



**Date:** February 20, 2018

**To:**

- Covenant Health and UNA Representatives currently sitting on local Professional Responsibility Concern Committees
- Leadership representatives from both Covenant Health and UNA
- Covenant Health HR and LR Representatives and UNA LROs

**From:**

- Sheli Murphy, SOO, Rural Health, Covenant Health
- Karen MacMillan, SOO, GNH, Covenant Health
- Janet Schimpf, SOO, MCH, Covenant Health
- Scott Baerg, SOO, Urban, Continuing Care and Addiction and Mental Health
- Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta

**RE: Adjustment to the Covenant Health/UNA Professional Responsibility Process Improvements**

As you are aware from a previous memo for more than a year, representatives from Covenant Health and UNA have been working together to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the Professional Responsibility Concern (PRC) process. We were poised to roll out an education regarding the changes however, the mediated agreement has altered some areas in the process and therefore we need to pause and adjust the current 'new' process to align with the more recently ratified collective agreement. As a group we continue to uphold the vision and principles that we committed to earlier in the process, but need to update the documents and educational tools to reflect these most recent changes

The Covenant Health/UNA Forum comprised of senior leadership from both Covenant Health and UNA continue to be committed to supporting PRCC representatives across the province and ensuring that the PRCCs are an effective, proactive, collaborative mechanism to address patient care issues. In support of this, a joint presentation and new resources will become available over the next few months, followed by joint education sessions prior to summer. Dates will be distributed for sites late spring so please watch for those and please encourage individuals to attend.

We are excited for the opportunities this represents for us to work together to improve the PRC process. We believe that our patients, employees and members will all benefit from moving to a more consistent, proactive and collaborative approach to our joint PRC process. We all have a responsibility to contribute to these improvements and we will all share the benefits.

**WATCH FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PRC PROCESS RESOURCES AND JOINT PRESENTATION!**



## Covenant Health / United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) Professional Responsibility Concern Process

### Vision

The Covenant Health and UNA Professional Responsibility Concern (PRC) process promotes excellence in care at all stages of life, and caring for the whole person – body, mind and soul.

### Principles

1. Professional Responsibility Concern Committees (PRCCs) are joint committees focused on **joint problem-solving** through **collaboration** in an environment of **mutual respect** to resolve issues as close to the point of care as possible. Aligning with the principle of **Subsidiarity** – “Decisions...ought to be handled by the least centralized competent authority,<sup>2</sup>” so as close to the point of care as possible. Front line managers and UNA members should work to resolve issues (At times this may need to include additional resources, e.g. Local presidents, HR, etc). Issues should be elevated for review, learnings of others or if resolution is not achieved.
2. Both Covenant Health and UNA representatives have an obligation to establish, organize and participate in the PRCCs to maximize their effectiveness and to seek opportunities for resolution throughout the entire process.
3. Full, consistent disclosure of **agreed upon, available, relevant** information by both parties to support decision-making and enhanced learning.
4. Every step of this process should occur within a **just culture**, which is supported and actively fostered by both UNA members and all levels of Covenant Health management. A just culture improves **safety of care** and services as it encourages the reporting and discussion of adverse events, close calls, near misses and hazards. A just culture acknowledges error as fact, and does not punish individuals for system failures of which they have no control over but reinforces the need for **professional accountability**.<sup>1</sup>
5. **Professional Responsibility** - The PRC process is in alignment with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) Practice Standards for Regulated Members, the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) Code of Ethics and Practice Standards, and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics. All three documents emphasize the professional responsibility Registered Nurses (RN) or Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) must demonstrate to ensure safe, competent, and ethical nursing care.
6. This process is also regulated by the steps outlined in *Article 36: Professional Responsibility* of the **UNA/Covenant Health Collective Agreement** and the approach taken by both UNA and Covenant Health in addressing a Professional Responsibility Concern (PRC) should not violate the terms of this article.
7. **Organizational Engagement** should be considered in every step of the process. This involves both UNA and Covenant Health identifying and engaging the appropriate individuals from their respective organizations to assist in problem-solving discussions.

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<sup>1</sup>Covenant Health, *Building a Just Culture*, Corporate Policy & Procedure Manual – Policy no. III-35, September 13, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Catholic Alliance of Canada, *Health Ethics Guide, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed*, Appendix 1, Making Moral Judgements, p.116