

THE PULSE

United Nurses of Alberta

December 2025

Triage Desk

In our final newsletter of the year, we're taking a look at some major changes unfolding in Alberta's health-care system.

We'll hear from a nurse whose life was saved by Canada's publicly funded, publicly delivered system, and who has also witnessed, firsthand, the tragic outcomes faced by patients in the U.S. private system when essential care was out of reach.

We also look at recent changes that would allow physicians to work in both private and public settings, and proposals that could let residents pay for services, developments raising important questions about access and equity.

To brighten things up, you'll find a holiday message from our president and a little "Brain Food" joy: the surprising story of how the snow globe was invented by accident.

Thank you for reading, for your dedication to the profession, and for the care you continue to provide throughout the year. Wishing you a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Nursing Notes



["I Survived Because Care Was Public." Alberta Nurse Shares Her Story.](#)

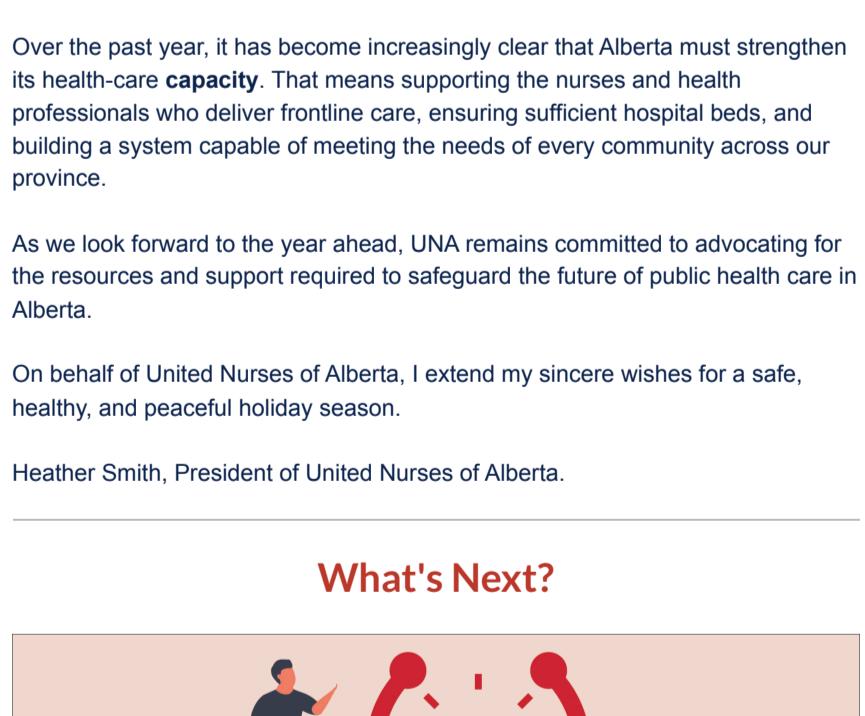
Alberta is facing major changes in how health care is delivered, with a growing shift toward a private, for-profit model. This raises a difficult question: What is the true cost and who is most vulnerable when care comes with a price tag?

Registered Nurse Melanie Fitz, whose life was saved because she had access to Canada's publicly funded, publicly delivered system and who has worked in the U.S. for-profit system, where she saw people suffer, and even die, because they couldn't afford essential care, says it's Albertans who can't afford to pay in cash that will pay with their lives.

Melanie's experience shows the human impact of a system where life-saving treatment becomes a financial decision and where those who can pay move ahead of those in greatest need.

This is her story, and why the future of health care matters so deeply to her and should matter to you too.

[Watch the video here.](#)



Dual Doctor Work Model Raises Questions About Access and Equity

The Alberta government's leaked plan to amend the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act poses a direct threat to public health care.

The amendment would allow physicians to work in both the public system and a parallel private market.

UNA President Heather Smith says the proposal would lead to longer wait times in an underfunded public system, higher out-of-pocket and insurance costs for patients, and major profits for private insurers.

Experts cited in The Globe and Mail say the changes would create a two-tier system where wealthier Albertans get better access to care.

UNA says the plan is designed to circumvent the Canada Health Act, advance privatization, and ultimately undermine public health care in Alberta.

Brain Food



Did You Know? Snow Globes Were Invented by Accident.

Snow globes actually began as a failed attempt at improving hospital lighting.

In 1900, Austrian inventor Erwin Perzy tried to brighten a surgical lamp by adding tiny reflective flakes to water. The experiment didn't go as planned.

The lamp didn't get any brighter, but the drifting particles created a magical effect.

Perzy leaned into the magic of the moment and crafted the first true snow globe, featuring a miniature scene of the Vienna Basilica.

The idea took off, and by 1905 he and his brother were handcrafting snow globes in a small Vienna workshop, a tradition the Perzy family still carries on today.

Quote of the Month

"We must guard against the overreaching hand of big government, trying to take away our freedom. And we must always protect the environment in a manner consistent with our values."

Steve Forbes, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief of Forbes Media

President's Holiday Message

As we enter the holiday season, I am reminded of the crucial role care plays in the well-being of our communities.

This is a time to reflect on our shared responsibility to ensure every Albertan can access the health services they depend on.

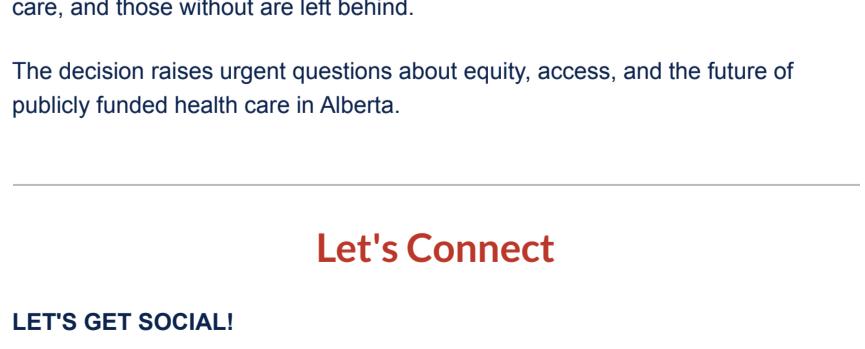
Over the past year, it has become increasingly clear that Alberta must strengthen its health-care capacity. That means supporting the nurses and health professionals who deliver front-line care, ensuring sufficient hospital beds, and building a system capable of meeting the needs of every community across our province.

As we look forward to the year ahead, UNA remains committed to advocating for the resources and support required to safeguard the future of public health care in Alberta.

On behalf of United Nurses of Alberta, I extend my sincere wishes for a safe, healthy, and peaceful holiday season.

Heather Smith, President of United Nurses of Alberta.

What's Next?



Doctors warn Alberta's plan to let people pay privately for tests could harm the public health system.

Alberta is preparing to allow private payment for diagnostic services such as MRIs and CT scans, signalling a major shift in the province's health-care approach.

According to Dr. Paul Parks, president-elect of the emergency medicine section of the Alberta Medical Association, this will have major ramifications and will absolutely collapse our public health-care system.

He warns it could create a two-tier system where those with money receive faster care, and those without are left behind.

The decision raises urgent questions about equity, access, and the future of publicly funded health care in Alberta.

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.

MEMBERS CAN DOWNLOAD THE [UNA APP](#) HERE.

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