



Canada's Nurses Get Loud In Calgary

June 5-9, 2017

Five Amazing Days

Eye-opening. Relevant. Educational. Thought-provoking. Rejuvenating. Powerful. Inspirational.

These are just a few words used by delegates to describe their time at the 2017 CFNU Biennial Convention.

Every two years nurses from across Canada come together to share their experiences, triumphs and challenges as they face issues impacting patient safety, quality of health care, professional practice and accountability, political agendas, and the well-being of our own communities. The knowledge received and the experiences had at Convention leave very little room for disappointment.

The immense pride and strength and solidarity 1,200+ nurses brought to Calgary this year was a powerful reminder that when nurses advocate for positive change, we can make a difference.

Convention is not only a time to strengthen our voice as patient advocates or to become united as a profession. Convention is also a time to reconnect and unwind with nurses from other provinces,

where memories and friends are made and the fire that burns within us is ignited.

The theme of **Speak Up** ran through each incredible speaker who shared their personal story or vision for a stronger, healthier and more compassionate future, and was a strong component of each workshop attended. But it was also the empowering message that delegates took back with them to their home provinces.

The energy, passion and dedication nurses bring to convention can move mountains and will continue to fuel our own hunger to create positive change and to **Speak Up** for patients and health care.

The following is a look back at the amazing five days CFNU delegates shared in Calgary. See you in New Brunswick in 2019!

Make your voice heard!

Join the movement in speaking up for a healthier Canada.

speakup.cfnu.ca

Day One Round-Up

June 5, 2017

Healthy Walk

Thank you to all the delegates who joined us for some fresh air and exercise on Monday afternoon. What a great way to reconnect with old friends, meet new friends from across Canada, and see beautiful downtown Calgary.

Linda Silas, CFNU president, kicked off the 2017 CFNU Biennial Convention with the Healthy Walk to energize both the bodies and the minds of the delegates before we get down to business.



Welcome Reception

Hosted by the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), the Welcome Reception was just a sneak peek into what the week holds for us.

Hassan Yussuff, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) President, shared words of encouragement and solidarity from our brothers and sisters in the labour movement.

Yussuff opened with a clear and simple message: "Nurses are the heart and soul of the health care system in this great country."

"You are the backbone of the system that makes the system what it is. If you go back through the history of our country, the history of the health care system,

and how it has changed, how it has evolved and continues to change, nurses have been and will be leading change."

"The work you do every day, your commitment at bargaining table, pushes others to do better... Your voice, your activism, your leadership has strengthened the labour movement... The work we [labour movement] are doing together will make this country even better for the next 150 years."

Inspiring words to start what is sure to be an amazing week.

The work you do every day, your commitment at bargaining table, pushes others to do better... Your voice, your activism, your leadership has strengthened the labour movement.

-Hassan Yussuff, CLC President



Day Two Round-Up

June 6, 2017

Education Day Brings Inspiration & Solidarity

Did you feel it? The energy, the excitement, the encouragement, and the sense of solidarity that is starting to fill the air?

The first full day of convention was built around

connecting with nurses from other provinces, sharing ideas, empathizing with and learning from others' experiences, and recognizing we are not alone in the struggles we face as nurses and as leaders in health care.

Is It YA-HOO or YEE-HAW?

That is the long standing question – either way, when in Calgary we say YA-HOO!

CFNU president, Linda Silas, is now an honorary Calgarian, following The White Hat Ceremony on the opening day of convention.

Silas was presented with a white Smithbilt hat, as part of the long-standing tradition in Calgary of welcoming visitors to the city. Since the 1950s, the White Hat has been a symbol of Western hospitality and good cheer.



Morning Plenary: Being a Nurse in a Conflict Zone

Courage in the face of chaos

What kind of person willingly goes into a conflict zone and risks his/her life to save others? During this morning's plenary session delegates met one of these health care heroes – Captain Stephanie Smith (right), a military nurse, who served in Afghanistan, as well as participated in several relief missions, including in Haiti. Captain Smith recounted her missions and shared stories that were both terrifying and inspiring.

"Imagine going to work and having to treat bombing victims that are your neighbours," she said. "This is the reality of working on the front lines in a conflict zone."





Leonard Rubenstein (above), founder and chair of Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, gave numerous examples of hospitals that were bombed

in conflict zones and introduced delegates to the term “double-tap strike” – the act of bombing a hospital a second time, while first responders are already inside providing care.

“Nurses and hospitals have become targets for simply doing their jobs of providing impartial care,” he said. “There are lots of dirty hands on the UN Security Council that have paralyzed progress for improving accountability and protection.”

Rubenstein called on the 1,000 nurses in the room to speak up for change. “Nurses can and do lead the way,” he said. “Let’s educate people on the scope and catastrophic scale of the problem of violence on health care workers.”

Workshops

With so many great workshops to pick from, how did you choose? Here are but only a few samples of activities, information, and things to think about as we take our new-found knowledge and skills back to our workplaces.

Spotlight: Conversations at Work – Strategies for Speaking Up!

This workshop on speaking up is billed as a highly practical and interactive workshop on interpersonal communication. Facilitator, Gerard Murphy, summed up his goal for the workshop this way: “I really want nurses to know that they can be assertive, in a respectful and professional way, in their practice and as activists.”

Murphy describes himself as a “high extrovert,” and he is exactly that, as well as funny, engaging and respectful. The workshop gave attendees lots of practical communication techniques to build their skills and many opportunities to practice what they learned throughout. The time flew by with activities, reflection, and learning constantly interwoven.

One participant described the session as “...totally worth it – I’m thinking about taking this education back to our hospital. The empathetic assertion techniques and using body language are really useful.”

This workshop pushes you out of your comfort zone but will never embarrass you, and you go home with a handbook full of great ideas to try out.

Spotlight: Global Café on the Social Factors Impacting Health

A fantastic and engaging session that equips and shows that nurses, from around the country, are ready to look at taking on upstream thinking.

Upstream thinking means investing wisely for future success, rather than spending all of our time and resources responding to and perpetuating failure. If health for all is our goal, then upstream thinking is about addressing the things that have the greatest influence on our health, including

income, employment, education, early childhood development, housing, nutrition and the wider environment.

Global Café, an interactive workshop designed to have participants constantly engaged with new perspectives, shows nurses from across Canada how to take a new approach to creating positive changes as they turn to upstream thinking.

Spotlight: PTSD in the Nursing Profession

This informative workshop took a deeper look at post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the impacts on nurses and the profession as a whole.

PTSD, a psychiatric disorder most often associated with war veterans, has been silently working its way through the nursing profession. In fact, Canadian studies estimate that more than 30 per cent of nurses experience one or more symptoms of PTSD. It has been found that, unlike most professions, it is typically the prolonged, cumulative exposure to trauma that can cause PTSD symptoms in nurses, as opposed to one acute event.

"Nurses normalize and expect trauma to be part of the job," said Mikaela Brooks, MNU researcher. "This belief can impede upon a

nurse's ability to recognize triggering events and to determine if they are coping well."

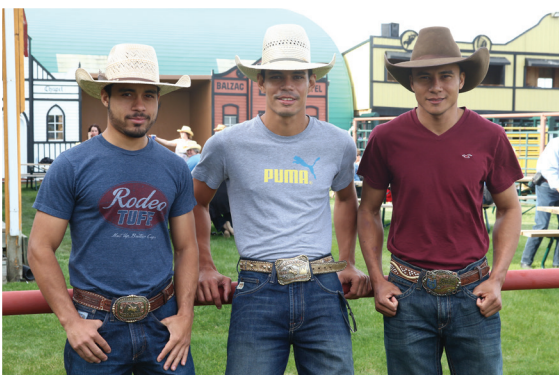
"Mental well-being is not so different than physical well-being," said Jeff Psych, psychologist. "Yet, we have this idea that physical illness is somehow more acceptable than a mental illness."

Nurses across the country, and their unions, are encouraged to continue to lobby for changes to their respective provincial legislation to recognize the impact of PTSD on nurses through the implementation of "presumptive legislation." In short, "presumptive legislation" removes the need to prove that PTSD is a result of the work environment. To date, Manitoba is the only province to enact presumptive PTSD legislation that is inclusive of nurses.

Fun Night!!

Which did you choose? The Western BBQ and Rodeo or the Segway Experience? Either way, there were laughs shared and memories made.

Thank you to the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) for organizing two fantastic Fun Night events. Can't wait for the banquet!





Day Three Round-Up

June 7, 2017

Another Great Day in the Books

The energy filled the room once again as we kicked off day 3 of Convention 2017.

Morning Plenary: Next Steps Post-TRC Learning From Our Past to Make Tomorrow Better

Powerful, emotional, thought-provoking and inspiring. Wednesday morning delegates heard stories of abuse, neglect, resilience, perseverance, forgiveness and triumph as we took a personal and in-depth look at what led us to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and what still needs to be done.

Residential school survivor Alice Blondin-Perrin (right) courageously spoke of her childhood experiences while attending a residential school, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, at the age of four. In an amazing show of strength, Blondin-Perrin had to overcome her nightmares and looked to heal herself by forgiving, not forgetting. "Only after I found the courage to tell my story, did I find peace of mind and begin to heal my insides. I had to forgive everyone, for that was true reconciliation to me."

Blondin-Perrin's book, *My Heart Shook Like A Drum*, was available for purchase.

Registered Nurse Flora Simpson (below) faced her own struggles growing up in the isolated community of Norway House, Manitoba. Simpson's community struggled to maintain health care services in the area to treat and care for the people. Feeling frustrated and knowing something needed to be done,



Simpson enrolled in the College of Nursing with the goal of providing care to her home community. In 2002, Simpson started her journey in public health at the clinic in Norway House and became a strong advocate for the child-first principle, Jordan's Principle.

Simpson noted: "It is important for our children to learn of the residential schools and our past struggles, so we can learn from our past, so we can avoid history repeating itself."

What can we do today to make tomorrow better? How do we begin to heal our Indigenous communities and encourage others to respect and engage in their culture? We educate, we challenge, we become allies, and we take action – we speak up.

That was Dr. Bernice Downey's message as we closed out the session. Speaking to the current health care issues facing Indigenous communities, Downey said: "Nurses are strong social justice advocates and agents for change. There are important health issues, such as suicide rates amongst Indigenous youth. We cannot be silent; health care professionals will play a critical role in overcoming these critical issues."



Workshops

Spotlight: Sexual Minorities – Providing Respectful Nursing Care

What do you do if you can't determine whether your patient is male or female? What if the name is female, but the patient is male in appearance? How do you address this person? The answer is simple – you ask. This workshop explored these questions, and the tools and strategies for creating a respectful environment.

"Asking means you're being mindful and respectful," said Chelsea Kelba, training centre coordinator at the Calgary Sexual Health Centre. "Silence is a choice, and by not acknowledging you can be extremely hurtful to the individual."

Kelba recommended starting off the conversation by identifying your own pronoun, e.g. "Hi, my name is Jane, and I identify as she/her," and then inviting your patient to do the same. If your patient identifies as a gender you are not familiar with, you can follow up with "what does that mean to you?" This method minimizes confusion and ensures that your patient will receive the best care, that is both tailored to and respectful of their specific needs.

In most cases, changes are being made to our educational systems, institutions and physical spaces to improve inclusiveness, but there is still a far way to go in terms of delivering health care to these individuals.

"We live in a culture where everyone is straight until proven otherwise," said Blake Spence, manager at the Calgary Sexual Health Centre. "We need to allow people time to reflect and figure out who they are."

This workshop generated lots of discussion and questions, showing an openness from nurses to better understand the diverse needs of their patients. Many of the questions revolved around defining the various types of genders and orientations – lesbian, two-spirited, pan-sexual, etc. – for which Spence had a simple answer.

"As a general rule, sex is between the legs, gender is between the ears and orientation is in the heart," said Spence. "But at the end of the day, it's not about gender – it's about people. We're all people."



Spotlight: Nursing and Technology Impact

Talk about an eye-opening workshop. Topics ranged from a survey of trends in technology, to how courts would view recommending apps and Fitbits to patients, all the way to whether nurses will be replaced by robots and artificial intelligence in the near future.

The facilitators included a CBC radio host who has written a book demystifying technology, a nurse turned Ph.D. researcher who looks at technology in health care, to a lawyer heading up the Canadian Nurse Protective Society. Each offered a valuable perspective on considerations when approaching technology in health care and the rapid pace of change.

The bottom line: technology is most powerful when used in concert with people, rather than a replacement for people. As unions well know, "if we are not at the table, we're on the menu." The key is to be involved in guiding and shaping how technology will be used, so that it doesn't change things around us without our input, because this is our nursing future. And it's time to start bargaining provisions to respond to new technology and methods of delivering health care.

In the meantime, don't expect flying cars anytime soon (despite what Popular Mechanics promised us as kids), but self-driving cars are coming fast.

Spotlight: Domestic Violence at Work – A Union Concern

Did you know that one in three women have experienced domestic violence, and for the majority it follows them to work? More than half of domestic violence victims receive harassing phone calls, emails or text messages while at work, while others are stalked or harassed at or near their place of work.

In some cases, abusers may even try to sabotage their victim's work or prevent them from going to work as a way of keeping them economically dependent and isolated.

Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported at work, and this workshop was about arming co-workers and union leaders with the tools necessary to spot the warning signs of domestic violence, offer support and to help end the stigma associated with domestic violence.

It was noted that while both men and women are at risk of experiencing domestic violence, women with disabilities, racialized women, young women, indigenous women, LGBTQ women, immigrant women and women in rural communities face greater risk of serious injury or death, and extra barriers to support and healing.

The workshop was facilitated by the Canadian Labour Congress which has been a driving force advocating for improved supports and protection for victims of domestic violence.

For more information and tips on dealing with domestic violence at work visit domesticviolenceatwork.ca

Day Four Round-Up

June 8, 2017

Time to Get Down to Business

Day 4 brought the start of Convention business and, of course... the banquet!

As we moved throughout the day and the agenda, our strength and our solidarity as a collective only grew as we shared stories from across the country about current and past struggles, how we overcame

the challenges, and realized we are not alone. We are all fighting the same fight; fighting for safe staffing, patient safety, protective legislation, and our collective bargaining rights. Coming to convention only reaffirms what we already know – we are stronger together.

Visit our YouTube Channel to watch the powerful and inspiring opening video for Convention.



President's Address

Violence, safe staffing and Indigenous Health on the agenda

CFNU president, Linda Silas, delivered a passionate address to the 1,200 delegates, kicking off the first business day of the biennial convention.

During her President's Address at the CFNU's biennial convention, Silas unveiled the results of the survey of over 2,000 nurses and released the report to approximately 1,200 nurses gathered in Calgary for CFNU's biennium. The survey results revealed that during the past 12 months:

- One third of nurses (34%) say that patient safety has declined where they work; 46% say it has stayed the same; just 20% say it has improved. Nurses in Ontario and Saskatchewan were more likely than those in other provinces to say their patients are not safe.
- The majority of nurses responding (61%) say they have experienced serious problems in the workplace, related to violence, including physical assault, bullying, verbal abuse and racial/sexual harassment. By contrast, a January 2016 national poll conducted by Vector Poll found that just 15% of employees in other sectors experienced serious problems with physical assaults, verbal threats, bullying or other kinds of abuse over a two-year period.
- A full two thirds of nurses (66%) pondered leaving their job to work for a different employer or in a different occupation. Ontario nurses are the most likely to have considered a career or job change (70%). Nurses aged 25 to 34 years are the most likely to have contemplated a job change.

A new report from the CFNU shows that nurses' paid and unpaid overtime has continued to take a toll on the health and well-being of the country's nurses and on patient care. The total cost of nurses' overtime and nursing absenteeism rose to close to \$2 billion in 2016. The report, released on June 8, 2017, at convention, is an urgent call for an effective health human resources plan that supports safe nurse staffing levels.

"Nurses and policy-makers know that excessive overtime is eroding the safe, quality care of our patients," she said. "Our patients deserve the best nursing care, and to provide that care, nurses cannot be stretched to unhealthy limits."

Public health care employers paid \$989 million in

2016 in illness- or disability-related absenteeism costs. The total cost of unpaid and paid nursing overtime was an additional \$968 million.

She added that as the acuity level of hospital patients continues to rise, cuts to nursing positions are driving nurses to rethink their career choice just as they are needed most.

"Over the last year more than 60 per cent of nurses have had a serious problem with some form of violence at work," she said. "Enough is enough! We will not accept violence as part of the job and are calling for a zero-tolerance approach to violence in health care workplaces."

She went on to speak about closing the gaps between non-Indigenous and First Nations health care, particularly when dealing with substandard care provided to First Nations children.

"For too long Canada has ignored the plight of its First Nations people, and there is no excuse for this. Quite frankly it's shameful," she said. "As nurses, we have a responsibility to ensure that all Canadians have access to safe health care. We are committed to working with our Indigenous leaders to better understand why these conditions persist and, more importantly, what Canada's nurses can do in helping to address these inequities."

For more details on the CFNU membership survey and commissioned report on overtime and absenteeism, visit:

<http://nursesunions.ca/news-and-events>



CFNU Game Changers

Your National Executive Board (NEB) took to the stage to talk about the pressing issues facing nursing and health care – provincially and nationally, and how the provinces are taking the issues head-on. The NEB covered topics such as patient safety, staffing shortages and cuts, and the need for a national pharamcare program, to name only a few topics, as well as key issues their members are facing at home, and how speaking up has empowered them to make a difference in health care.



Enough Is Enough

A new national survey of Canada's nurses, released in conjunction with CFNU's discussion paper, *Enough Is Enough: Putting a Stop to Violence in the Health Care Sector*, shows that workplace violence in health care is a serious and growing problem.

According to the survey, over the last 12 months more than 60 per cent of nurses have experienced serious problems in the workplace, related to violence, including physical assault, bullying, verbal abuse and racial/sexual harassment.

"Nurses are more likely to be attacked in the workplace than prison guards or police officers," said CFNU president Linda Silas. "How can we effectively care for our patients when we are constantly at risk of being attacked?"

The discussion paper, *Enough Is Enough*, raises the

alarm and highlights the need for urgent action to increase nurse staffing levels, and implement an action plan to keep nurses safe on the job.

"Enough is enough," said CFNU President Linda Silas. "We know that the cost of workplace violence in Ontario hospitals alone is \$23.8 million annually. These funds would be better invested in patient care and safety for both our patients and our nurses."

The CFNU is calling for a zero-tolerance approach to violence in health care workplaces.

Congratulations, Bread and Roses Recipients!

At each CFNU convention, the Bread and Roses Award is given to a nurse member in recognition of outstanding contribution to policy and decision-making, and raising public awareness for nursing issues and patient advocacy.

Congratulations to Tracy Zambory (left), President of Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), Jane Sustrik (right), First Vice-President of the United Nurses of



Alberta (UNA), and David Harrigan (centre), Director of Labour Relations for UNA, on receiving this year's award.

Their commitment and dedication is truly inspiring, and with their leadership we are confident that we can confront and conquer the serious challenges facing Canada's health care system.



The Banquet...

Opps! Sorry, nothing to report here. What happens at banquet, stays at banquet!

All we can say is: it was a great time! Thank you to the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) for hosting, and a special thank you to our surprise guest, former nurse and UNA member, country artist Paul Brandt!



Day Five Round-Up

June 9, 2017

That's a Wrap

What an amazing week! So many memories and new friends. Fantastic workshops, great entertainment, and inspirational speakers!

THANK YOU Calgary for the great food, vibrant restaurants and bars, beautiful skyline, and of course... the shopping. **THANK YOU to the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA)** for hosting us this week and showing us a great time!

Visit CFNU's YouTube channel to watch the 2017 convention closing video and relive all the greatest convention moments.



Steven Lewis Foundation

The Ontario Nurses' Association and the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and its Member Organizations are very pleased to be teaming up to support the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation with a strong three year commitment of \$135,00 a year for each of three years.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) works with community-level organizations who are turning the tide of HIV & AIDS in Africa by providing care and support to women, orphaned children, grandmothers and people living with HIV & AIDS. Since 2003, they have funded over 1,400 initiatives, partnering with more than 300 community-based organizations in the 15 African countries hardest hit by the global AIDS epidemic. These grassroots groups are the lifeline for their communities: they provide counselling and education about HIV prevention, care and treatment; distribute food, medication and other necessities; reach the sick and vulnerable through home-based health care; help orphans and vulnerable children access education and work through their grief; and support grandmothers caring for their orphaned grandchildren.

The work that will be supported by this investment includes two projects with a particular focus on health care, including health human resources. The first project is the Panzi Hospital Mobile Outreach Clinic and Blood Bank in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This clinic facilitates the safe

collection of blood donations and blood screening to ensure adequate supply of safe blood at the hospital where they are much needed. Among other surgeries performed at the hospital a common surgery requiring blood products are fistula repairs, which are desperately needed. Fistulas are often caused by multiple rapes which are used as a weapon of war in the DRC. The second project that will receive support is the Swaziland Nurses Association for their mobile clinic. Through their Swaziland Wellness Centre, the nurses association has provided health and wellness services to more than 10,000 health care workers. Health care workers are often unable to seek care during working hours, and the mobile clinic allows them and their families to be seen quickly and easily in their home communities and workplaces.

Since the very beginning, SLF has relied on the support of Canada's labour movement. From funding special initiatives to general unrestricted funds, the support, solidarity and commitment of our movement has had and continues to have a profound impact on communities across sub-Saharan Africa. The CFNU and ONA are proud to continue this tradition of solidarity with the Stephen Lewis Foundation and are particularly pleased to be able to direct our support to our sisters and brothers in the health care sector, who are working tirelessly under very difficult circumstances to turn the tide of HIV & AIDS, an epidemic which continues to disproportionately impact women and girls.

Sir Robert Francis

The freedom to speak up – can you imagine? Being able to speak up for your patients' safety, your profession, for health care issues and for yourself – without the added fear and stress of being reprimanded.

Keynote speaker, Sir Robert Francis, QC, presented his findings from his 2015 report, *Freedom to Speak Up*, which examined the victimisation of whistleblowers in the National Health Service (NHS).

"The freedom to speak up is not the freedom to be bullied by your manager, the public, or your colleagues," said Francis.

Francis' report identified 10 principles for building a culture of freedom to speak up, most to create an environment where:

- Employees feel confident to speak up.
- Employees feel safe to speak up in the future.
- Employees have confidence in the investigation process.



- Employees see speaking up will make a difference.
- Employees know their concerns are well received.

Visit freedomtospeakup.org.uk to read the full report.



Big Daddy Tazz

Premier Rachel Notley

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley received a "so-so-so solidarity" welcome before she addressed the 1,200-nurse delegation. She began her address by saying a big thank-you to the nurses in the room for all that they do each and every day to make things better for others.

"There are few things in life that are more

frightening than seeing someone you love in a hospital bed," she said. "And, there are few things in life more reassuring than seeing the face of a smiling nurse ready to care for that loved one."

She went on to speak about the state of the Alberta economy. She admitted that balancing

the budget is necessary, but said that, unlike some of the other provinces in Canada and despite calls from the opposition, her government will not “cut and fire.” The Alberta government has made a commitment to “build and hire.”

“We are building badly needed hospitals, long-term care homes. We are ensuring Albertans have the care they need when they need it,” she said. “We will work towards a balanced budget, but what we won’t do is cut vital services that people depend on.”



There are few things in life that are more frightening than seeing someone you love in a hospital bed. There are few things in life more reassuring than seeing the face of a smiling nurse ready to care for that loved one.

- Premier Rachel Notley

She then told the story about Amanda who lost her job because she took time off to take care of her sick child.

“You should never have to choose between taking care of your family and protecting your job,” she said. “The law has since been changed with the introduction of Bill 17.”

Under Bill 17 – the *Fair and Family-Friendly Workplaces Act*, no one in Alberta will be fired for taking time off to take care of a seriously ill family member.

The bill also does things like providing unpaid job-protected leaves for things like spousal abuse, while it explicitly makes illegal the practice of making employees pay for dine-and-dashes and gas-and-dashes, and prohibits

the practice of paying disabled workers less than others because of their disability.

Furthermore, Bill 17 modernizes the process of certifying or decertifying unions in a workplace, minimizing the opportunity for bullying and intimidation by either side, makes it easier for newly certified unions to secure a first collective agreement, and formalizes Alberta’s recognition of the Rand formula, whereby because all workers in a unionized environment benefit from the union’s bargaining, they are all required to pay dues.

She concluded by saying that we must all work together so that we can get the best outcome for all Canadians.

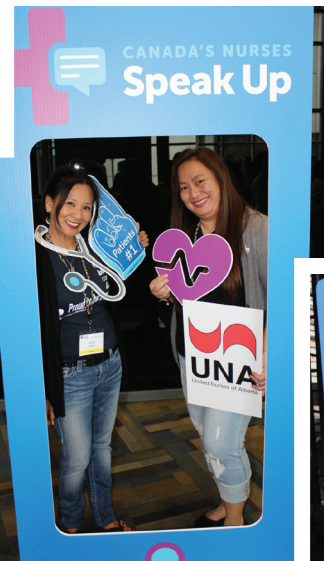
Speak Up Rally

What's the best way to end such an amazing week? With 1,200 nurses marching through downtown Calgary to celebrate 150 years of patient advocacy!



CFNU Secretary-Treasurer
Pauline Worsfold and
CFNU President Linda Silas
re-elected by acclamation

Speak Up Photo Booth



See You in New Brunswick in 2019!

