaining, I encourage you to ensure your voice is heard.

Heather Smith

President, United Nurses of Alberta

FRONT COVER: Lorie Dalog, Vice President of Local 406, Beverly Midnapore (Age Care).

Bargaining for 2024 UNA Provincial Collective Agreement set to begin

Agreement will cover RNs, RPNs employed
by Alberta Health Services, Covenant
Health, Lamont Health Care Centre,
and the Bethany Group (Camrose)



■ **PREPARATION** for United Nurses of Alberta's 2024 round of negotiations for a new Provincial Collective Agreement has already begun, and bargaining will get under way in earnest early next year.

The Provincial Collective Agreement covers Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses employed by Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre, and the Bethany Group (Camrose)

However, it is highly significant to all UNA members because it will set the pattern for all other UNA contracts over the next three or four years.

It's important to remember that the Bargaining Survey included with this edition of UNA NewsBulletin and the online versions that will be provided to members by their Locals should only be filled out by UNA members employed by AHS, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care, and the Bethany Group (Camrose).

While UNA members are unlikely to face a long delay in bargaining like that which occurred in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNA members should expect a drawn-out and arduous process with some twists and turns along the way before a collective agreement is reached and ratified.

At every step, UNA will need the support of members to ensure we can negotiate the best possible agreement for all.

"So, as members, your participation and input at each step are essential and important," said UNA President Heather Smith. "Please go to your Local meetings and provide your input. Please share and discuss the recommended proposal at every step with your co-workers."

"Please go to your Local meetings and provide your input. Please share and discuss the recommended proposal at every step with your co-workers."

- Heather Smith

The process formally begins with the completion and assessment of bargaining questionnaires by UNA members – a paper questionnaire form is included with this edition of UNA NewsBulletin and eligible members can also complete the form electronically using the link that is emailed to them by their Local.

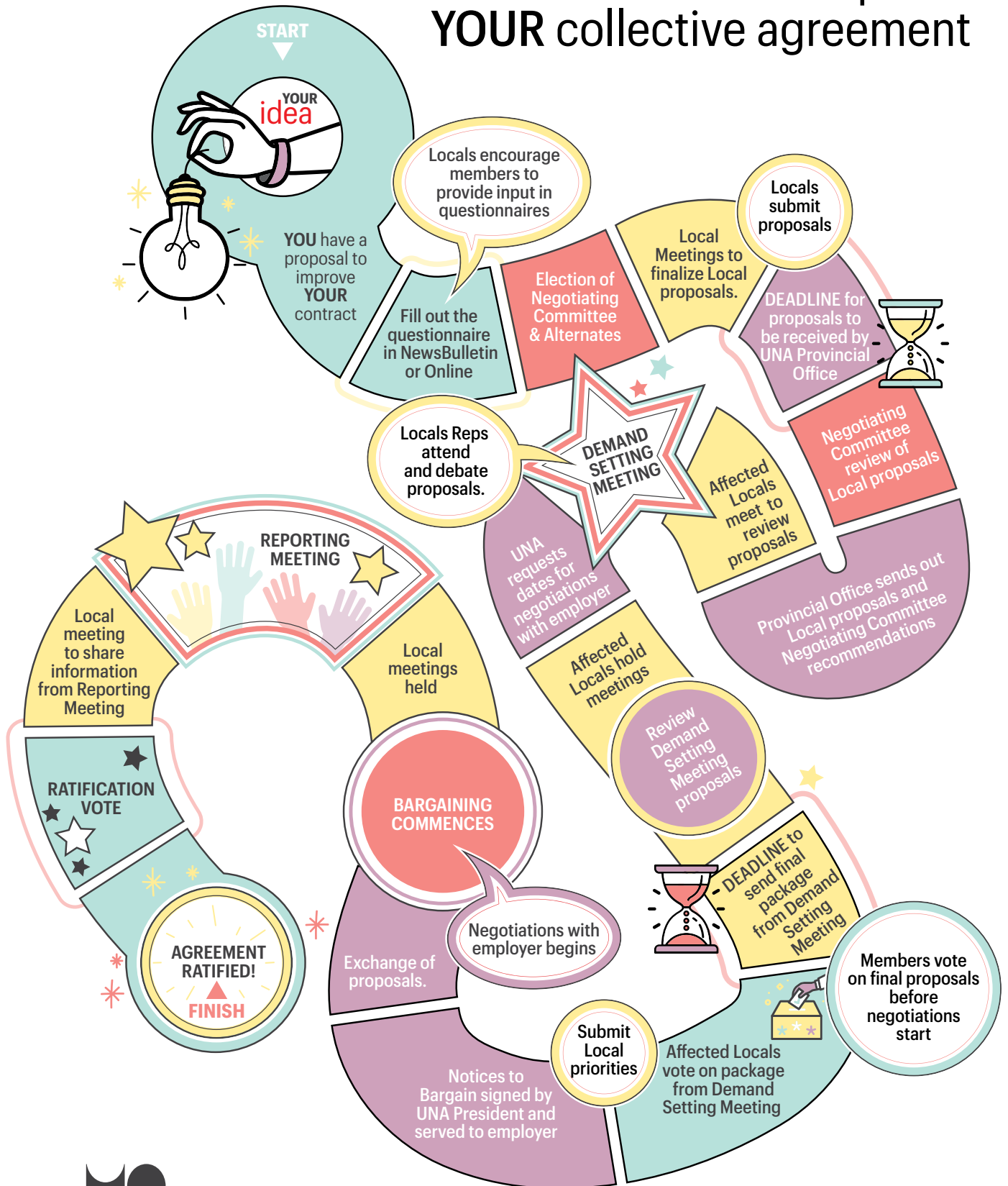
Then the Locals will hold meetings to determine what proposals the Local membership believes should be part of UNA's ongoing proposals.

During the same time period, the 2024 Bargaining Committee will be chosen at District meetings throughout Alberta in June. Nominations of Bargaining Committee members and alternates are to be completed by June 30.

Stay informed by visiting www.UNA.ca.

□ CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

How an idea becomes part of **YOUR** collective agreement



After that, the bargaining process will begin to pick up speed, with proposals from locals received in mid-September, after which they will be reviewed by the negotiating committee and Labour Relations Director David Harrigan.

Just before UNA's October 17-19 Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, attended by representative of all locals, the Bargaining Committee will review the bargaining recommendations for the locals and those of the Director of Labour Relations.

Immediately after the AGM, Provincial Office staff will send out local proposals and Bargaining Committee recommendations in preparation for the Demand Setting Meeting (DSM), which this year will take place November 21-23 in Edmonton. Affected locals will vote on each recommendation at the DSM.

In December, the Bargaining Committee will request dates for bargaining with the Employer Group – negotiations on the Employer side are handled by AHS Labour Relations staff.

UNA locals will vote on the recommendations of the DSM in January 2024 and, if ratified, UNA will send Notices to Bargain to the four employers in the Provincial Collective Agreement. An exchange of proposals will take place later in February.

After that, the timing is less certain, as are the steps that will need to be taken.

If there is an impasse in bargaining, the assistance of a mediator may be required for an agreement to be reached. If agreement cannot be reached, UNA members may be asked to consider appropriate action to reach an agreement, up to strike action if necessary.

Once the union and employer have signed a tentative agreement, a Reporting Meeting will be held, and all members will have the opportunity to vote for or against the tentative agreement.

Later, a copy of the proofread and signed agreement will be posted to the UNA App and printed for the use of members. 🍷

Nurses at Carewest Fanning Centre in Calgary vote to join UNA

■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta welcomes Registered Nurses employed at Carewest's Dr. Vernon Fanning Centre in north-east Calgary.

The bargaining unit of 123 Registered Nurses voted to join UNA on April 13, 2023, and the vote was certified soon after by the Alberta Labour Relations Board.

As soon as possible, UNA will meet with the new members and negotiate a first collective agreement for RNs, who before the vote worked without representation by a union. UNA members employed at Carewest Dr. Vernon Fanning Centre have not yet been assigned a UNA Local number.

UNA also represents RNs and Registered Psychiatric Nurses employed at Carewest

Colonel Belcher (Local 221), Carewest Sarcee & Beddington (Local 423), and Carewest Glenmore Park (Local 424).

UNA thanks the nurses who led the organizing drive at this worksite and who made it very easy for their coworkers to come forward and ask questions about joining our union. 🍷



Image from <https://carewest.ca/carewest-dr-vernon-fanning/>

Study says 'Alberta Surgical Initiative' reduces surgical capacity, fails to fix long wait times

■ **THE** Alberta Government's Alberta Surgical Initiative to outsource publicly funded surgeries to private facilities has diverted resources away from public hospitals and reduced provincial surgical capacity, says a report released today by the Parkland Institute on May 16.

"Alberta has now among the worst performance in reducing wait times in Canada."

— Andrew Longhurst

Failing to Deliver:
The Alberta Surgical
Initiative and Declining
Surgical Capacity



Andrew Longhurst



Image from Simon Fraser University

The surgical initiative was introduced in 2019 as a way to increase the province's surgical capacity under then premier Jason Kenney.

Data found by researcher Andrew Longhurst through Freedom of Information requests and statistical analysis, however, indicates the opposite is happening.

With the sole exception of cataract surgeries, the increase in for-profit surgical delivery generated by the ASI "has failed to improve wait times for all other kinds of surgical procedures," Longhurst said. "Alberta has now among the worst performance in reducing wait times in Canada."

Indeed, according to the report, "surgical volumes data obtained through Freedom of Information requests reveal that the ASI is failing to meet its stated objectives. ... The province's total surgical activity declined in the first three years of the ASI."

This was predicted by many experts, since investing public funds in private "chartered" surgical facilities made the staff shortages in Alberta Health Services hospitals worse and reduced the total number of surgeries performed in Alberta, the study concluded.

"There is a limited pool of specialized health care professionals," Longhurst said. "Outsourcing surgeries leads to competition between public and for-profit sectors for the same professionals."

The declines in total provincial surgical capacity also can't be explained fully by the pandemic, the report notes, since surgical activities in private facilities increased between 2018-19 and 2021-22.

Total provincial surgical volumes fell 6 per cent between 2018-19 and 2021-22, according to the latest data available. In the same time period, "public hospital surgical activity decline 12 per cent as the public sector faces reduced capacity and operating room funding." Also in the same time period, surgeries in private facilities soared almost 50 per cent.

In 2022, Alberta had among the worst performance for priority procedures in Canada, the report says. The trend from 2019 to 2022 indicates that wait times for hip and knee replacements "have worsened significantly, and more precipitously than the Canadian average."

Looking back over a longer range, the report points out, since 2010-11, the three greatest reductions in hospital surgical volumes took place in the first three years of the ASI.

The report also indicated private surgical facilities could further destabilize the public system and create the potential for unlawful extra-billing. 🍷

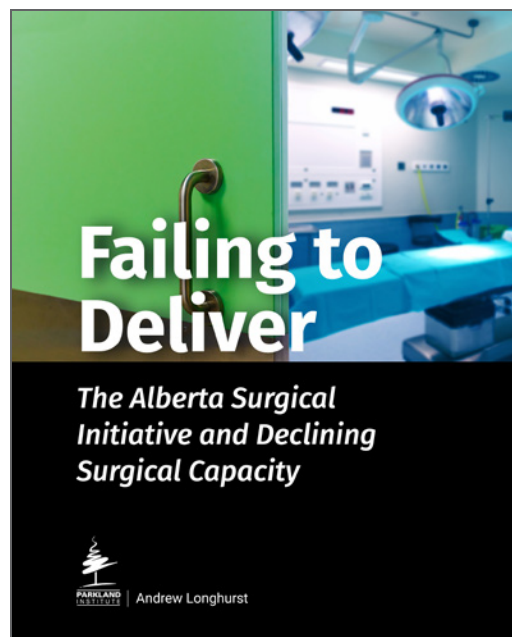


Image from Parkland Institute

UNA marks Nursing Week and International Nurses Day with an eye to 2024 bargaining



■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta members marked Nursing Week this year in the midst of provincial election campaign and while preparing for a year of bargaining in 2024.

In a message to members at the start of Nursing Week on May 8, President Heather Smith said that as always in bargaining, UNA says what it means and means what it says.

“This is because every one of the contract proposals we put forward comes from UNA members and truly represents our needs and aspirations,” she said.

“This Nursing Week I want you to ensure that your voice is heard,” she said.

The theme of Nurses Week 2023, declared by the Canadian Nurses Association, was “*Our Nurses. Our Future.*”

The CNA described the theme as showcasing “the many roles that nurses play in a patient’s health-care journey.”

“The pandemic brought to light the courage and commitment that nurses work under every day and showed the important role that nurses play in the community,” the CNA said in a statement.

In 1971, the International Council of Nurses designated May 12, the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale, as International Nurses Day.

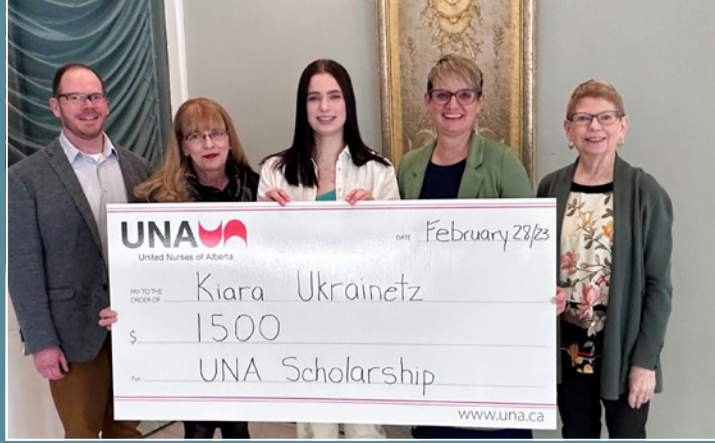
In 1985, CNA members passed a resolution to begin negotiations with the federal government to have the week containing May 12 proclaimed as National Nurses Week. Soon after, the federal minister of health proclaimed the second week of May as National Nurses Week. In 1993, the name was changed to National Nursing Week to emphasize the profession’s accomplishments as a discipline.

May 12 remains known as International Nurses Day. 🍷

Photos of Nursing Week activities were posted by various UNA Local members on Facebook.

“Every one of the contract proposals we put forward comes from UNA members and truly represents our needs and aspirations.”

Heather Smith



UNA Nursing Education Scholarship recipient Kiara Ukrainetz with UNA Second VP Cameron Westhead, President Heather Smith, First VP Danielle Larivee, and Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.



This screen capture of a meeting with some UNA Nursing Education Scholarship winners shows UNA Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik, Second VP Cameron Westhead, First VP Danielle Larivee, President Heather Smith, and scholarship recipients Lauren Pack, James Croucher, Quentin Clowater (with his mother Maria Clowater), parent Joanne Croucher, Lauren and Angie Thielen, and Lauren Pack's mom Colleen Pack.

UNA awards 15 nursing education scholarships plus one CFNU scholarship

Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions Scholarship winner Samantha Leak with her sponsor, her mother Anne Marie Martin, and UNA Second VP Cameron Westhead and Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.

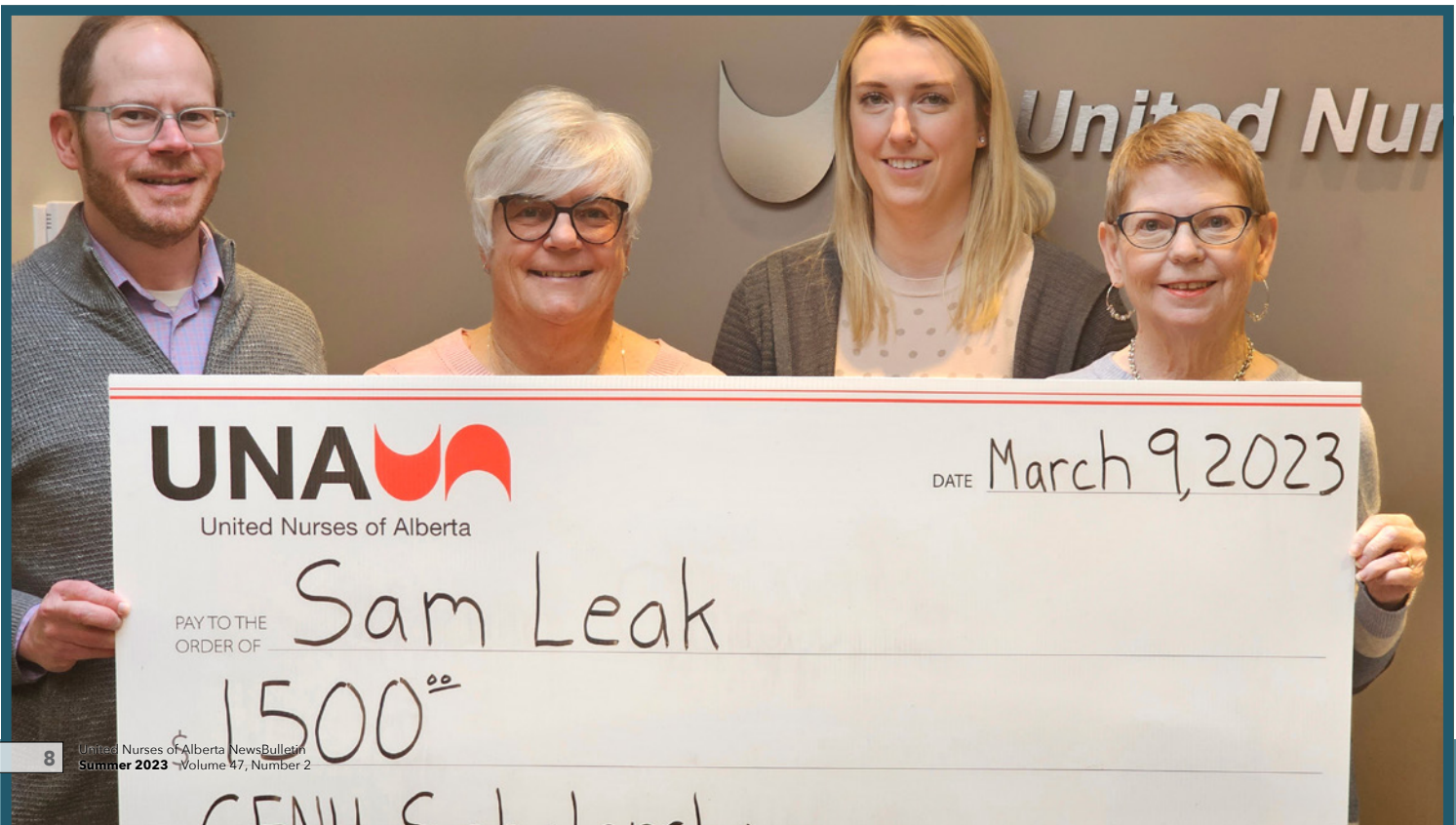
■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta has awarded 15 annual scholarships of \$1,500 to nursing students from across Alberta as well as one Canadian Federation of Nurses Scholarship, also worth \$1,500.

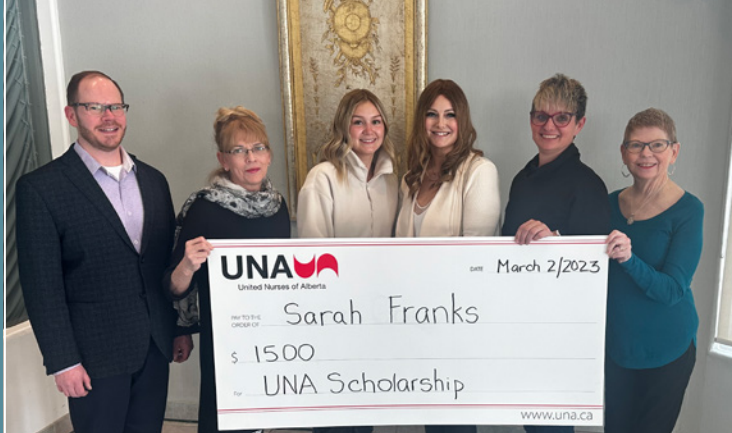
This is the largest number of UNA nursing education scholarships ever awarded after a motion was passed at the union's Annual

General Meeting in 2021 to raise the number of annual scholarships from 10.

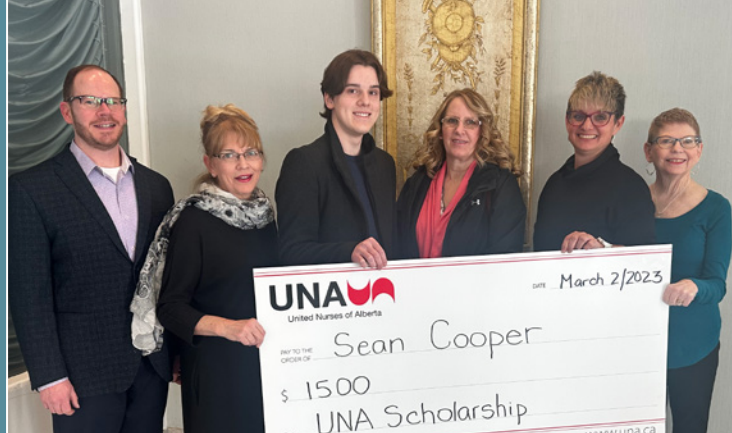
UNA's scholarship program awards scholarships to applicants, who must be related to UNA members, who have completed an application form and written a short essay answering the question, "*Why is the PRC process important to Alberta Nurses?*"

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UNA Nursing Education Scholarship winner Sarah Franks and her aunt Sheila Pederson flanked by UNA Second VP Cameron Westhead, President Heather Smith, First VP Danielle Larivee, and Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.



UNA Nursing Education Scholarship recipient Sean Cooper and his mother Tammy Cooper with UNA Second VP Cameron Westhead, President Heather Smith, First VP Danielle Larivee, and Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.

□ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

This year's UNA Scholarship winners are:

Michaela Craig from Northwestern Polytechnic, sponsored by Michelle Callihoo from Local 136 (Barrhead Healthcare Centre)

Sean Cooper from the University of Alberta, sponsored by Tammy Cooper from Local 301 (University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton)

Quentin Clowater of the University of Calgary, sponsored by Maria Clowater from Local 95 (Alberta Children's Hospital, Calgary)

James Croucher of MacEwan University, sponsored by Joanne Croucher from Local 96 (Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, Fort McMurray)

Kamiel Dumanowski of Medicine Hat College/University of Calgary, sponsored by Pamela Dumanowski of Local 126 (Palliser Community, Medicine Hat)

Larissa Paige Eifler of Mount Royal University, sponsored by Jennifer Eifler of Local 211 (Calgary Community)

Sarah Jessica Franks of Grant MacEwan University, sponsored by Sheila Pederson of Local 85 (Sturgeon Community Hospital, St. Albert)

Lauren Pack of the University of Lethbridge, sponsored by Colleen Pack from Local 164 (Taber Health Care Complex)

Mia Pierson of Red Deer Polytechnic, sponsored by Alison Rosadiuk of Local 304 (Stony Plain Community Health)

Abigail Pilgrim of Keyano College, sponsored by Juanita Pilgrim from Local 96 (Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, Fort McMurray)

Sarah Salami of MacEwan University, sponsored by Biola Salami from Locals 234 and 316 (Hardisty Nursing Home and Good Samaritan, Edmonton)

Avery Schiller of Northwestern Polytechnic, sponsored by Rachael Schiller from Local 73 (Westlock Health Care Centre)

Reagan Speer of Lethbridge College, sponsored by past member Beckie Rudneski.

Lauren Anne Thielen of Lethbridge College/University of Lethbridge, sponsored by Angie Thielen from Local 415 (South Health Campus, Calgary)

Kiara Ukrainetz of MacEwan University, sponsored by Sheila Pederson from Local 85 (Sturgeon Community Hospital, St. Albert)

This year's Canadian Federation of Nurses Union Scholarship winner is:

Samantha Leak of Mount Royal University, sponsored by Anne Marie Martin from Local 415 (South Health Campus, Calgary). 🇨🇦

APPLY FOR A 2024 UNA SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are now being accepted for 2024 UNA Nursing Education Scholarships. Applications must be completed and submitted by 4:30 p.m. on October 15, 2023.

UNA now awards up to 15 nursing scholarships of \$1,500 each year and one award of \$1,500 sponsored by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions for students enrolled in first-year Registered Nurse or Registered Psychiatric Nurse track programs. This scholarship is not intended for postgraduate studies.

Applicants must be related to a UNA member or associate member in good standing.



www.una.ca/memberresources/scholarships

UNA International Solidarity Grant helps PROVIDE FOOD AND WATER TO MEXICAN CITY'S POOR



International Solidarity Grant recipient Teresa Caldwell provided these photos of her volunteer work with workers and their children in Mazatlán, Mexico. These families survive by retrieving material of value from the municipal dump and reselling it. Caldwell is shown below with some of the young people she has helped.



■ **AS** the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic eases, United Nurses of Alberta will be able to resume supporting humanitarian work abroad by union members.

Recently Teresa Caldwell, a member of Local 301 at the University of Alberta Hospital, received a \$1,000 International Solidarity Grant for her work in Mazatlán, Mexico, with a group that provides sandwiches and bottled water for dump workers and education for children in the port city in the country's northwestern Sinaloa State.

In her report, Caldwell, a former North Central District representative, described her volunteer with Vineyard Ministries Central Mexico to provide sandwiches and water to more than 400 people who support themselves by scavenging in Mazatlán's municipal dump for bottles, cans and other marketable recyclables.

"They sadly have to work long days, sometimes with their children, to make around 1,400 pesos (approximately \$100 Cdn) a week," she wrote in her report. "Even though people aren't allowed to stay at the camp, we have seen several shelters erected within the dump site."

The religious charity has built several community buildings where services are offered to people living in poverty, and provide food, water and educational services to more than 1,000 children with the hope they will return to school.

"I am very thankful for the support UNA has provided through grants such as the International Solidarity Grant," Caldwell wrote. "Opportunities such as these show how resilient people can be, and the importance of being there for each other, no matter which country we live in." 🇲🇽

Longtime UNA activist Tanice Olson retires as LRO

■ **CONGRATULATIONS** to longtime UNA activist and Labour Relations Officer Tanice Olson on her retirement, which took effect on June 7.

Olson, who started work at the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary immediately after graduating from the University of Alberta Hospital School of Nursing in 1988, says she plans to divide her time between gardening and being with relatives in Calgary in the summer and “enjoying my hummingbirds and all my friends in Mexico” in the winter.

She will be missed by UNA members and her co-workers.

“Tanice was an eloquent and forceful representative of Local 1, the Peter Lougheed Hospital,” said UNA President Heather Smith. “She brought those same skills to representing members across Alberta as a Labour Relations Officer.

“Understanding both collective agreement administration and UNA governance, Tanice has been an advocate, a teacher and mentor to many Local Executive leaders,” Smith said.

“Tanice has been with UNA as a member, a Local Executive, District Rep, Negotiating Committee Member and most recently as an LRO in the Southern Alberta Regional Office in Calgary for the last 11 years,” said Labour Relations Manager Jeannine Arbour. “Her in-depth nursing knowledge, her incredible historical record keeping, and her generosity in keeping the back rows of AGM filled with the best baked goods are going to be sorely missed by us all.”

Olson grew up in a union family. She remembers reading the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers magazine sent to her father at home as a young person growing up.

But she says she really became truly committed to the union during her first nursing job. “It was a rocky time in health care in the early Nineties, many of my classmates moved to the U.S. to work. After finally achieving my goal of full time in Labour and Delivery in 1992, I was bumped four months later.”

In addition to the positions mentioned by Arbour, before joining UNA’s staff Olson served as a PRC Committee member, ward rep, membership secretary, second vice-president, and UNA Finance and Membership Committee member. 🍷



Photo by Carolyn Olson



Long-time UNA activist and Labour Relations Officer Tanice Olson, who plans to spend some of her retirement in Mexico.

FIFTH WELLNESS DAY SEEN AS SUCCESS



■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta held its fifth Wellness Day event on May 18 focused on mental health and self-care.

More than 420 UNA members participated in the daylong Zoom event, which took place in the week following Nurses Week.

Speakers Barb Campbell, Tonya Ratushniak, Stephanie Staples, and David Granirer shared skills that can help UNA members boost their resiliency, teach relaxation and stress relieving methods.

Barb Campbell and Tonya Ratushniak



After welcoming remarks by UNA President Heather Smith and Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas, the speakers shared their skills.

UNA Second Vice-President Cam Westhead and UNA's Executive Board Membership Committee have played a key role in organizing these Wellness Day events.

Wellness Day video available online

UNA members can watch **the video recording of the fifth wellness day event** and **discuss wellness issues** with other nurses in UNA Forums. Members will need to **create a UNAnet account** in order to access the video and chat. 🗣️

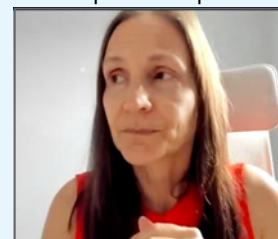
Watch the Wellness day video



David Granirer



Stephanie Staples



Avril Newcombe appointed UNA finance and administration director

■ **ON** March 1, United Nurses of Alberta announced the appointment of Avril Newcombe as Director of Finance and Administration.

Newcombe is no stranger to UNA. She started in the Finance Department in May 2009 as finance technician and is well known to UNA staff, activists and many members.

Newcombe, who moved to Alberta from Prince Edward Island in 2005, has more than 25 years' experience in the accounting and finance fields.

Raised on a farm in rural P.E.I., Newcombe says she tries to return every summer to visit family and friends. "I love Anne of Green Gables," she says, "and the fresh lobster is tasty!"

Newcombe replaces former finance and administration director Darlene Rathgeber, who retired in September 2022. Rathgeber worked for UNA for 40 years and was in her last position for 34 years at the time of her retirement. 🗣️

Avril Newcombe, UNA's new Director of Finance and Administration.



Gil McGowan wins 10th term as AFL president

KAREN KUPRYS ACCLAIMED TO SECOND TERM AS SECRETARY TREASURER

■ **GIL** McGowan was elected to his 10th term as president of the Alberta Federation of Labour during the biennial convention of the province's largest union advocacy organization in April.

He is the longest serving president of the AFL in the organization's 111-year history.

Prior to his first election in 2005, McGowan had served as the AFL's communications director for 10 years, during which he was often seconded to unions to assist with campaigns and strikes and played a key role in the fight to protect medicare during the Klein government.

As president, he has played important roles in many important public issues in Alberta, among them resource development policy, reform of the temporary foreign worker program, climate change and green jobs, the \$15 minimum wage, pension reform, reforms to the *Alberta Labour Code* and *Employment Standards Code*, and reforms to occupational health and safety and workers compensation legislation.

Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan, who was elected to a record 10th term at the union advocacy organization's biennial convention in Calgary.

McGowan is chair of the sponsor board of the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the pension for most Alberta nurses.

As McGowan's challenger, Edmonton and District Labour Council President Greg Mady offered his congratulations and moved for the results of the election to be made unanimous after they were announced on April 29.

Karen Kuprys was re-elected by acclamation as AFL's Secretary Treasurer.

Kuprys is well known to UNA members, having served as secretary, vice-president, president and Professional Responsibility Committee chair of Local 154 at the Youville Home and Foyer Lacombe in St. Albert.

A Registered Nurse for 28 years, Kuprys was also a member of UNA's Executive Board for a decade as a representative of the North Central District. She received UNA's inaugural Bread & Roses Award in 2020 and a Centennial Award from the College and Association of Registered Nurses in 2016.

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Above: Heather Smith, Photo by Rachel Scheffelmair



UNA members who attended the Alberta Federation of Labour biennial convention in Calgary in April took part in a Workers Demand Better-themed demonstration and a joined a picket line with members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, who were on strike at the time.





Above: UNA President Heather Smith and other union leaders take part in a discussion of labour issues during the AFL convention.



Registered Nurse Karen Kuprys, shown here with AFL President Gil McGowan, was acclaimed to a second term as secretary treasurer of the organization.



In the foreground, UNA Second VP Cameron Westhead, Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik and President Heather Smith.



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After the convention was opened with prayer and an informal talk by Tsuut'ina elder and Dene language commissioner Bruce Starlight, the approximately 500 delegates and observers at the convention also heard greetings via video link or in person from Calgary City Councillor Kourtney Penner, Calgary and District Labour Council President Alex Chevalier, Canadian Labour Congress President Bea Bruske, federal Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan, Amalgamated Transit Union Canada President John Di Nino, and an energetic in-person message from Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas.

Alberta NDP Opposition Leader Rachel Notley, who had tested positive for COVID-19 shortly before the convention, gave a short video message and the speech that had been prepared for her was delivered by NDP Labour Critic Christina Gray.

There were many panels and speakers throughout the four-day event on topics ranging from the impact of inflation on Alberta working people by economist Jim Stanford to unions and workers in science fiction by former AFL communications director Olav Rokne.

The AFL, founded in 1912, is a voluntary association of unions and employee organizations that together represent about 175,000 Alberta working people. 🍷

Tsuut'ina elder and Dene
language commissioner
Bruce Starlight

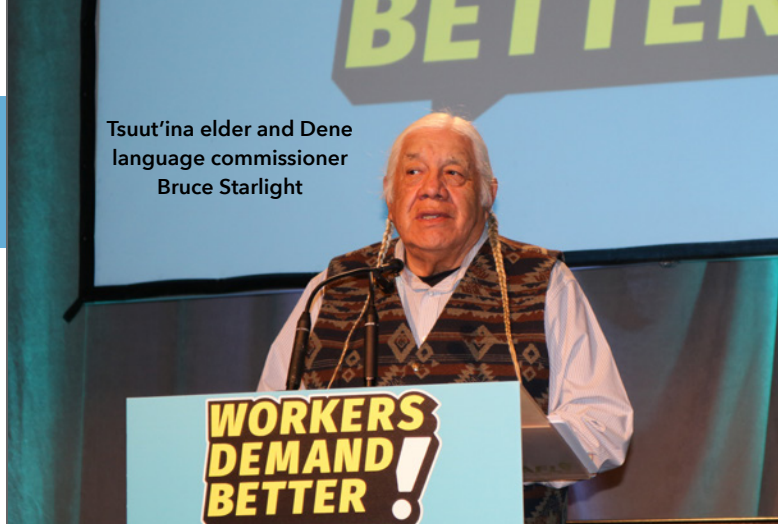


Photo by Rachel Scheffelmair



UNA members mark April 28 International Day of Mourning in the wake of COVID pandemic

■ **WITH** the profound hope that the COVID-19 pandemic is finally receding in the rear-view mirror, United Nurses of Alberta members marked the International Day of Mourning on April 28 by mourning the dead and injured and recommitting themselves to fighting for the living.

by the provincial Legislature in 2020, which saw rights needed by Alberta to ensure their safety at work significantly rolled back.

The bill, which introduced amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, weakened the Joint Health and Safety Committee system and eliminated requirements for workers to participate in worksite safety inspections. It also eroded the right of workers to refuse unsafe work and made it easier for employers to punish workers who refused dangerous work.

This happened despite the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* stating that among the purposes of that legislation is “the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers.”

This is particularly troubling considering the experience of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought unexpected dangers to our workplaces when it came to protecting health care workers in the midst of a deadly global pandemic.

“Nurses will never let their patients down,” UNA President Heather Smith said during the pandemic. “But the work of nursing, now more than ever, must be done with special alertness to the safety of health care workers and the people in their care alike.”

Traditional April 28 gatherings to honour the dead and advocate for the living began to return this year and will be more prominent in the future.

April 28 officially became the National Day of Mourning in Canada in 1991 after the passage by Parliament of the *Workers Mourning Day Act* in December 1990. Since then, the occasion has come to be widely marked throughout the world. 🇺🇦



Alberta Federation of Labour Secretary Treasurer Karen Kuprys speaks during the April 28 International Day of Mourning ceremony in Edmonton.

UNA members serve on the front lines of health care, and the commitment to ensure workers are protected from workplace hazards that can lead to preventable, needless death, serious injury or illness is embedded in the DNA of the nursing profession.

“But we must recognize that the struggle is not moving in the right direction in Alberta,” UNA said in a statement published on April 28.

“Alberta’s government continues to talk the talk about worker safety, but the actual policies enacted by the current government shows no such commitment to walk the walk,” the statement said. “On the contrary, using slogans about reducing red tape, our provincial government has been chipping away at regulations that keep Alberta workers safe.”

UNA’s statement pointed to the “*Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act*,” passed

UNA and AHS co-operate during wildfire emergency

KNOW
your
Rights

■ **DURING** the province-wide wildfire crisis, the wellbeing of nurses and their patients remained UNA's top priority. Your union always stands ready to support nurses to provide the best patient care possible under dangerous circumstances.

To ensure staff and patients were safe during the 2023 provincial emergency, UNA and Alberta Health Services agreed to temporarily extend timelines for labour-relations matters.

The agreement signed May 7 applies to the conduct of investigations and filing of grievances, arbitrations, Professional Responsibility Concerns, and Occupational Health and Safety Concerns. It extended timelines from May 8 to June 10 and could be extended if conditions warrant. It left room for the parties to mutually agree to proceed more quickly in particular situations where immediate action was required.

The goal of the extension was to ensure appropriate resources could be allocated to keep staff and patients safe during the wildfires threatening communities

throughout Alberta. Notice of additional support for members in areas that effected by the fires will be published on UNA's website – www.una.ca – on the union's smart phone app and on online forums accessible through UNAnet.

UNA also encourages nurses affected by the wildfires to seek assistance through their employer-provided supports. An AHS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is found online at www.una.ca/document/wildfire-faq.

The AHS Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a free and confidential service available 24/7 to support employees and their families. Visit Homeweb.ca or call 1-877-273-3134 for support. EFAP offers Crisis Management Services, EFAP Counselling Services, and Life Smart Services.

Nurses who have been evacuated or need immediate assistance should call 9-1-1. For non-emergency health advice is available at Health Link, 8-1-1. If you need to talk, call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642 or Health Link. 🍷



Report from
Director of Labour Relations
David Harrigan

UNA members with any questions or concerns about how this ongoing situation is impacting their workplace should contact their UNA local executive or Labour Relations Officer at 1-800-252-9394.

UNA donates \$10,000 to Canadian Red Cross for Alberta wildfire relief

■ **UNITED** Nurses of Alberta is supporting **Canadian Red Cross** efforts to assist people affected by the wildfires raging across Alberta.

UNA's Executive Board approved a \$10,000 donation to the Canadian Red Cross, which is using the funds for immediate and ongoing relief, recovery and resilience efforts in response to fires, as well as for community preparedness and risk reduction for future natural disaster events within Alberta.

More than 30,000 Albertans have been evacuated from their homes since the wildfires began spreading in early May.

Since the wildfires began to spread, communities such as Drayton Valley, Edson, Evansburg, and Entwistle, and many First Nations communities across the north of the province, have faced mandated evacuation orders.

Individual UNA members are encouraged to contribute online to Red Cross efforts. 🍷

NURSES NOW + ALWAYS

DON'T PULL THE PLUG ON PUBLIC HEALTH CARE

UNA 

NEEDNURSES.CA



**Show your support with a
'Don't Pull the Plug on
Public Health Care' lawn sign**

- **ALBERTA** nurses are on the front lines of health care, dealing with understaffing, an under-funded and badly frayed system, and the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as they do their utmost to bring the best quality care to Albertans.

Nurses can show their concern by putting a DON'T PULL THE PLUG ON PUBLIC HEALTH CARE/I ♥ ALBERTA NURSES sign on their lawn or in their window.

Anyone can order a lawn sign by going to: <https://neednurses.ca/action/request-a-lawn-sign/> 

