



**BC NURSES'
UNION**

Standing up for health care

Special Report



STAFFING GRIEVANCE SETTLEMENT

www.bcnu.org

- > Message From Your President
- > **NEW** Fast-Track Staffing Dispute Process
- > \$5 Million In Specialty Education Funding



MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT GAYLE DUTEIL

It has been one year since our collective agreement expired on March 31, 2014. In 2012, nurses made an agreement to work a 37.5-hour week. In exchange we were promised more regular nursing positions would be made available to assist with horrendous patient care situations in so many of our health care facilities and communities. The mutually agreed-to memorandums and new language in the 2012-2014 contract, designed to address nurses' workload and improve patient care, were not implemented. The result has been unacceptable staffing levels in many areas all across the province.

With this staffing grievance settlement, employers have admitted they fell short on their end of the deal and it was the collective work of BCNU members, stewards and elected leaders that made them finally listen. The thousands of grievances and PRFs that nurses filed documenting patient care issues brought key decision-makers together to seek solutions. So above all else, I want to say thank you for your overwhelming determination to provide safe care for your patients. \$2 million in this staffing grievance settlement has been allocated as damages for breaches of our Memorandums of Understanding relating to staffing replacement and patient care staffing language, which was not respected. These funds will be distributed to individuals and groups of members who were impacted up to March 31, 2015.

When we began these staffing grievance settlement discussions, I found it hard to trust that there was any real commitment to address the long-standing

lack of safe staffing. However in late March when your BCNU representatives sat down with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC), senior representatives of health authorities and the Ministry of Health, we were determined to find a way to make them live up to their side of the deal, one step at a time.

One important step is a new fast-track process to resolve nurses' staffing disputes. It will not solve every staffing issue instantly at every site, but it does provide a new way to address some of the worst cases quickly and system-wide issues over time. But it will only work if the health authorities and government implement it. I will work tirelessly on your behalf to push them to use the creative staffing solutions that we all know could start to make a difference.

With this staffing grievance settlement, employers have admitted they fell short on their end of the deal.

Through this staffing grievance settlement we have secured a commitment that the community nurse replacement language will be adhered to immediately.

We have made some substantial gains in the settlement through targeted labour development funds. Starting this year, \$8 million has been allocated to address some of the urgent specialty education, LPN transition education and community nurse technology needs.

This is just the beginning, one more step on our path to a new and better contract for all BC nurses. We will not be rushed and we must see tangible proof that there are more nurses to provide safe patient care. Patience and pacing will get us to our goal, one step at a time.

FAST-TRACK PROCESS TO RESOLVE NURSES' STAFFING DISPUTES

NEW

LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

\$5 million in specialty education funding

> This funding will be available for allocation soon. Please check our website regularly and make sure you receive BCNU's eNews for the most up-to-date information. Go to the member portal (bcnu.org - *login*) and provide your personal email information.

\$1 million to support increased complement of RN staffing

> For example, LPNs interested in becoming an RN or RPN will be able to access these funds.

\$2 million to support the application of the protocol MOUs to Community nurses which may include technology applications or equipment.

DAMAGE FUNDS

\$2 million in grievances settlement funds to acknowledge damages for breaches of MOUs up to March 31, 2015. These funds will be distributed to individuals and groups of members who were impacted.

IF YOU ASSESS THAT PATIENT CARE NEEDS CAN'T BE MET WITH EXISTING STAFF YOU CAN NOW USE THE NEW "FAST-TRACK STAFFING DISPUTE PROCESS."

The 2012 contract gave nurses new authority to assess if patient care needs can be met with existing staff or if more staff is needed. If more staff is needed the *in-charge nurse* will make a recommendation to the manager.

If the manager doesn't accept the *in-charge nurse's* recommendation for more staff to meet patient care needs, a **Notice of Complaint Form** should be completed.

In addition, a **Notice of Complaint Form** should be filed for nurses' other staffing-related concerns such as:

- > working short
- > insufficient baseline
- > inappropriate skill mix
- > not being replaced
- > overcapacity
- > missed meal breaks

NOTICE OF COMPLAINT FORM

You can get an official **Notice of Complaint Form** from your BCNU steward and an online form is available at:

bcnu.org > *contracts and bargaining* > *bargaining*