

CHALK ONE UP FOR PUBLIC HEALTH CARE! CLS returns to public ownership

After ten years as a 'public private partnership' between the Calgary Health Region (CHR) and MDS Kasper, ownership of Calgary Laboratory Services (CLS) will revert to public control. Barring unexpected obstacles, the CHR will buy back MDS's 51% share in February, retaining CLS as a wholly owned subsidiary.

While CLS and HSAA members have provided quality care to the people in Calgary and Southern Alberta, we have consistently opposed for-profit health care, and therefore applaud this move. We also acknowledge that HSAA's relationship with CLS has been characterized by respect and an environment of problem solving, rather than confrontation. We welcome assurances by the CHR that it intends to continue this progressive approach. With the move of Susan Cassidy, CLS's former Vice President of Human Resources to the position of Executive Director Work Force Strategy with the CHR, we hope that she will help to turn the whole CHR into an employer of choice.

For CLS staff, including the 1300+ represented by HSAA, the transition is expected to be fairly seamless. CLS will remain a separate employer (much like Carewest or Capital Care), the current collective agreement will remain in effect, and no significant staffing changes are planned. One substantive question that we will explore with our members and the employer is the potential for participation in the Local Authorities Pension Plan. Such a move would not be automatic. The CHR as the employer, and employees (through a vote) would have to agree.

Elisabeth Ballermann,
President, HSAA

A good start to '06!

We're Not Saying Who Won - HSAA New Logo To Be Unveiled at AGM

There's now one more reason to attend the 2006 AGM in Edmonton. To mark our 35th anniversary, HSAA will unveil its new logo on Friday May 26 and present a \$500 cheque to one of two finalists in our logo contest.

More than 50 HSAA members submitted about 100 logo concepts. We were overwhelmed with the response and with the concepts. Thanks to everyone who sent a logo. Every member who is on hand for the unveiling at the AGM will receive a t-shirt with the new logo.

CHANGES TO HSAA BURSARY FUNDS

The Members' Benefits Committee is pleased to announce that the HSAA Board has approved additions and changes to the HSAA bursary funds.

PART-TIME BURSARY FUND

This fund had to be eliminated in March of 2000 for financial reasons. The HSAA Board has recently approved the re-instatement of this bursary.

This fund is set up for **members** only who are pursuing part-time post secondary studies leading to a diploma, degree or certificate either through correspondence or attendance at an educational institution. The content of these courses must be professional development and aimed at enhancing employment opportunities.

There are a total of 80 bursaries of \$400.00 each which will be awarded to members each year, 40 for the fall semester commencing September 1, 2006 and 40 for the winter semester commencing January 1, 2007. The bursary recipients will be determined by a lottery with 20 bursaries for members in areas north of Red Deer and 20 bursaries for members in Red Deer and south for each of the semesters.

The first of the new part-time bursaries will be awarded for the fall semester beginning September 2006. We

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will be accepting applications from March 1, 2006 until July 31, 2006 for courses starting in September 2006. For courses commencing in January, 2007 we will be accepting applications from August 1, 2006 until November 30, 2006.

Applications will be sent out in February 2006 to all chairs and group reps and will also be on our website at hsaa.ca, click on About Us and click on Benefits to print off the form.

GEORGE C. HALL BURSARY FUND

This fund is for members and spouse/dependants of members who are pursuing full-time post-secondary studies leading to

a degree or diploma. Bursaries are determined by lottery.

We have awarded 40 of these bursaries each fiscal year. The Board has now approved awarding 50 bursaries of \$500.00 each for members and spouse/dependants of members.

Applications must be received at the HSAA Edmonton office by May 31, 2006 for full-time schooling starting in September 2006. Local unit chairs and group reps should have a supply of application forms. They are also available on our website at hsaa.ca, click on About Us and click on Benefits to print.

J.R. Berube, Chair
Members' Benefits Committee

Second Call for Board Nominations

Do you want to become more involved with your union? Serving as a Board member of Health Sciences is an excellent way to do this. This spring, there will be four (three-year term) vacancies: one in each of the Calgary, Edmonton, and North Districts plus there will be additional Board position for the South District to reflect the increase in membership in this region.

The nomination form is available on our website (hsaa.ca) or one will be mailed to you by calling the Edmonton office. Forms must be returned to Nancy Beattie in the Edmonton office by February 28, 2006.

Kath MacKenzie
Chair, Elections/Credentials Committee

Lab Assistants Urged to Join the ACMLT

Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLAs) are being urged to join the Alberta College of Medical Laboratory Technologists (ACMLT). The ACMLT is working hard to increase the profile of MLAs within the health care community, as well as with the government, health regions and various employers. Given the important role MLAs perform in clinical laboratory service delivery, the ACMLT states they should be considered professionals, and as such, regulated under provincial legislation. The ACMLT is seeking to have the practice of phlebotomy defined as a restricted activity and regulated under the Health Professions Act. This move would ensure public protection and safety.

For more information about registering with the ACMLT, visit www.acmlt.org or email your request to acmlt@acmlt.org

Don't Forget to Fill Out Work Survey

In the last edition of the Challenger, we told you about an important survey that will be arriving in your mailbox early this year. HSAA wants to know your opinion about your work environment. The results of this survey will be used to educate employers about the importance of a high quality work environment and its impact on productivity, health and safety, and morale.

The goal is to improve the work environment for HSAA members and provide employers with evidence for action. Please make sure you complete the survey. Meaningful results will only happen if there's strong participation from you, our members.

Get Organized!
HSAA's Calendar of Events booklets are now available. Call the Edmonton office for yours
780-488-0168





FEEDBACK

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 February 3, 2006

Home Care OTs Share Their Work Experiences

We are two home care occupational therapists working in the northeast office in Edmonton. We work on what is known as the Short-Term Intervention Team, which means that we see people who require help for a period of about three months. Given that we take referrals from hospitals, community services and individuals themselves, we see a diverse group of people usually with urgent needs. Because of this, we never really know what is going to be waiting for us when we get to work each day. Scheduling can get tough.

In the dual role of OT and case manager, we have a multi-faceted job. In the course of a single workday, we can play the role of counselor (providing support to an anxious client), secretary (answering numerous phone messages), navigator (driving to an impossible-to-find address), mediator (being in the middle of family conflict), teacher (demonstrating to a client how to safely transfer in and out of their bathtub), salesperson (trying to convince a client to purchase that

much-needed wheelchair), and manager (helping link clients with their appointments or to community resources).

Our keys to survival are supportive coworkers who will help you at the drop of a hat when you see six new referrals sitting on your desk. They provide us with road maps and a sense of humour.

You never really know what awaits you inside each home. Every day, at least one of us on the team is amazed by a client's situation and circumstances. We think this is what keeps us going and interested in our job.

Jennifer St. Pierre
Trish Hirschhorn

(Editor's note: Letters like this one are welcome from members who would like to share their work experiences and raise the profile of their health sciences discipline.)

Tributes For HSAA Physio

The Alberta Physiotherapy Association (APA) set aside a full page in its December newsletter to pay tribute to HSAA member Nancy Littke. The tributes are in recognition of her service to the APA and to her profession. One of the tributes came from Elisabeth Ballermann, who is a former classmate of Nancy's. Here is an excerpt.

"I am incredibly proud of this exceptional classmate of mine, who has made a tremendous contribution, not only to the profession, but to her many communities - local, provincial, national and international....On behalf of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta, congratulations and thanks to this outstanding member of our two organizations."

HSAA MEMBERS HONOURED IN CAPITAL HEALTH AWARDS

Several Health Sciences members have been honoured in the "Reach Awards". These awards from Capital Health honour the accomplishments of staff who have made significant contributions to the health system in several categories.

In the "innovation" category, the following members of the Teleophthalmology Team at the Royal Alexandra Hospital are named: Bernd Schwanke, medical photographer; Matthew Tracy and Tony Wan, biomedical equipment technologists.

In the "innovation" category, the following members of the Police and Crisis Team - Regional Mental Health Program, are named: Sue Connelly, psychologist; Tamara Dudas, clinical coordinator; and Audrey Stuckey, social worker.

In the "customer service" category, the following member of the Preschool Speech Central Intake Team is named: Judy Meintzer, speech language pathologist.

And in the "teamwork" category, the following members of the Adult Mental Health Crisis Response Team - Regional Mental Health Program are named: Sue Connelly, psychologist; Bruce Diaczun, social worker; Tamara Dudas, clinical coordinator; Lloyd Paine, Doug Stein, and Vinny Verghese, social workers.

Congratulations to everyone! If you are aware of an award received by an HSAA member, please contact David Kirkham in the Edmonton office.



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

HSAA LANYARDS POSSIBLE SAFETY HAZARD

The safety release feature on some HSAA lanyards is not working. The quick release is an important safety feature designed to come apart quickly and easily if the lanyard is accidentally caught or grabbed intentionally while you are wearing it round your neck. Please take the time to test your lanyard. You can test it by making sure it comes apart at the back of the neck when you give it a quick, sharp, downward tug while wearing it. If it does not come apart during the test, please discard it. If you are not sure how to test,

discard your lanyard. Do not return the lanyards to HSAA.

HSAA has been using this product for many years and has not encountered this problem before. This hazard seems to be limited to the latest batch. A big thanks to HSAA Board member Lesley Baker for making us aware of the problem.

Joanne Monro, Occupational Health and Safety Officer
Dawn Aschenbrenner, Chair, HSAA OH&S Committee

HSAA WINTER/SPRING WORKSHOPS 2006

Workshops are open to all members of HSAA. They are from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Sessions scheduled for Calgary and Edmonton will be held at the HSAA offices. There is salary replacement if you are scheduled to work. Please call the Edmonton office at 488-0168 or 1-800-252-7904 to register.

IN SCOPE SUPERVISOR	Thurs, Feb 9 Wed, Feb 22	Calgary Edmonton
BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE	Tues, Feb 14 Thurs, March 2	Edmonton Calgary
BASIC GROUP REPS	Wed, Feb 15	Edmonton and Calgary
TIME MANAGEMENT	Tues, March 7	Edmonton
ACE THE INTERVIEW	Wed, March 15 Wed, March 22	Edmonton Calgary
EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EMAC)	Thurs, March 16 10:00 am to 2:30 pm	Red Deer
SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE UNIONS	Tues, March 28	Edmonton
PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES Disciplinary Investigations/Hearings	Thurs, March 30	Edmonton
BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE	Tues, April 11 Thurs, April 13	Edmonton Calgary

For more information and a description of course content, visit our website hsaa.ca and click on Upcoming Events, HSAA Conferences and Workshops.