

April 2026

Triage Desk

Hello there,

This month's edition focuses on two urgent issues: workplace violence and the growing threat Bill 11 poses to public healthcare.

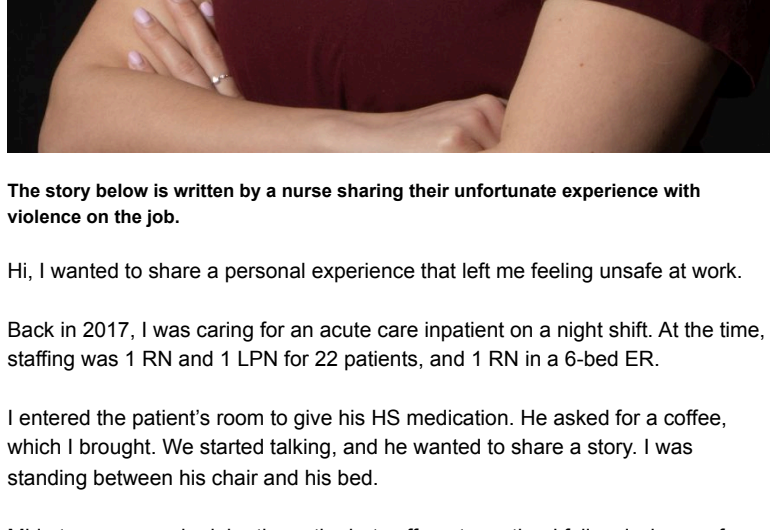
Violence and threats should never be accepted as "part of the job," yet many nurses and healthcare workers face them every day. In this issue, nurses share their real experiences, from verbal abuse to physical harm.

You'll also find our [statement on the recent act of violence](#) at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

On Friday, April 17, we're also calling on you to take action and urge the federal government to enforce the Canada Health Act.

Thank you for taking the time to read, reflect, and stand with us.

Nursing Notes



The story below is written by a nurse sharing their unfortunate experience with violence on the job.

Hi, I wanted to share a personal experience that left me feeling unsafe at work.

Back in 2017, I was caring for an acute care inpatient on a night shift. At the time, staffing was 1 RN and 1 LPN for 22 patients, and 1 RN in a 6-bed ER.

I entered the patient's room to give his HS medication. He asked for a coffee, which I brought. We started talking, and he wanted to share a story. I was standing between his chair and his bed.

Mid-story, unprovoked, he threw the hot coffee at me, thankfully missing my face and hitting my chest. He then stood up and tried to push me onto the bed, reaching for my neck. He was an average-sized man in his 60s, but had pre-existing health issues that allowed me to fend him off and escape. Before I left, I noticed he had removed the pull cord from the blinds and placed it neatly on the bed.

I called for help, and my partner came. The patient then went into another room, seemingly confused. We called our lone security guard — also in his 60s — whose response was to say it must have been a mistake.

Meanwhile, the patient had called the RCMP, reporting an armed robbery. Officers arrived, spoke with him, and stayed until he could be chemically restrained. They told me I could press charges, which I didn't feel comfortable doing without understanding why this had happened.

After speaking with his family, we learned he had done this once before - during a massive stroke. He was sent for a stat CT, and we never received follow-up.

As if the incident wasn't traumatic enough, management only asked a brief "how are you," with no guidance or support. Security made it clear they were there to protect the building, not staff.

Without follow-up, I was left wondering what went wrong?

Did I miss signs he was stroking?

Could I have done something differently?

Not knowing has been more stressful than the incident itself.

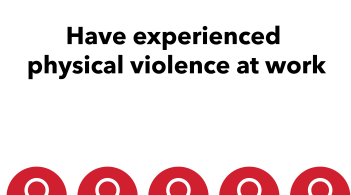
This is just one of many times the system, management, and security have left me and others feeling vulnerable and unsafe.

The public perception remains that nurses are the punching bags of healthcare, whether physical, verbal, sexual, or emotional.

And it needs to stop.

Brain Food

Did you know?



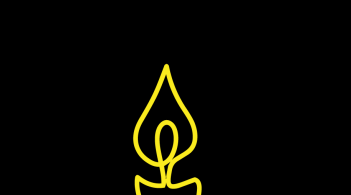
Four in 10 Alberta nurses report experiencing physical violence at work.



Six in 10 report non-physical violence.

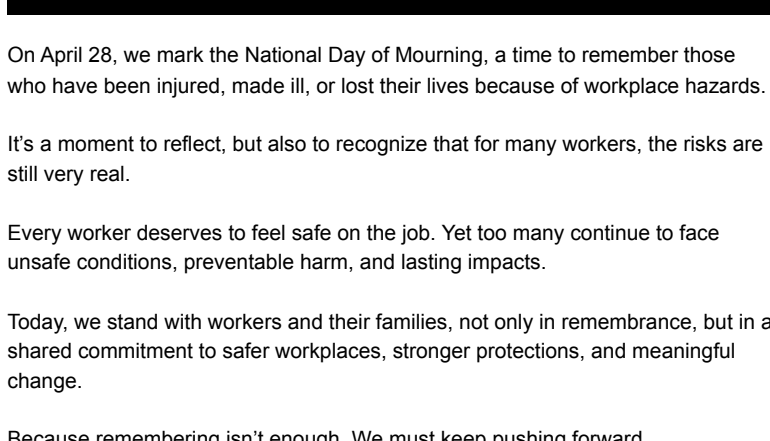
This is based on UNA's 2025 annual membership survey.

The reality? Many of these situations are preventable.



With more capacity - staff on units, more beds, and stronger community care - we can reduce overcrowding, ease pressure on emergency rooms, and make workplaces safer for nurses and patients alike.

National Day of Mourning



On April 28, we mark the National Day of Mourning, a time to remember those who have been injured, made ill, or lost their lives because of workplace hazards.

It's a moment to reflect, but also to recognize that for many workers, the risks are still very real.

Every worker deserves to feel safe on the job. Yet too many continue to face unsafe conditions, preventable harm, and lasting impacts.

Today, we stand with workers and their families, not only in remembrance, but in a shared commitment to safer workplaces, stronger protections, and meaningful change.

Because remembering isn't enough. We must keep pushing forward.

What Nurses Are Saying

Anonymous Nurse

"I was sexually assaulted by a male patient on a night shift. My charge told me to get use to it when I came out of the room distressed. I moved to L&D to work with only women because I was so traumatized and afraid of male patients attacking me."

Anonymous Nurse

"... I've been hit, spat on, chased, had things thrown at me by patients many times, and it's always brushed off as just part of the job. Verbal threats are a daily occurrence. Then, when I was working on a night shift a few months ago, I witnessed my coworker being brutally assaulted by 2 patients so badly that we had to do CPR on him. I haven't worked there since because I decided to prioritize my safety. No job is worth my life."

Anonymous Nurse

"I work as a Locum RN in long-term care facilities. During my assignment at Slave Lake, a resident repeatedly requested morphine for pain despite the physician having clearly determined it would not be prescribed. I calmly explained this decision and attempted to provide support within the care plan. The resident became agitated and directed a discriminatory remark toward me, stating, 'Go back to where you came from.' As a Black nurse, I experienced this as a racial and inappropriate comment. I informed the resident that the remark was not acceptable and stepped away to de-escalate the situation. I am sharing this incident to raise awareness regarding staff safety and the impact of discriminatory behavior toward healthcare workers."

Anonymous Nurse

"I had a patient threaten to cut my face off with a pair of scissors once."

Anonymous Nurse

"I have been bear sprayed, bit, kicked, punched and even kicked in the stomach when 6 months pregnant causing a partial abortion. All in a suburban ER within a 7 month period. Thankfully at a safe, telehealth nursing job now. Will carry this trauma for a longtime still."

Anonymous Nurse

"... I was working as an RN on a medical-surgical unit that also had a lot of A&C patients. One patient in particular was a man in his 40's with a TBI and alcohol use disorder. I was sitting at a computer charting and he came out of his room to use the phone at the desk. There was a time limit on phone calls as part of his behaviour care plan. He was speaking with a family member about an event that had made the news earlier that was close to home. He was over his time limit and was given a warning by his bedside nurse. He ignored her. She came over and hung up the phone with the receiver. Realizing he had been disconnected, he looked up and the first person he saw sitting there was me, and in an instant took the handset and hit me in the face with it. Security came and I had a large gash on my chin from it. I still remember the look on his eyes and this was over 8 years ago. I also received numerous threats during the pandemic working in a small rural hospital, from people angry about shutdowns and public health restrictions. They happened regularly and I almost left nursing afterwards..."

Quote of the Month

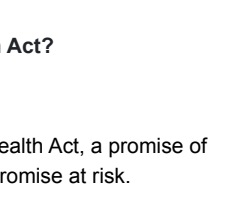
"One death is one too many. It's for this reason we look to strengthening our resolve to create safe workplaces and protect workers."

Anne Tennier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

What's Next?



It's time to *spring* into action and say NO to Two-Tier health care!



Is This The Last Anniversary For The Canada Health Act?

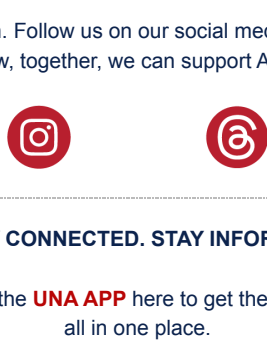
This year marks the 42nd anniversary of the Canada Health Act, a promise of universal, accessible care. [Alberta's Bill 11](#) puts that promise at risk.

On Friday April 17, help us urge the federal government to enforce the Act and protect public healthcare from Bill 11.

Here's how you can take action:

- Mark the day with an "anniversary" cake (real or not), post a photo on social media and tag Prime Minister Mark Carney and Federal Health Minister Majorie Michel.
- And scan the QR code below to sign the petition and send a letter to the Prime Minister and the federal Health Minister

Let's make sure this isn't the final anniversary.



Let's Connect

LET'S GET SOCIAL!

We'd love to keep in touch. Follow us on our social media platforms and help us spread the word about how, together, we can support Alberta's nurses.



STAY CONNECTED. STAY INFORMED.

Members can download the **UNA APP** here to get the latest news and updates, all in one place.



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