

55.4 % BOMBSHELL

Who would have predicted the drubbing that the Premier received from his party at the Progressive Conservative Convention in Calgary?

Clearly there was a level of restiveness and discontent, but even the most dire predictions (for the Premier) that I heard before the vote were for not less than 70% approval. In the end, every Monday morning quarterback has a theory, which you have heard or read about - the arrogance; the petulant behaviour, most recently demonstrated by throwing a book at a seventeen year old legislative page; the loss of the 'fire in the belly'; the lack of vision, the tired speech at the convention, the edict that leadership hopefuls resign their cabinet posts by June, the Chretien-like long good-bye, or, perhaps, "The Third Way". It was most likely a combination of these.

The Premier announced that he will stay put until September, at which time he will send a letter to the party, advising them that he would resign after they have chosen a new leader. This timeline would in all likelihood mean he will continue in office until the end of the year. For HSAA and its members, there are a number of immediate questions - Is the "Third Way" dead? Will the budget be passed as presented, and if not, what would that mean to health care? Will this government be able to function, given the fact that this leadership race is underway?

But perhaps the long term questions are even more important. Who will succeed Ralph Klein? Will the 'new' leader really be new, or will the party reach back in time for a white knight? What position will the new leader, and the next Premier, have on public services in general, and on Medicare in particular? What will the next election bring? Stay tuned, it should be an interesting ride.

In Solidarity,

Elisabeth Ballermann,
President, HSAA

DKML Campaign On The Road to Success

After two months of campaigning, HSAA has filed petitions from DKML employees with the Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB). Health Sciences has cleared the first hurdle to represent the lab employees by gathering more than the required number of petitions at hospital labs, collection sites, and the base lab. The petitions were presented to the ALRB on April 7. At

the time this article is being written, the ALRB was in the process of verifying the names on the petitions. After this process is completed, the Board will decide if a vote will be held. When a date for the vote is set, we will place the information on our website. If a simple majority of employees vote "yes" to join HSAA, then Health Sciences will win the right to represent these workers.

Tax Implications of the Professional Development Allocation

Some employers have issued T4A forms to members who received funds under the Professional Development Allocation (PDA). By the time most members read this, the April 30 deadline for filing the 2005 tax return will have passed. However, a number of members have contacted HSAA asking how to deal with the tax implications of the PDA.

The Professional Development Allocation, like any money paid to you by the employer, is subject to taxes. We encourage each member to evaluate their personal needs and taxation issues before using their PDA so they can maximize the usage and minimize the taxes.

For example, those members who are part of a professional college or association can claim their association dues on their tax returns. In light of that fact, it may be prudent to pay the association dues directly without reimbursement

from the PDA and use the PDA funds for those items that cannot be claimed on the annual tax return such as travel costs, periodicals, and salary replacement.

Each individual's tax issues are unique. HSAA cannot provide tax advice and suggests that you consult with a taxation specialist in order to achieve the maximum benefit from your PDA.

Sylvie Gill
Labour Relations Officer

Note: We have now reached the end of the 2005/2006 PDA year and you are required to submit all receipts for reimbursement. If you have not yet filled out and submitted your PDA form for reimbursement, HSAA advises you to do so as soon as possible. Please check with your employer to confirm the deadline for submission of receipts for the previous PDA year, as each Health Region/employer has different deadlines.

Classification Project Moves to New Phase

Phase 2 of the provincial classification project is scheduled to begin April 3. This intensive working phase of the project will begin with the development of an effective communication plan to keep you informed of our progress. Watch for further updates.

By April 24, we will move to the most critical aspect of the project, designing the classification specifications. In this stage, we will examine what general factors should be included and how the document will look. You will have a chance to provide some input. This will involve five separate focus groups to ensure that the final product meets the needs of all members and employers. Start thinking about your participation.

Once we have a working template, we will swiftly move into developing the new classification specifications (July 24). During this stage, we will ensure the unique needs of Community and Mental Health are addressed.

After the job specifications have been developed, we will begin designing the Point Factor System (August 21). We will determine what factors should be used and assign appropriate weights and grades. Once we know what factors we want to include (November 13), we will develop the point factor system including a computer rating tool in MS Excel.

The final stage will begin March 26, 2007 where we will develop the user manuals and the plan to roll-out the finished product. We want to create a system that will not only work when first presented but serve to keep the new classification system current and usable in the years to come. Finally, we know that no system is perfect, so we need to look at how the plan will be governed and what the appeal process will be.

We thank you in advance for your help in making this project a success.

Sarah Chernik
Classification Analyst





Letters for Feedback are welcome. We cannot promise to publish every letter and we reserve the right to edit for length and style. All letters should be signed and include your job title. Mail your letters to: Challenger Editor, Health Sciences Association of Alberta, 10212 - 112 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5K 1M4 OR fax them to: (780) 488-0534 OR e-mail them to: davidk@hsaa.ca The deadline for the next Challenger is May 31, 2006

Call to Action on the “Third Way”

I am a physical therapist living and working in the Lamont area. I am co-planning Vigils to Stop the Privatization of Medicare on the steps of the Legislature. I was encouraged to submit this article to explain why I am an “activist”?

Part of the answer to this question is an extension of why I chose my career. I care deeply about others. Secondly, I believe that my responsibility as a citizen is to be informed and to support or object to government policies and initiatives. Thirdly, history has taught me that an enlightened public acting together can change their community for the better.

So, here I am, a rural woman in a big city, co-organizing speakers and music for a 30 minute program Mondays at 7:15 p.m. and Wednesdays at 12:15 p.m. during the spring sitting of the Legislature. I know that the “Third Way” will lead to a two-tiered American style health system, with all of its ugly consequences for my patients, friends, and family.

NAFTA trade agreements will make it impossible to change our minds once private health insurance for medically necessary services are approved. I am determined to join others to stop Klein and his “American Way”. And do you know what? I am having fun attending the vigils. I feel supported by all of the new people I am meeting who feel exactly the way I do. I go away feeling less alone and much empowered.

I believe we are all “activists” at heart; perhaps some of us just need to take that first step. Together we will make a difference. Will you join me?

For more information and other ways to become involved see the Friends of Medicare website at www.keepmedicarepublic.ca or phone 1-888-633-1311.

Pat Spady

Local Unit News

On February 27, members of the local unit at the Peter Lougheed Centre ate pizza and chicken wings while watching the DVD “Nasty Bosses and Problem Employees”.

The DVD was a recording of Dr. Patricia Pitzel, the guest speaker at last fall’s labour relations conference. Eighty-five members participated in a draw for fifteen door prizes. It was a great way to connect with members on a winter day.

Maureen Mackrory
Jodie Moodie
Co-chairs - Peter Lougheed Centre

(Editor’s Note: Send us news from your local unit. Mail your news to David Kirkham in the Edmonton office, fax to (780) 488-0534 or email to: davidk@hsaa.ca)

Celebrate Safety & Health Week April 30 - May 6, 2006

OHS&W week is quickly coming upon us. When I was at the HSAA OHS&W conference in November 2005, I promised some of the members that I would share our ideas from the Royal Alexandra Hospital OHS&W Committee. In the past few years, we have made the OHS&W week exciting and energetic.

This year, the theme is “Review, Refresh, Revitalize”. Every year, we have a tea during one of the afternoons of the OHS&W week. We have a cake with the current year’s poster printed on it, sponsored by the administration.

Here are some of the things we have done in the past: We hung posters throughout department, made a video of

the dos and don’ts of safety (titled “Survivor DI”), put on a fashion show using the staff as models, put on a T.V. game show (“The Dating Game” with safety being the theme), organized a power walking clinic and gave away door prizes to the participants. We kept track of the mileage and posted our totals at the end of the week. We created puzzles such as crossword, word search, word scramble, and distributed them to everyone in the department.

I hope you have as much fun organizing and participating in OHS&W week as we do. For more information visit www.naosh.org/english/participate.html click on: NAOSH Week 2006 Poster

Cindy Michalewic
MRT, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Edmonton



Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses To:
10212 - 112 Street Edmonton, AB T5K 1M4

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROFESSION

by Roseanne Gallant, CCHRA(C) and Sally Bulloch, CCHRA(C)

Our profession has made a shift from two professional designations, Health Record Administrator and Health Record Technician, to one professional designation of Health Information Management (HIM) professional and one professional credential of Certificant.

The Health Information Management Association of Alberta (HIMAA) created the Health Information Management Professional Task Force to advocate the new professional designation and educational requirements.

The complete article is posted on the HSAA website (hsaa.ca). For more information contact the Task Force at himaa1taskforce@yahoo.ca.

HSAA Welcomes New Labour Relations Staff

Three new staff members have been hired to join the labour relations team at Health Sciences.

Liz Thompson is the new labour relations officer whose major responsibilities will be in the areas of workers' compensation and disability. Shelley Solomon and Pamela Johnson have been hired as assistant labour relations officers. During the DKML organizing campaign, both Shelley and Pamela maintained internal employee contacts to assist HSAA in gaining support. They attended meetings with prospective members, informing workers of their rights, as well as the benefits of belonging to Health Sciences. A big welcome to Liz, Shelley, and Pamela!

PRIZE WINNERS - WORK SURVEY



As the Challenger was going to print, HSAA was about to select the winners of our prize draw for those members who mailed in the work life survey. The results of this survey will be used to inform employers about the importance of a high quality work environment and its impact on productivity, health, safety, and morale. Once the draw has been made, the winning numbers will be posted on our website (hsaa.ca). After the numbers are matched with the prize winners, their names will appear on the web.

Condolences

HSAA sends its condolences to the family, friends, and coworkers of Adam Larratt who died suddenly on March 16. Adam worked as a pharmacy technician at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton.

Members Needed For HSAA Human Rights & Equality Committee

HSAA is forming a new committee to promote positive social change. The Human Rights & Equality Committee will address such topics as economic and social justice, equality, labour solidarity, and universal health care.

If you would like to serve on this committee, send a letter of interest to Nancy Beattie in the Edmonton office by May 24.

Committee selection will occur June 23.

