



**2010 - 2011  
Operations  
Report**



The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) proudly represents 8,700 Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner)s (RN(NP)s), and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) and graduates employed in rural and urban: acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities; home care services; community health; integrated facilities; public and mental health services; education sector; Canadian Blood Services offices; as well as nurses working in advanced practice roles.

### ***Our Mission***

SUN exists to enhance the social, economic and general well being of our members, and to protect high quality, publicly funded and delivered health services.

### ***Our Vision***

Healthy Members, Healthy Union, Healthy Communities

### ***Our Values***

**Effective Advocacy** - SUN believes our success is dependent upon our ability to be effective advocates for the rights and needs of our members and our patients.

**Quality Health Care** - SUN believes we have a vitally important stewardship role in protecting and enhancing high quality, accessible, comprehensive and publicly funded and delivered health care services.

**Honesty and Integrity** - SUN believes we must always uphold the integrity of nursing, and be honest and forthright in our interactions.

**Respect and Understanding** - SUN believes we must continually demonstrate respect and understanding in all of our interactions.

**Accountability** - SUN believes the Board must be accountable to members for its actions and results.

**Inclusiveness and Diversity** - SUN values inclusiveness, embraces diversity and strives to protect the rights of all.

**Solidarity** - SUN believes nurses benefit from solidarity which is enabled by strong trade union principles and by uniting our collective power.

**Empowerment** - SUN believes its members and staff must be supportive in their efforts to optimally achieve our mutual goals and objectives.

# President's Message



## Healthy Members

Over the past year SUN has seen our membership number grow; SUN now represents over 8,700 Registered Nurses, Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioners), and Registered Psychiatric Nurses. This increase in membership is largely due to the SUN/Government Partnership having almost met its target to hire 800 more nurses. SUN recognizes that many vacancies remain unfilled and will continue to explore other initiatives to help alleviate the burden these vacancies place on SUN members.

Active recruitment of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) has diminished and our new graduates are challenged to find permanent full-time employment. This is quite a dramatic change from one year ago. As a result of this rapid change, the SUN Board of Directors has removed its provincial approval of working visas. Applications will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Through our work in Occupational Health and Safety, Nursing Advisory and Labour Relations, SUN representatives in locals, supported by SUN staff, have successfully advocated for SUN members and their rights to a safe practice environment.

Board support has been provided in some isolated situations where locals and SUN District Councils (SDCs) are having difficulty filling executive positions. One Local is in trusteeship while an allegation of misuse of funds by executive members is reviewed. A Board hearing was held in response to a member request to have the Local President removed from office. The request was withdrawn during the hearing and confirmation of the Local President's impeccable record of member advocacy was established. It is our hope the mediated resolution around the issue will build stronger member participation in the Local.

SUN President and Board member facility visits continued this year. Sites visited include locals in Lloydminster, North Battleford and the rural locals in between. Sites in Weyburn have also been visited, and meetings with the locals for Meadow Lake Union Hospital and Cypress Regional Hospital (Swift Current) occurred.

## Healthy Union

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### **Strategic Direction**

In May of last year, the Board of Directors confirmed that our goal to have Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioners)(RN(NP)s) and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) play a vital role in coordinating and enhancing the quality and safety of patient, client and public service to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens have timely access to high quality health care services was the correct focus for the next year.

To achieve this goal, we established specific objectives:

- To have SUN recognized as a collaborative partner.
- To have Government and stakeholders endorse and support the RN/RPN role to make and implement decisions regarding all aspects of patient- and family-centered care.

We established a second goal - to provide leadership that ensures SUN members have collaborative support and enhanced access to information for patient-centered care.

Our target to achieve this goal is to have one or more nurse led innovations in patient-centered care that has the potential to be implemented and sustained in a variety of nursing practice environments.

One year ago we started to educate SUN members about an initiative that would have us provide greater focus to patient- and family-centered care.

SUN members have always provided the best care possible, often in very challenging circumstances. As we learn about patient-centered care through the lens of the patient and their family, we understand the system and individuals do not always provide that care.

The Ministry of Health and many other organizations are using a definition that SUN supports. It comes from the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care, 2004.

*Patient- and family-centered care is an approach to the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among patients, families and health care providers. It is founded on the understanding that the family plays a vital role in ensuring the health and well-being of patients of all ages. In patient- and family-centered care, patients and families define their “family” and determine how they will participate in care and decision making. The four principles of patient- and family-centered care are:*

- *Dignity and Respect: Health care providers listen to and honor patient and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into care planning and decision making.*
- *Information sharing: Health care providers communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful. Patients and families receive timely, complete, accurate information in order to effectively participate in care and decision making.*
- *Participation: Patients and families are encouraged and supported in*

- participating in care and decision making at the level they choose.*
- *Collaboration: Patients, families and providers collaborate in policy and program development, implementation, and assessment; in health care facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.*

For further detail and explanation on SUN's vision and role in providing patient- and family-centered care, see the Director, Government Relations & Patients and Families First report (page 17).

Visits to several units that are participating in *Releasing Time to Care*<sup>™</sup> confirmed that where the program is implemented as designed, nurses find it to be the "right thing to do." The challenges we heard about relate to caring for patients beyond the unit's capacity, and communication at many levels. Members have told us that planning for better patient care is rewarding for nurses.

### **Governance**

Recent years have seen some intensive work to establish a consistent format for policies affecting SUN members. We have also moved to establish some processes in the Board's role of governance.

Board members accessed their board development funding to attend various conferences in order to keep abreast of emerging trends in our practice environments so they are better able to represent the interests of SUN members in these matters.

For the first time, our key services were identified and some objectives for those services were established. In reviewing our success in meeting those objectives, we were able to identify some challenges in how the objectives were stated.

### **SUN's Key Services**

1. Membership Advocacy
  - To maximize opportunities to support and enhance the collective agreement through labour relations, benefits/pensions, OH&S, nursing advisory and professional practice.
  - To maximize use of web site and other materials to educate members regarding collective agreement.
  - To strategically challenge employer interpretations of new articles in the collective agreement.
  - To provide timely accurate responses to members seeking interpretation of the collective agreement.
  - To engage members in contract compliance.
2. Communication
  - To communicate accurate, timely information regarding significant decisions of the Board and important events at SUN.
  - To provide educational and current events and news through frequency of newsletters.
  - To ensure timely responses to SUN members in all aspects of communication.
  - To maintain an accurate database.
3. Education
  - To provide one of every tier of SUN's education program in 2010.

- To expand the knowledge of members in leadership positions, including unit reps, local presidents, OH&S reps and NAC members, as it relates to our strategic direction.
  - To provide educational opportunities to SUN members, taking into account geographic location and prior learning opportunities.
  - To expand knowledge of members as it relates to our strategic direction.
  - To participate in the first CFNU Prairie Labour School.
  - To provide information designed to educate members on a variety of topics in the newsletters and on the web site.
  - To maintain an accurate database.
4. Strategic Development
- To maximize every opportunity to advance SUN's strategic focus.

Reporting on these key services and our ability to achieve these objectives will be found in the reports of SUN's Directors. Refining of this process is underway as planning for 2011-2012 proceeds.

Through the Directors, work has progressed to establish processes, protocols or policies for the administrative work we do. While this work is massive and will take several years to complete, it does provide assistance to the Board in fulfilling our responsibilities of monitoring, planning and decision making.

One new Board member was elected in 2010, and orientation to the role and responsibilities was provided. Board members were provided computer education and this year will receive computer education that builds on the previous year's training.

Member input into development of enhanced professional practice support is being sought. At the time of writing this report, there has been minimal feedback, but discussion will continue at the Annual Meeting.

Bylaw and policy amendments approved at the Annual Meeting have been incorporated into the appropriate documents and circulated in the Union. Other resolutions will be reported on at this year's Annual Meeting.

### ***Financial Decisions and Considerations***

In June, the Board approved funding for additional human resources in order to enhance our communications, our external work with stakeholders and support for SUN members. To date, the only resources in place are those to support SUN members.

Acting on a resolution from the 2010 Annual Meeting to form an ad hoc committee to address processes for SUN District Council grants, the terms of reference and composition of such a committee were determined during the June 2010 board meeting as well. A complete report on their work is included under Committee Reports on page 33 of this document.

Financial support was provided to Nursing Advisory chairpersons to meet and develop a plan to address professional practice concerns of members working in Emergency Rooms in tertiary hospitals. The issue is ongoing overcapacity, which often results in overcapacity situations in other units and may also result in hallway nursing.

Funding (up to \$6000) for an actuary review of the Regina Civic Plan was approved.

Funding support for a SUN member accepted into the Next Up Leadership Campaign was approved.

### ***Donations***

- \$3,000 to support the Next Up Leadership Campaign
- The \$3.00 per member per capita levy approved at the SFL Convention to cover the costs of a labour issues campaign has been paid (\$24,000)
- \$250 to the Saskatchewan Health Coalition sponsoring the Public Forum with Mike McBain
- \$500 to support a Canadian Student Nursing Association member from each campus to attend their national conference
- \$3,000 through CFNU for Haiti and Indonesia relief
- \$1,500 to Poverty Free Saskatchewan to support hiring a part time project coordinator
- \$1,500 to Women of the Dawn for the project Kid Care Christmas Dinner

### ***Scholarships***

- SUN Psychiatric Nursing Scholarship Award - \$750 to Lacey Galbraith
- CFNU/SUN bursary - \$1,000 to Danielle McTavish

### ***Operations***

The Board is currently in the process of setting some objectives for our key services. In some cases, the opinion of SUN members will be required for us to determine what the service should focus on.

As we prepare for the next round of negotiations, communication is one of the key services on which we will focus.

The Board is represented on some structures or undertakings in the province. The President/First Vice-President represent SUN on the Provincial Nursing Council. Discussions to date have focused on the definition of patient- and family-centered care and what is required to have all nursing groups and individuals understand what this means in their practice.

## **Healthy Communities**

### **Investing to Make a Difference**

SUN continues the process of investing in our communities to make a difference. Looking to invest in a different community each year, the Board of Directors, with consultation from SUN members, sought proposals from Moose Jaw and surrounding area for 2011. The Board of Directors received two proposals for review; additional research on the projects is underway prior to making a commitment to allocate funding.

### **Organizational and Member Support**

SUN members in several communities have been active in efforts to maintain services related to physician and registered nursing shortages. While there have been many public gatherings and rallies, one example is the town of Wakaw. SUN members, along with their Board representative, Janis Hall, joined the residents of Wakaw to rally against the closure of the Wakaw

Hospital, due to the lack of an available physician.

SUN's Board of Directors has approved a request for organizational support. Our support will be connected to a grant application for Saskatchewan's first Children's Health Institute.

## **Participation in our Affiliations**

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### ***Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU)/ Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)***

CFNU's *Research to Action* projects have concluded and were highlighted during a national conference in early March. Details of the Saskatchewan project are reported under the Director, Government Relations and Patients and Families First report (page 18).

While there are many CFNU activities to highlight from the past year, one of significant importance is our meeting with provincial health ministers in St. John's, Newfoundland, in September. While SUN was not able to meet with Minister McMorris there, a later meeting was arranged where we were able to stress the importance of continued work such as CFNU's *Research to Action*.

Labour conflict over jurisdictional issues and representation demanded the time of our CFNU President to represent our interests in these debates.

International solidarity work is increasing and we are considering a partnership for some multi-year funding to support an organization. Representatives of CFNU have recently visited Zambia to explore a project there.

CFNU publications include the book on Long-Term Care, *Long Term Care in Canada: Status Quo No Option*, which was included in this year's Annual Meeting registration kits. A second publication on generational issues in the workplace will be released at the CFNU Biennial Convention in June.

The Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU) will be hosting CFNU's 15th Biennial Convention this coming June. The convention brings nurses from across the country together to attend educational workshops, discuss common issues and determine the direction of our national body. SUN is pleased to be funding 17 members to attend the convention in Winnipeg.

SUN participated in the CLC's lobby efforts to have the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) reformed in order to meet the pension needs of all Canadians. This was done through direct lobbying of provincial cabinet ministers, lobbying federal MPs in the Regina area, and through our labour councils along with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. Twelve SUN members have been funded to attend the CLC Triennial Convention in May.

### **Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL)**

A record 52 SUN members attended the SFL convention in Regina last fall. Board members, Paul Kuling and Lorna Tarasoff volunteered to be Sergeant at Arms and worked hard to keep order in the assembly.

Participation in other activity of the Federation includes the following:

- **SFL Summer Camp for Teens** - SUN provides funding to cover the costs of

hiring the camp nurse(s). This camp continues to influence many young people to engage their social conscience. SUN also sponsors two holes in the annual golf tournament that raises funds for this camp.

- **Education Committee** - Jean Sinclair, SUN Education Officer, represents SUN on this Committee, which annually plans the SFL Spring School and a facilitator networking day; four SUN members attended the Spring School.
- **Finance Committee** - Rosalee Longmoore, SUN President, was a member of this Committee until last fall's convention. This Committee also functioned as part of the Finance Structure Review Committee, which made recommendations to Executive Council and to Convention.
- **Human Rights Committee** - Rosalee Longmoore, SUN President, chaired this Committee until last fall's convention when it was determined not to continue this Committee as much of the work was done through equity committees. SFL has since established an ad hoc committee due to proposed changes to legislation regarding human rights issues.
- **Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee** - Randa Schikosky, Local 101, continues to represent SUN on this Committee, which plans and delivers an annual OH&S conference. Randa was joined by Denise Dick, Region 4 Representative to SUN Board of Directors, in facilitating at the 2010 Conference. Norma Wallace, SUN OH&S Officer, and Virginia Kutzan, SUN member activist, were both nominated for the annual "Bob Sass SFL OH&S Award" in 2010. Congratulations to Virginia as the successful nominee.
- **Pension Committee** - Marg Romanow, SUN Pension and Benefits Officer, continues to represent SUN on this Committee, which participated in the CLC's lobby efforts and planned the Pensions Conference held in February 2011.
- **Shiftwork Committee**- Cheryl Carlson, Local 268, represented SUN on this Committee until last fall's convention.
- **Solidarity and Pride** - Jan Cibart and Fred Bordas, both from Local 224, represent SUN on this Committee and Jan serves as the Vice-President from this Committee to the SFL Executive Council. Recent focus of their work has been the Marriage Commissioner Reference to the Court of Appeal, support to the 2nd Annual Camp Firefly, and ongoing education in the community.
- **Women's and Balancing Work and Family** - Lynne Dielschnieder, Local 106, represented SUN on this Committee until last fall's convention. This Committee focused on supporting other women's groups in their initiatives and in getting resolutions to convention.
- **Collective Bargaining/Strike Strategy/Labour Legislation Committee** - Donna Trainor, SUN Executive Director, was SUN's representative until last fall's convention. After convention, SUN's Director of Labour Relations, Kelly Miner, was named as SUN's representative. The Committee met once to discuss strategy for the Casino Regina picket lines.

### ***Labour Issues Campaign***

SUN staff have participated in the organizing institutes held to educate members on how to facilitate the labour issues that have been identified as priorities. One of our workshops at this year's Annual Meeting will focus on this work.

## Looking ahead...

It will come as no surprise that the year ahead of us will be extremely busy. Election of the Negotiations Committee will be the start to preparing for SUN/SAHO negotiations in 2012, with many of our key services supporting this work.

The Board of Directors and selected SUN members are excited to take part in the upcoming national conventions in May (CLC) and June (CFNU). These conventions offer our members and SUN the opportunity to learn together (and from each other), debate resolutions and set the direction for the CLC and CFNU in the years ahead.

SUN will continue to seek opportunities to work collaboratively with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, employers and other stakeholders to enhance the professional practice environment for our members.

Federal and provincial elections are likely to happen this year and SUN members will want to ensure their voice is heard as we elect governments. SUN will participate in the education of members on matters of importance to our work lives and social programs.

Working together in solidarity, we can influence a better future for the healthcare system, our province and our country!

Rosalee Longmoore, RN  
SUN President, on behalf of SUN Board of Directors



# Executive Director Report



On behalf of SUN staff, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for the dedication you continue to show each and every day. While your practice environments continue to be difficult in these fast changing times, you demonstrate - time and time again - resilience, combined with knowledge, skill and hard work to face those challenges head on.

In order for SUN to provide members with support during these fast paced changes, and to ensure that SUN continues to be an integral part of the healthcare system, we continued the excellent work done at SUN in all of our key services: enforcing both existing and new provisions of the collective agreements and engaging in new opportunities to promote and support our members and their efforts to improve patient outcomes.

The strong operational work of the Union in areas of collective bargaining; providing consultative, advisory and advocacy services in labour relations, benefits, OH&S, nursing advisory, communications, and education for SUN members; continued throughout 2010. This past year saw the development of a focused labour relations workplan, designed to support and enhance the enforcement of the collective agreements and mitigate any negative impacts of the workplace as a result of various initiatives.

Internally, improvements were made this past year to ensure financial, administrative and information technology support for the entire organization. This work continues as we strive to look for opportunities to maximize our organization.

Since being initiated in December 2009, our Patients and Families First work has continued to focus on a number of external opportunities. Through some of the ongoing projects, such as the Patients and Families First Challenge, work at the retention and recruitment committee tables and through the CFNU's *Research to Action* project focusing on nurse-patient ratios, we are striving to continue to support our members by working to advance nursing practice environments so you can give your patients the kind of care you want to provide. SUN staff and Board members are also participating in other projects such as the SUN/Government Partnership, Nursing Council and two working groups formed to shorten the surgical wait times.

Our organizational success is the strength of our members and staff. Together we will continue to ensure our historical strength in representing the traditional interests of members, becoming an advocate for and a partner in building a powerful role for members in their professional practice environments, as well as becoming an advocate for and partner in public interests.

### **SUN Education Program      Supported by: Jean Sinclair**

SUN continues to work hard to ensure that SUN's education programs meet the needs of SUN members. In 2010:

- We held a "Special" Board/SUN District Council/Officers Meeting on February 17 which focused on SUN's *Patients and Families First Initiative*. This workshop provided the opportunity for leaders and staff to gain more understanding about the exciting new work of the Union.
- SUN's Patients and Families First Workshops were held on March 9 & 10, in Saskatoon and Regina, respectively. In addition to SUN member participation, these workshops brought together patients, patient advocacy groups, nursing students and instructors, and other members of the nursing community, to advance patient-centered care. We were grateful to our partners the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN), the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan (RPNAS), and the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (SRNA), who assisted with the success of this workshop.
  - 136 members were funded to attend in order to learn more about this initiative.
- To expand the knowledge of members in leadership positions, regional workshops were held on June 9 & 10 in Regina and Saskatoon. These workshops focused on patient- and family-centered care, SUN's *Patients and Families First Initiative*, and the tools of the collective agreements that support professional practice.
  - 75 members were funded to attend these workshops.
- On October 6, a Duty to Accommodate/ Return to Work workshop was held for local presidents from the regional hospitals and like size locals. This workshop was designed to provide information and tools to support local leaders as they advocate and support members in their locals.
  - 18 members attended; given the positive feedback, this workshop was offered at the 2011 Annual Meeting Education Day.
- Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) workshops were held June 7 & 8, in Saskatoon and Regina, respectively, for members of OH&S committees. The workshop focused on areas such as identifying the role and responsibilities of the OH&S Committee outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations*, identifying the Union representative role regarding OH&S, and becoming familiar with *Section 23 - Right to Refuse Dangerous Work*.
  - 74 members attended the workshops.
- On October 18 & October 25 in Regina and Saskatoon respectively, SUN conducted Nursing Advisory workshops focusing on professional practice issues, Article 58.05 regarding professional standards in the SUN/SAHO Collective Agreement, and the new Professional Practice Report forms.
  - 95 members attended the two workshops.
- The 2010 Education Conference took place on November 2 & 3 in Regina. The Education Conference offers SUN members the opportunity to

complete one of the four tiers in the Education program.

- 95 members attended the conference.

Provincial funding was available for all of these educational opportunities, seeing 523 SUN members in total funded during 2010, an increase from 2009 when only 148 members were provincially funded.

A number of non-funded workshops were delivered by Employment Relations Officers in 2010, in addition to those listed above, and SUN would encourage all locals to consider this opportunity in 2011.

SUN members were offered the chance to participate in an exciting new educational opportunity in 2010. The 1st Biennial CFNU Prairie Labour School was held on May 25-27 in Regina. The Labour School saw nurses from the three prairie nurses unions - the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), the Manitoba Nurses' Union (MNU) and SUN - join forces for the innovative event. Plans are underway for the 2012 school, which will be hosted by UNA.

The SUN Certificate Program had six new registrants in 2010; while five SUN members who were previously enrolled in Level 1 moved to Level 2. The total enrollment for the Certificate Program is 15 members which is an increase from the eight members in 2009. This program:

- provides direct experience and education in labour relations, union administration and leadership for active SUN members;
- bridges the gap between formal SUN Education programs and practical experience;
- creates a pool of knowledgeable SUN members able to assist co-workers, locals, districts, and SUN provincial with day to day issues, special projects and campaigns; and
- creates an opportunity for SUN members to explore a greater commitment to SUN as a leader at the local, district or provincial union level or as an Employment Relations Officer.

To expand SUN members' union education experience, SUN funds members to attend external education opportunities. In 2010, the SUN Board of Directors selected SFL's Equity Conference, Stressing Shiftwork Conference, SFL/CLC Spring School, Prairie School for Union Women, and the SFL OH&S Conference as external education opportunities. In 2010, a total of 33 SUN members received this funding. For 2011, the SUN Board has approved the SFL's Pension Conference, SFL/CLC Spring School, Prairie School for Union Women, and SFL's OH&S Conference as external schools/conferences.

### ***What's new in 2011?***

The 2011 Education Program will again offer OH&S and NAC workshops, as well as workshops that will focus on SUN's overall strategic plan. The 2011 Education Conference will be held in Saskatoon in early November; so watch for information, as it becomes available, in SUNSpots, SUNBursts and in Local mail outs.

## **SUN Communications**

**Supported by: Cheryl Krett & Erin Thomsen**

Work within the Communications area is always evolving as we look for more efficient and current means of communicating with our members and the public.

Throughout 2010, SUN:

- Continued to enhance SUN's publicity materials and showcase the "real" faces of Saskatchewan nurses. A photo shoot was held in October in conjunction with the filming of SUN's Holiday Commercial. The interest from members was overwhelming once again! Thank you to all of the SUN members and their families who took part in the photoshoot and the commercial.
- Participated in a number of career fairs, student meet and greets, and affiliate conferences, showcasing a display and targeted information packages. These opportunities allow us to provide information on all aspects of our organization.
- Kept SUN members informed through regular issues of SUNSpots and CONTACT, timely mail outs to our locals and SDCs, monthly "Did You Knows" as well as through web site updates. The popular Nurse Planners were also distributed in November to all SUN members. SUN maintained a presence in the media through advertising opportunities in newspapers, specialty publications, magazines and targeted programs across the province.
- Focused SUN's communications in 2010 on patient-centered care in support of our Patient and Families First work. A Patients and Families First newsletter was created in September and by November the second edition had been circulated. Feedback from the newsletter has been positive.
- Developed an OH&S newsletter. This communication tool provides important information to members with respect to workplace safety.

### ***What's new in 2011?***

In January, a special edition of SUNSpots was produced and distributed to SUN members and key stakeholders. The focus of this edition was to educate readers on SUN's vision of patient- and family-centered care, and provide them with practical tools, tips, and ideas for enhancing the patient- and family-centered care our members deliver. This special issue of SUNSpots also highlighted how SUN and its members incorporate the correct concepts and actions of patient- and family-centered care into their practice, and how to continue doing so on an improved and consistent basis.

### **NEPS 4th Year Practicum Students**

In 2010 and 2011, SUN hosted two fourth year nursing students in the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) for their six week community senior practicum. This was a new opportunity for SUN and proved to be mutually beneficial. Both students had the opportunity to learn about and participate in collaborative initiatives that SUN is engaged in, such as *The Patients and Families First Initiative* and Challenge, the Joint SUN/Regional Health Authority Retention and Recruitment Committees, and applied research projects. In addition, they were able to learn about and participate in SUN's labour relations work.

## **SUN/Government Partnership**

Our work at the SUN/Government Partnership Table has resulted in the allocation of 732 more RN/RPN positions as of December 31, 2010; resulting in 91% of our goal (800 nurses) being reached. Of special note, is the success of the Cypress Health Region, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Saskatoon Health Region and Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority, which have exceeded their targets.

While the progress that has been made toward meeting the targets is an important step, vacancies still remain. At the end of 2010, 372.2 full-time equivalent vacancies still existed. Such vacancies indicate that further action and work is required to ensure adequate staffing levels for the delivery of safe, patient- and family-centered care.

Filling these vacancies, particularly in rural and remote areas is a critical step.

Looming retirement of many experienced and skilled nurses means we must continue to focus on recruiting new nurses as well as retaining the expert nurses we already have. With this in mind, the SUN/Government Partnership will need to determine where to allocate the unallocated FTEs (total 95)

SUN recognizes that further work is required to ensure adequate staffing levels for the delivery of safe, patient-and family-centered care. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Ministry of Health and the opportunity to find innovative solutions to these challenges for patients and their families.

*Donna Trainor, RN  
Executive Director*



## ***Patients and Families First Initiative***

### **Supported by: Amber Alexce, Gwen Curtis & Bev Duncan**

The Patients and Families First Initiative, launched December 9, 2009, is intended to help nurses give patients the kind of care they want to provide, and support collaboration with patients, and the broader healthcare community.

RNs, RN(NP)s, and RPNs play a vital role in coordinating and enhancing the quality and safety of patient, client and public service to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens have timely access to high quality health care services. Putting high quality care for patients and their families first has been a long-standing commitment of SUN and its members. The Initiative was developed to address the gap between the reality of nursing practice environments, and the kind of high quality, patient-centered care our members want to provide.

Despite pockets of excellence in the healthcare system, health care providers continue to face challenges in their efforts to provide evidence-based patient care in a way that is genuinely patient- and family-centered, rather than system-centered. The Initiative addresses the need to give a voice to patients and empower frontline nurses to optimize quality care by inviting proposals from patients, members of the public, patient advocacy groups, and registered nurses to develop their ideas for improving patient-centered care in Saskatchewan.

As the union for RNs/RN(NP)s/RPNs in the province, SUN has been trying to support our nurses and their desire to make high-quality, patient-centered care consistently available across Saskatchewan. But we can't do this alone.

This presents us with a great opportunity to work on giving a voice to those who need it most (patients and their families), and dismantling the silos that have plagued our healthcare system - silos that, too often, prevent genuinely patient-centered care from happening.

## ***Patients and Families First Innovative Challenge***

As part of the *Patients and Families First Initiative*, SUN launched the Patients and Families First Challenge. The purpose of the Challenge was to encourage and support patients, members of the public, patient advocacy groups, and SUN members in developing and testing sustainable innovations that will improve patient-centered care. The Challenge also addressed the need to give a voice to patients and empower frontline nurses to optimize quality care by inviting proposals from patients, members of the public, patient advocacy groups, and SUN members to develop their ideas for improving patient-centered care in Saskatchewan.

On February 28, 2011, the inaugural Patients and Families First Challenge drew to a close. SUN was thrilled to see the positive response the Challenge received; in total the Challenge received 93 submissions (44 from SUN members; 44 from patients; and five from patient advocacy groups).

SUN would like to extend their gratitude to the patients, advocacy groups and SUN members who took the time out of their busy lives to help us make a difference and submit their innovative ideas.

# **Director, Government Relations & Patients & Families First**

The applications submitted presented endless ways to improve Saskatchewan's healthcare system; deciding who to award the \$10,000 prize will be a difficult decision to make. The proposals were outstanding, leaving the External Advisory Committee tasked with reviewing, assessing and scoring the Challenge submissions with the difficult job of determining a winner.

The External Advisory Committee is comprised of 12 key stakeholders and decision makers who have partnered with SUN to provide expertise in judging the submissions. SUN is honoured to have partnered with the following stakeholders:

- Marlene Smadu (Chair), Associate Dean, Regina Site and International Student Affairs, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan
- Bob Allen, Executive Director, Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan (RPNAS)
- Cara Brewster, Registrar, Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN)
- Bonnie Brossart, CEO, Health Quality Council (HQC)
- Lorna Butler, Professor & Dean, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan
- Val Davies, Executive Director, Regina General Hospital, Specialty Care Office, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
- Lynn Digney-Davis, Chief Nursing Officer, The Nursing Secretariat, Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
- Suzanne Downie, Director, Nursing Practice, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (SRNA)
- Sheila Dresen, Acting Dean, Faculty of Nursing, University of Regina
- Netha Dyck, SIAST
- Darlene Gray, Director, Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Treatment in Saskatchewan (OCATS)
- Linda Wasko-Lacey, Vice-President, Health Services, Heartland Health Region

Following two intense weeks of review and scoring of the submissions, the External Advisory Committee met on March 21 in Regina to determine the winners of the two \$10,000 awards; one award for a SUN member applicant and one award to a patient or patient advocacy group applicant. The successful candidates will be announced during the Annual Meeting.

### ***Research to Action - 6 Medicine, St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon***

In October of 2008, Health Canada approved a proposal by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) to implement nine pilot projects designed to increase the retention and recruitment of nurses across the country. In November 2009, a tenth pilot project, based in Nunavut, was approved. Collectively, the pilots are known as *Research to Action: Applied Workplace Solutions for Nurses (RTA)*.

The pilots involve innovative strategies that bring research to action, including programs that address staffing ratios to enhance the quality of patient care, systems to offer support to new nursing graduates, and opportunities for education and professional development. All projects are work-place based and had been developed in partnership with employers, unions, governments and other health care stakeholders in each jurisdiction.

Health care stakeholders in Saskatchewan recognized that a positive work environment is crucial to the retention and recruitment of nurses. If the conditions for the bedside nurse improve it will have a positive impact on the retention and recruitment of nurses. Outdated staffing systems are one source of inefficiency and discontent. Many such systems were established years ago under different circumstances. Studies have shown that patients experience fewer and less adverse events and shorter lengths of stay when the nursing resources are adjusted to meet their needs.

SUN, along with the Saskatoon Health Region and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, partnered to adapt a “Synergy Model” staffing plan for a unit at St. Paul’s Hospital, a 200-bed acute care facility in Saskatoon. Developed by Martha Curley, the Synergy model considers eight universal patient characteristics: stability, predictability, complexity, vulnerability, resiliency, participation in care, participation in decision making, and resource availability.

These indicators allow nurses to articulate patient characteristics and needs, to consider the impact on workload, and to determine the health care professional best suited to meet those needs. The model classifies patient needs and resulting workload impacts, creating a real-time communication tool for handovers and shift-to-shift reports and can be integrated into care plans, practice notes, and patient rounds.

This project is designed to provide an evidence-base for the importance of adequate staffing for both patient and nurse outcomes. Through SUN’s involvement on the Project Steering Committee and Working Groups, we have continued to assist in supporting staffing levels, and highlighting the advances in RN role (re. coordination, assessment, care planning, etc); most recently in the development of the final report.

Sustainability, planning and knowledge transfer are a current focus in order to ensure that the gains made for both patients and nursing practice are continued. The nurses on the unit have taken the lead on developing workable solutions for sustainability and will also be directly involved in knowledge transfer. The final report draft is in its final stages at the provincial level, and analysis of retention and recruitment data will soon be underway at the national level. There has been significant interest in this project both within Saskatchewan and from other provinces.

### ***Saskatchewan’s Surgical Initiative***

In response to the provincial government’s throne speech of October 2009, Saskatchewan physicians, nurses, healthcare administrators, former surgical patients, other health sector organizations and associations, health care unions, and Ministry of Health officials have been working together on a plan to:

- improve the experience of Saskatchewan surgical patients;
- reduce surgical wait times to no more than three months within four years;
- ensure that short wait times can be sustained into the future; and
- make changes that result in better and safer care for surgical patients.

The *Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative's* plan for better surgical care is based on five measurable objectives under which numerous changes and initiatives are already in progress or under development.

SUN continues to be involved as a key stakeholder in the *Surgical Waitlist Initiative* in an effort to uphold the principles of high quality, accessible public health care, and protect the interests of our members when faced with issues such as itinerant surgery, education and orientation, etc. The current focus of the Initiative is on the implementation of the Long Waiter Strategy. SUN has provided evidence-based information on successful usages of RNs in “patient navigator” and “nurse coordinator” roles that both improve patient experience and satisfaction, as well as improve system performance and outcomes according to key health care indicators. SUN will continue to pursue the development of these roles and advocate for the interests of SUN members around issues such as education, orientation, scheduling, etc.

### ***Joint SUN/Health Region Retention & Recruitment Committees***

Through the SUN/Government Partnership, the Joint SUN/Health Region Retention and Recruitment Committees were implemented in 2009. SUN members, along with representatives from their respective health regions and from the Ministry of Health, engage in round table discussions seeking out solutions to retaining and recruiting registered nurses to their region. The round table discussions have developed a variety of ideas and initiatives, each unique to their own facilities and regions. To date, 56 projects have been approved throughout the province. Allocation of funds has been made to a number of key areas:

- bursaries \$264,000
- mentorship \$225,000
- professional development \$1,088,327
- technology \$154,560
- recruitment \$19,141
- leadership/relationship building \$197,230
- quality care \$30,800
- other projects \$19,360

Each Joint SUN/Health Region Retention & Recruitment Committee has been vigorously working towards developing innovative ideas to improve their workplace and in turn, the care they provide patients and their families.

Throughout 2011, the Committees will continue to look for opportunities as well as begin evaluations of the approved projects. The types of innovative projects the Committees have submitted for approval by the SUN/Government Partnership table represent a wide range of ideas and solutions, each unique to their region.

For Regional Committee updates, project success, and next steps, visit SUN's web site at [www.sun-nurses.sk.ca](http://www.sun-nurses.sk.ca).

*Donna Trainor, Executive Director on behalf of  
Lawrence LeMoal, Director, Government Relations  
& Patients and Families First*

## **Director, Labour Relations**



The Director, Labour Relations portfolio includes, but is not limited to, labour relations, labour law, nursing advisory, member benefits and pensions, occupation health and safety, and collective bargaining.

2010 was a busy year but with the support and dedication of SUN's Employment Relations Officers, Nursing Advisory Officers, Occupational Health & Safety Officer, Pensions & Benefits Officer, SUN Lawyer and supporting staff, SUN made great strides for our members.

### **Labour Relations Regional Highlights**

#### **Mamawetan/ Churchill River**

**Supported by: Don MacDonald**

In the Mamawetan/Churchill River region, some concerns have surfaced where the Employer is not making arrangements to ensure proper RN coordination of care within the hospital when the RN manager is away. This has resulted in several members staying beyond their normal hours to ensure patient care is not jeopardized. This has been seen as mandating as no nurse feels comfortable leaving a hospital with no RN on duty. SUN is currently working with the Local involved to resolve the issue.

#### **Keewatin Yatthé**

**Supported by: Don MacDonald**

SUN is currently trying to engage the Keewatin Yatthé Health Region in meetings with the locals for the near future. Local 308 has a fully elected executive and all three locals are warm to the idea of the formation of a Regional JUMM and Regional SDC.

#### **Regina Qu'Appelle**

##### **Base Hospitals**

**Supported by: Carl Veistrup and Nick Bonokoski**

The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region is looking at consolidating some services at the Regina General Hospital with those at the Pasqua Hospital. The Health Region plans to take the pre-admissions clinic and surgical assessment centre and merge/transfer these services to the new Regina Centre Crossing (formerly the Real Canadian Superstore in downtown Regina at Dewdney

Avenue and Albert Street).

The major issue for both base hospitals is the fact that there are not enough beds in the facilities, which creates major overcapacity issues for the Emergency Rooms. SUN continues to address this ongoing issue.

### **Wascana Rehabilitation Centre**

**Supported by: Colin Byas**

This has been a very busy year for Local 268, with challenges around shifts, postings, accommodations, and attendance issues. Management continues to profess there are adequate staffing levels and the local disagrees and continues to raise the members' concerns around increased overtime and less time to care for patients.

### **Rural Communities**

**Supported by: Colin Byas**

In many rural Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region communities, they have a lack of health care providers, which results in SUN members daily duties expanding to cover other areas as well as their own positions. There continues to be many challenges concerning the protection of bargaining unit rights and determining the RN/RPN roles in Long-Term Care facilities. SUN members in Moosomin have been very active in the Nursing Advisory process by completing Work Situation Reports, which is showing some progress, however a great deal of work still needs to be done.

### **Public Health**

**Supported by: Joan Ennis-Schmidt**

There continues to be concern and debate over the interpretation of field hours and the resulting issues around such. Within the Regina City District, public health is undergoing a change to their model of care creating two teams; one for maternity/child services and one for school visits.

### **Home Care, Healthline and Long-Term Care**

**Supported by: Joan Ennis-Schmidt**

Home Care, the Healthline and the region's Long-Term Care facilities all share similar issues regarding postings, vacancies; the interpretation of Letter of Understanding #12 in the SUN/SAHO Collective Agreement; staffing levels; workload; replacement; increased number of disciplines; and concerns around Duty to Accommodate.

### **Saskatoon Health Region**

#### **Base Hospitals**

**Supported by: Derron Hoover, Melanie Kenny & Don MacDonald**

The Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon City Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital remain very active in addressing a wide range of concerns from their members. A number of outstanding grievances and Work Situation Reports are at various stages. Overcapacity continues to be an issue in the region with the trend growing.

#### **Rural Communities**

**Supported by: Derron Hoover**

Even though the carbon monoxide (CO) leak that St. Mary's Villa in Humboldt experienced in December, 2010, contributed to the death of three patients, management has praised the staff for how they coped with the crisis. While short-term injuries appear to have resolved, longer term effects are still uncertain; SUN continues to monitor the situation, the well-being of our members and the clients they care for.

Like many rural communities across the province, rural facilities in the Saskatoon Health Region are experiencing physician shortages, leading to temporary closures or facilities shutting down. SUN is working to assist our members affected by such closures.

### **Heartland Health Region**

**Supported by: Lindsay Pickett**

Between the SUN members and the Heartland Health Region there is a true willingness to work together to find solutions to whatever the issue might be. However, there have been some unique challenges that have presented themselves.

There continues to be issues concerning the replacement of RNs/RPNs by other health care providers (or the non-replacement of the RN/RPN) in Long Term Care.

The integration of nursing services in Outlook and Unity continues to be a problem with respect to the retention and recruitment of RNs in those facilities. In an effort to resolve the matter, the Joint SUN/Heartland Health Region Retention and Recruitment Committee arranged for mediated discussions on how to move forward.

A disturbing trend at the Kerrobert Health Centre is the new practice to deny job-share requests. A grievance concerning the denial of a job-share request has gone to arbitration; which SUN is awaiting the decision on. Even though the issue has been taken to arbitration, SUN has recently learned from management that a second job-share request will be denied, with no intention to post the job-share partner position.

### **Prairie North Health Region**

**Supported by: Margot Wallace**

The replacement of RNs/RPNs with other health care workers is, by far, the most serious issue for members working in the Prairie North Health Region. Resolutions to date regarding this issue, in the acute care sector, is largely temporary. SUN wants to remind all members that each occasion needs to be reported and investigated. In the Long Term Care sector, the replacement of RN/RPNs with LPNs is becoming routine due to the decreasing availability of RN/RPNs. However, there are a few newly graduated nurses who want to work in Long Term Care.

Local 33, which represents members at Battlefords Union Hospital, has also been experiencing problems with replacement of RNs with other health care providers. The Nurse Managers have developed an assessment tool which they use when deciding how, or if, they will replace a vacant RN shift. The staffing practices continue to be closely monitored by the Local as SUN disputes this replacement practice.

### **Prince Albert Parkland Health Region**

**Supported by: Jan Murdock**

Following the Provincial Budget announcement in March of last year, the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region served notice to SUN regarding changes that would have a direct impact on the facilities in the communities of Spiritwood, Big River and the Wellness Centre in Prince Albert.

The health care facilities in Big River and Spiritwood had previously not been able to sustain the physician coverage required to maintain Emergency and Acute Care services, but had however, maintained an Acute Care staffing

model. In order to provide adequate staffing coverage, the facilities have been converted to a Long Term Care staffing model.

### **Kelsey Trail Health Region**

**Supported by: Margot Wallace**

Melfort Hospital is experiencing an unexpected increase in the number of clients admitted to the facility. While these unanticipated fluctuations are temporary, they do cause staffing issues. At the Joint Union-Management Committee level, SUN has agreed to implement a staffing audit to identify if there is a need to create additional relief positions.

There is a serious staffing problem at the Nipawin Hospital due to several vacant RN positions and recruitment efforts have been unsuccessful. The Kelsey Trail Health Region and SUN are working jointly with the Region's Retention and Recruitment Committee and the Joint Union-Management levels to develop a sustainable staffing plan.

### **Cypress Health Region**

**Supported by: Donna Driediger**

There are a fair number of grievances in the Cypress Health Region concerning the health region's plan to move from twelve-hour to eight-hour shifts region wide; Long-Term Care facilities and rural health centres have been the hardest hit so far. An information drive is currently in the works to inform the public on how these proposed changes will have a direct impact on the services they receive and patient safety.

### **Five Hills Health Region**

**Supported by: Joan Ennis-Schmidt**

Many SUN members in the Five Hills Health Region are feeling frustrated with the lack of replacement coverage, and excessive workloads. SUN continues to address the members' issues and concerns through the process set out in the SUN/SAHO Collective Agreement, in hopes of finding a sufficient resolve for both parties.

SUN is currently in the process of challenging the Employer's use of General Duty Nurse A's to teach other nurses in a formal classroom setting, as this is similar to the role of a Nurse B Clinical Nurse Educator.

### **Sun Country Health Region**

**Supported by: Carl Veistrup**

SUN is currently in talks with SAHO and the Health Region to determine the appropriate allocation of the Provincial Service Recognition Awards. At this time each health region is interpreting the calculation process differently, resulting in inaccurate payment of the awards.

### **Sunrise Health Region**

**Supported by: Nick Bonokoski**

Activity in the Sunrise Health Region is growing exponentially as grievances have increased from an average of five in previous years to 26 for 2010. SUN members are anxious to see an expedited arbitration process to address outstanding issues.

The biggest issue in the Sunrise Health Region is in regards to communication, as the Employer is simply doing a very poor job of it. Major policies have been launched with no consultation and this has led to a great deal of grief for SUN members. The Employer has committed that they will not make the same mistake again and we are holding them to that.

### **Canadian Blood Services**

**Supported by: Donna Driediger**

The Canadian Blood Services has indicated it has plans of introducing a Clinic Supervisor role at the clinics, with conversations regarding the position being out-of-scope. SUN strongly believes that this position should be considered as a Charge Nurse role, therefore within the scope of the Union.

After much push back from the RNs and a significant amount of prodding from SUN, the multi-skilled worker pilot project at Canadian Blood Services was diverted from the Regina centre to Calgary. Since the change of the pilot site, Canadian Blood Services has done some revamping of its practices and the RNs there have a new call-in protocol they are having some difficulty adjusting to. While there are still concerns around the logistics, the process is contract compliant.

### **All Nations Healing Hospital**

**Supported by: Colin Byas**

This has been a very busy year for the staff at All Nations Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle. Hospitals near the facility have been on bypass due to the lack of physician coverage. This causes very heavy workloads and concerns for all the staff at the hospital.

### **Extendicare Canada Inc.**

**Supported by: Colin Byas**

The busiest activities, for SUN members working at Extendicare, seem to be around the area of payroll regarding correct compensation for In-Charge shifts and the recognition of previous experience. Scheduling and payroll are not done locally and this causes difficulty in dealing with such matters in a timely fashion. Like many Long-Term Care areas, protecting the work of RN/RPNs and the bargaining unit is starting to increasingly come to the forefront.

### **Education Sector**

**Supported by: Donna Driediger**

#### *Regina Public School Board*

The RNs working for the Regina Public School Board make up SUN's newest local. The new members concluded bargaining in January 2011 and have recently ratified and signed their first Collective Agreement. The settlement will see members wage increase upwards of 10.6%. These new union members will be working on developing policies and procedures in their workplace where they will finally have input and respect surrounding their professional practice.

*SUN also represents the Registered Nurses working at Athol Murray College of Notre Dame, Wilcox (50kms south of Regina).*

## **Grievances and Arbitration     **Supported by: Ronni Nordal****

### **Grievances**

Throughout 2010, SUN's Employment Relations Officers encountered regional budgetary restraints as a result of the March 24, 2010, provincial budget. In the budget, the Ministry of Health directed the health regions to find \$35 million in savings and implementation of LEAN principles. LEAN principles can be summarized as cost savings through improved efficiencies such as bulk purchasing and shared services. These principles also include reduction in lost time due to injuries, 'premium' pay, and sick time.

Health regions across the province implemented the LEAN principle in varying

ways and resulted in some regions seeking budget savings through targeted reductions in use of sick time, paid education leave, ‘premium’ pay and reducing time lost due to injuries. In many instances, the implementation of these policies is in contravention of language in the SUN/SAHO Collective Agreement and established case law. As a result, SUN has seen an increase in duty roster calls and grievances.

SUN members should be aware that the 2011-2012 Provincial Budget has asked the Health Region’s to build upon their 2010 success where LEAN principles are concerned. Such direction from the Government will continue to impact SUN members in a negative way.

There were 178 grievances filed in 2010 which marks a 49.6% increase from 2009. This is not surprising given the provincial budgetary targets that were set in March of 2010.

2008	2009	2010
80 grievances	119 grievances	178 grievances

When broken down, while broadly represented, it becomes evident that the majority of grievances have dealt with vacancies, hours of work and discharge/disciplinary actions.

Of the 178 grievances filed in 2010, 47 are in relation to LEAN policies: targeted reductions in paid leaves and overtime or related cost saving measures including replacing RNs/RPNs with LPNs, barring re-employment of retired members, and failure to post.

The Discharge/Disciplinary grievances filed include 12 suspensions, five of which are in conjunction with a SRNA complaint. The grievances filed concerning discharge while on probation reflect the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region’s change in practice by no longer supporting and extending the probationary periods for Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs).

At the end of February 2011, there were a total of 49 open grievance files that have been referred to arbitration. In concert with the Employment Relations Officers, Ronni Nordal, SUN Lawyer, is continuously working to improve the grievance process in order to resolve member issues in a timely manner. Progress has been made in the best interest of the members, but there is always room for additional improvements.

### Arbitrations

There were a number of issues and grievances that Ronni Nordal, SUN Lawyer, took to arbitration in 2010. While each issue taken forward is of great importance and significance, highlights from 2010 include:

- Confirmation that employers are required to have just cause to terminate and are restricted to the reasons for termination at the time of termination.
- Confirmation that seniority is paramount where there are no qualified applicants and the remaining applicants have equal skills and abilities.
- Confirmation that with respect to suspension and discipline grievances, the key question is whether a suspension was warranted.
  - If it is determined that suspension was a warranted course of action, it

- is unlikely the arbitrator will interfere with the length of suspension.
- Confirmation that the scope of practice for a RN has a greater breadth and depth than that of a Licensed Practice Nurse (LPN).
    - SUN also gained confirmation that where the Employer has made a determination that an RN is required, it cannot replace that RN with a LPN based solely on cost.
    - It was determined that in order to make any adjustments in staffing, an assessment is required in order to determine whether it is necessary to replace the RN shift.

## ***Nursing Advisory***

### ***Supported by: Jan Murdock & Carrie Simpson***

In addition to the grievance process, SUN members have access to the Nursing Advisory process to resolve workplace issues. Each year, SUN files a significant number of Work Situation Reports on a variety of subjects; last year was no different. A total of 724 Work Situation Reports were filed on behalf of SUN members.

While each of these Work Situation Reports are at a different stage of resolution, the Nursing Advisory process continues to be an effective mechanism for members to address workplace concerns.

Unresolved Work Situation Reports are extended the opportunity to be presented to their respective Health Regions for resolution. In 2010, SUN members made two presentations to their Regional Board of Directors:

- Local 68, Moose Jaw Union Hospital, Emergency Department (May 26)
- Local 35, South East Integrated Health Centre in Moosomin (September 21)

Response from the Five Hills Health Region, concerning Local 68's presentation, was positive and agreeable to SUN's recommendations. SUN is currently working in collaboration with the Employer to implement the mutually agreed upon resolves. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Board (Local 35's presentation) response also provided for an initiative to which SUN is evaluating and monitoring.

After finding no resolve from the RQHR Regional Board of Directors presentation, an Independent Assessment Committee hearing was held on June 29 - 30, 2010 for the Mother/Baby unit at the Regina General Hospital (Local 106). The outstanding concerns included inadequate baseline staffing, lack of a supernumerary charge nurse present 24-hours per day, and a lack of sufficient staff to assist with non-nursing duties. The response from the Independent Assessment Committee was not favorable for SUN and ongoing discussions occur with the Employer to implement the noted decisions.

2010 brought something new to the Nursing Advisory work, the Professional Practice Report form. In 2008, new language was added to the SUN/SAHO Collective Agreement (Article 58) that led to the development of the Professional Practice Report form. The form is intended to have a more timely resolution to concerns over staffing levels related to patient safety. By March 2011, we had received 57 Professional Practice Report forms.

In-services for the revised Work Situation Reports and new Professional

Practice Report forms were delivered to all Base Hospitals, most Regional SDCs, and other active SDCs. Workshops held in October 2010 were extremely well attended, and feedback indicates nurses are looking to continue to access educationals and expand their knowledge of practice issues.

## ***Collective Bargaining***

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### **SUN/SAHO Negotiations**

Preparations and research is currently underway for the upcoming round of negotiations between SUN and SAHO. There are a number of factors that will have an impact on this round of bargaining. The largest change in legislation, that affects SUN members, has been the proclamation of *The Public Services Essential Services Act*. While the true impact of this legislation has not been seen by SUN, we do know that the other healthcare unions have been declared essential in numbers not seen elsewhere in the public sector.

The immediate impact of this legislation on SUN is the need to review our policy for developing Essential Services Plans and the requirement to negotiate an Essential Services Agreement in advance of proceeding to bargaining. The SUN Board of Directors is actively working on improving our policy concerning essential services in order to adhere to the new legislation.

### **SUN's Charter Challenge concerning**

#### ***The Public Services Essential Services Act***

SUN filed our affidavits to challenge *The Public Services Essential Services Act* as it pertains to *The Charter of Human Rights* prior to the December 31, 2010 deadline and is pleased with the expert opinions we obtained.

Employers filed their responses prior to the February 10, 2011 deadline; in turn SUN subsequently had until March 10, 2011 to file any further affidavit replies. SUN's Lawyer and Director of Labour Relations have been actively gathering information from SUN's archives and members to support our challenge. The Health Regions and SAHO continue to state previous SUN strikes have caused fatigue, workload issues and the inability to provide appropriate nursing coverage (for the management covering during the strike).

## **Member Benefits**

**Supported by: Marg Romanow**

### **Saskatchewan Healthcare Employee Pension Plan (SHEPP)**

SUN continues to represent SUN members as a Trustee of the SHEPP plan. The Board of Trustees meets on a regular basis to address investment and governance issues. Current issues being discussed are mandatory enrolment to SHEPP and solvency funding requirements. The SHEPP contributions will increase in 2011 to meet the funding needs of the plan.

### **Extended Health Benefits Plan & Enhanced Dental Benefits Plan**

The Extended Health and Enhanced Dental Benefits Plans currently have large surpluses. While SUN has filed a lawsuit against SAHO on the issue of ownership of funds, attempts to resolve the lawsuit continue. SUN will be pursuing plan improvements.

## **Disability Appeals**

SUN assists SUN members through the appeal process for those who have had their disability benefits terminated. SUN continues on an ongoing basis to work with approximately 60 active disability appeal files.

## **Workers' Compensation Board Committee of Review**

The *Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) Act* requires that a review of the legislation and practices be conducted every three years. SUN is currently working with members in preparing a submission to the WCB Committee of Review. In addition, SUN holds a representative seat on the Review Committee.

## **Occupational Health & Safety**

***Supported by: Norma Wallace***

SUN has been instrumental in establishing the new safety association for healthcare in the province. The G22 Safety Association has a new name, the *Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health (SASWH)*. As SUN's representative on SASWH's Board, SUN's OH&S Officer, Norma Wallace, has recently been elected as Vice-Chairperson at SASWH's March 21, 2011, Annual Meeting.

SUN has had the Occupational Health and Safety Officer position for two years and Norma Wallace has been actively increasing the OH&S education and communications for SUN members. Ongoing member communication and education occurs through the SUN communications such as SUNSpots, CONTACT, OH&S Newsletter, workshops, and the web site.

*Kelly Miner*

*Director, Labour Relations*



## **Director, Finance, Administration & Information Services**



Year 2010 was a busy year for SUN's finance, administration and information services staff.

### **Building and Property**

On April 22, the Regina office's renovation project, that began in December 2009, was deemed to be substantially complete. The outcome of these renovations resulted in creation of six functional office spaces, renewal of both the men's and women's washrooms, replacement of the lights and creation of a multimedia-friendly boardroom. With the renewal of the lighting system, we saw a reduction in our power costs by an average of 5%. Having a multimedia boardroom also provided benefits which include a greater use of technology by staff and Board members, a reduction of paper costs and allowed for technology training to be done in-house. Smaller but still important improvements included an upgrade to our security system, updates to our emergency evacuation procedures and staff education. Additionally some renovation work in the Saskatoon office was also completed which included shelving in staff offices, cupboards and additional electrical outlets (January 2011) for the boardroom.

During 2010, a much needed focus was undertaken to improve the exterior appearance of the building, property and parking lot at the Regina location. In addition, gravel fill around the building foundation was repaired, cracked windows and screens were replaced and the chain link fence mended. To assist in ongoing property cleanup efforts, we invited a community group to help out and they tended to the property twice a week and did a tremendous job throughout the summer and fall season. For this work, I want to acknowledge the Cosmopolitan Industry of Regina for doing a great job and it is our intent to contract them in 2011 to do the same.

### **Information Technology and Office Systems**

Significant work was undertaken in the information technology area in 2010, such work included the transition of Windows XP to Windows 7 operating systems. To gain economies of scale, implementation is occurring over a two year time frame and is expected to be finalized in 2011. During the year, 13

desktop computers, 12 laptops and 17 new monitors were deployed. The new monitor replacements primarily replaced monitors that were 17" or less. Standardization was adopted as a model for all future information technology equipment deployments to gain economies of scale and to reduce pressures in providing help desk support services for multiple brands of products. With the changeover to Windows 7, training was also delivered to all Board members, staff in the Saskatoon office and many staff in Regina. The training will continue in 2011 as part of the roll-out process.

To better assist with asset management tracking and handling of help desk calls and services, new server software was implemented providing for remote desktop access services, to trouble shoot issues remotely, to Board members and staff. During 2010, our technology department opened 932 help desk tickets and closed 845.

Network upgrades completed in 2010 to SUN's network included the replacement of an e-mail server (exchange server), a new modernized data back-up system, thus moving from a tape system to a hard-drive system, added data storage capacity, replacement of our external power's back-up system due to equipment failure, and many more improvements. To support the IT staff in their work, technical training was provided which included 2010 exchange server and Window server 2008 training.

Our office equipment also underwent some significant upgrades caused by equipment failures. These included a new color printer, an address label printer, a production photocopier in the Regina Office and two label printers one for each the Regina and Saskatoon office; the replaced equipment ranged from five to nine years old. The purpose of this equipment is to support the communications work of the Union which includes general mail outs to locals and SUN District Councils and SUNSpots, to name a few.

Throughout 2010 improvements to SUN's Labour Relations Inquiry database, SUN's Grievance Database and Membership Database continued, including streamlining of processes and procedures to improve accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness of the information and services these systems support.

### ***Office Administration***

The office administration staff are the backbones to SUN's delivery of services and often do not get the recognition that is so deserving. Many thanks are owed to them.

The following table highlights some of the volumes of work that was undertaken in 2010, regarding the production of communication materials.

	General	OH&S	Surveys	SUNSpots	Nurse Planners	Golden Opportunities
# of Mail outs	16	5	1	6	1	1
Average pieces per mail out	285	220	240	9687	9479	9382

While the above table does not include all of our communications work, it does cover the routine items. Other key and important roles performed by the office administration staff include:

- reception,
- support for processing grievances,
- administrative correspondence,
- maintaining filing systems,
- production of workshop materials and supports,
- planning and coordination of the Annual Meeting, and
- maintenance of all of SUN's membership contact information.

### **Accounting and Payroll**

The Accountant and Office Assistant-Payroll are an integral part of SUN's operations as well. They consistently meet the tight timelines for producing payroll and meeting the financial reporting requirement needs of the Union, including year-end and audit activities. This can only be achieved through dedication and attention to detail.

In addition to this area, during 2010 and continuing into 2011, improvements were implemented in the budget development process and to internal control systems through new financial and administrative policies and procedures, along with revisions to strengthen existing policies. Much work is still needed in this area and progress is being made as time and resources permit.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to all the support staff for their work in supporting the organization in achieving its goals and objectives.

*Donna Trainor, Executive Director on behalf of the  
Director, Finance, Administration and Information Services*





## **Ad-Hoc Committee Report on SUN District Council Grants**

The Committee met on September 14, 2010 for the purpose of establishing amended practices for the distribution and accounting for SDC grants as set out in the 2010 Annual Meeting resolutions.

As a result of this work, the Committee has recommended changes to the SUN District Council Bylaws and Membership Policy 035-M-2007 SDC Grants. These recommendations including an implementation plan, prototype model of a financial manual, accounting and reporting templates. These were presented to the SUN Board of Directors at the October 2010 Board Meeting and to the SDC Chairs and Treasurers on November 17th at the BOD/SDC meeting. Work is currently underway to develop the manual, reporting templates and processes. Education and training on the new processes are planned for November 2011.

*Tracy M. Zambory (Chair), Don Yates, Deb Atkings, and Tess Gieg  
Ad Hoc Committee*

## **Constitution, Bylaws & Resolutions Committee Report**

The Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions Committee (CB&R) has met three times since the 2010 Annual Meeting. The Committee reviewed and approved submitted Local and SUN District Council Bylaws and forwarded the approved Bylaws to the SUN Board of Directors (BOD). The Constitution, Bylaws and Position Statements were updated according to the decisions carried forward from the 2010 Annual Meeting and BOD. In January 2011, the Committee met to organize the presentation of the Amendments and Resolutions and Discussion papers for this year's Annual Meeting.

As Chair of the Committee, I would like to thank Sandy Keating (BOD Liaison), Pat Smith (Local 126), Eleanor Lenderbeck (Local 78), and Joan Miller (Local 113) for their continued dedication to SUN members through the work of the CB&R Committee. Once again, the Committee extends its gratitude to Nina Johnson (SUN Executive Assistant) for her support and assistance throughout the year.

*Darcy Lapointe (Chair), CB&R Committee*

## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee held three regular meetings and one teleconference. The Committee met once with Brad Tippet from RBC Dominion Securities to review SUN's investment strategy and to assure that SUN's investment policy remains relevant. The Committee is happy to report that SUN is in a very healthy financial position.

As of December 23rd, 2010, 13 SUN District Councils have applied for and received the 2010 grant and grant top-ups. The grant top-up is a result of Resolution #37 from the 2010 Annual Meeting, where the membership voted for an increase in the SDC grants.

The 2011 budget was finalized and approved in December 2010. Budgeting is a forecast of SUN's revenues and expenses to the best of our ability and past experience; we have based our assumptions on 8250 members. This year the decision was made to create the Convention Fund. The creation of this fund will help smooth out the budgeting process so that funding can be spread out over time rather than trying to capture all the funds in the budget in the year of the convention. We also renamed the Building Fund to the Capital Fund. This allows the flexibility to use the fund to cover other capital expenditures.

As a follow up of the complete write off of the Station 20 West \$250,000 loan, it must be noted that Station 20 West is not in the financial position to pay on the loan and will continue to be discounted with no recordable revenue.

The Finance Committee looks forward to reporting at the Annual Meeting where we will review the results of the 2010 Auditors Report, the 2011 Budget and the additional financial analysis and unaudited statements that are included in the Financial Report.

*Tracy M. Zambory (Chair), Rosalee Longmoore, Mark Henderson, Tess Gieg, Donna Trainor (Ex-officio)*

## **Nominations Committee**

The Nominations Committee met on several occasions since the 2010 Annual Meeting to refine and administer SUN's election process. Through the 2011 Call for Nominations, a number of positions were filled by acclamation, leaving only a few remaining positions to be filled through the voting process. Ballots for these positions were sent to SUN members in February, with the winners being announced on the last day of Annual Meeting.

A Call for Nominations and elections for the positions that are currently vacant, will take place during the Annual Meeting. The vacant positions are:

- Program Committee - 4 more to be elected
- Nominations Committee - 1 more to be elected
- Provincial Negotiations Committee - 1 to be elected for each of the following:
  - Saskatoon Base Hospital
  - Home Care
  - Member from the North
  - Integrated Facilities
  - Public Health

*Jan McKerlie (Chair), Mary Ann Ardell & Garth Wright*

The SUN Board of Directors would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the staff that carries out the day-to-day business of SUN.

The dedicated staff at SUN are...

## **Executive Team**

Donna Trainor, Executive Director

Kelly Miner, Director, Labour Relations

Lawrence LeMoal, Director, Patients and Families First & Government Relations

## **SUN Officers**

Amber Alexce, Research & Policy Analyst Officer

Nick Bonokoski, Employment Relations

Colin Byas, Employment Relations

Gwen Curtis, Professional Practice Officer

Donna Driediger, Employment Relations

Bev Duncan, Professional Practice Officer

Joan Ennis-Schmidt, Employment Relations

Derron Hoover, Employment Relations

Melanie Kenny, Employment Relations

Don MacDonld, Employment Relations

Judy McKenzie, Employment Relations (Casual)

Jan Murdock, Employment Relations/Nursing Advisory

Ronni Nordal, SUN Lawyer

Lindsay Pickett, Employment Relations

Marg Romanow, Pension & Benefits Officer

Carrie Simpson, Nursing Advisory

Jean Sinclair, Education Officer

Erin Thomsen, Communications Officer

Carl Veistrup, Employment Relations

Margot Wallace, Employment Relations

Norma Wallace, OH&S Officer

## **Executive Assistants**

Maylyn Bast

Rhonda Bennett

Gayle Freeman

Nina Johnson

## **Accounting**

Lorna Bingaman

Dawn Veilleux

Sandy Verhelst

## **Office Assistants**

Lori Binfet

Judy Desjarlais

Deborah Graham

Cheryl Krett

Linda Lappa

Kathe Lerner

Lois Mierau

Carol Mullaney

Eva Pavlovic

Melanie Popovici

Janelle Ruhr

Joan Schneider

Gail Wolbaum

## **Information Technology Systems**

Ibn Dionisio

Ellen McClughan



**Regina Office**

2330 2nd Avenue  
Regina, SK S4R 1A6  
(P) 306.525.1666  
(TF) 800.667.7060  
(F) 306.522.4612  
(E) [regina@sun-nurses.sk.ca](mailto:regina@sun-nurses.sk.ca)



**Saskatoon Office**

204-440 2nd Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 2C3  
(P) 306.665.2100  
(TF) 800.667.3294  
(F) 306.665.9755  
(E) [saskatoon@sun-nurses.sk.ca](mailto:saskatoon@sun-nurses.sk.ca)

[www.sun-nurses.sk.ca](http://www.sun-nurses.sk.ca)  
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