

# 1999 Strike Diary

## **April 1 Negotiations continuing-slow and minor progress**

"We will remain firm about member's desire for salary increase."

### SUN Hotline Message

*This is a hotline message **Friday, April 1, 1999** from Rosalee Longmoore at Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. I apologize for technical problems yesterday, a new message was put on but did not replace the old one.*

*Bargaining continued yesterday, until 10:00 p.m. Slow and minor movement is being made on non-monetary issues. We have not responded to employer monetary proposal and will remain firm about member's desire for salary increase.*

*We appreciate your support. Stay strong with us. Please share this information with your co-workers.*

## **April 3 Bargaining continued until 10:00 p.m. last night**

"We are continuing to make slow progress on monetary items."

### SUN Hotline Message

*Hotline Update **April 3, 1999**, from Rosalee Longmoore at Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Bargaining continued until 10:00 p.m. last night. We are continuing to make slow progress on non-monetary items.*

*Messages of support that have been sent over the past few days are greatly appreciated. We remain strong – have a Happy Easter and call for daily updates. Please share this information with your co-workers.*

## **April 4 "Bargaining continued through facilitator all day yesterday and will resume this morning."**

### SUN Hotline Message

*This is a hotline update for **Sunday, April 4, 1999.***

*Bargaining continued through the facilitator all day yesterday and is scheduled to resume this morning. Slow progress continues to be made on non-monetary articles.*

*Messages of support and food delivered yesterday were greatly appreciated.*

*We anticipate a long, hard day of bargaining today.*

*Hang in there – we need your support.*

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### **April 5 "Bargaining resumes this morning. Strike Steering Committee to return to Regina today."**

#### SUN Hotline Message

*Hotline update **April 5, 1999**, from Rosalee Longmoore at Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.*

*Bargaining continued until almost ten o'clock last evening. A few non-monetary articles have been agreed to. Much of the afternoon was spent on the Hours of Work article. There remain several areas in this article where we have significant differences – overtime and organizing overtime work in home care, to name two of them. Bargaining resumes this morning. The Strike Steering Committee will return to Regina today. Please share this information with your co-workers and call daily to keep informed.*

### **"SUN served strike notice at 8 p.m. tonight.**

*Little progress was made at the bargaining table this weekend. SAHO continues to refuse to deal with work load and nursing practise issues in any meaningful way, let alone deal with money issues."*

#### SUN TalkMail Message

*This is a TalkMail Message from Rosalee Longmoore of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses for April 5, 1999, at 8 p.m.*

*Little progress was made at the bargaining table this weekend. SAHO continues to refuse to deal with work load and nursing practise issues in any meaningful way, let alone deal with money issues.*

*SUN served strike notice at 8 p.m. tonight.*

*SAHO will be advised of the ESS plan at 9:00 p.m. April 5, 1999.*

*Your Local or SDC needs to advise your employer of the contact people for Essential Services.*

*Local presidents should institute your phone fan-outs this evening or tomorrow morning and advise members of the notice being served.*

*In order to ensure all local presidents have received this message, a check-back system is in place. If you are the local president, please contact your SDC chairperson to let her know you received this message.*

*If unable to get hold of your SDC chairperson pls call either SUN office or your Region Rep by cell phone.*

*Once again, SUN has served strike notice and Locals will be advised in advance of taking any job action*

### **Nurses serve strike notice**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) served strike notice to the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) tonight, legally permitting nurses to initiate job action (which may include a withdrawal of nursing services) as early as 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7, 1999.

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According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, *"After months of negotiations, SAHO and the government have offered nothing that would significantly relieve the enormous pressure nurses are under because of the nursing shortage. Nurses have been extremely patient, but they are saying we can't go on like this."*

SUN News Release, April 5

Monday, April 5, 1999

### **Nurses serve strike notice**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) served strike notice to the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) tonight, legally permitting nurses to initiate job action (which may include a withdrawal of nursing services) as early as 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7, 1999.

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, ***"After months of negotiations, SAHO and the government have offered nothing that would significantly relieve the enormous pressure nurses are under because of the nursing shortage. Nurses have been extremely patient, but they are saying we can't go on like this."***

SUN says that nurses will be available to provide essential services as required. SUN's collective agreement expired on March 31, 1999.

Negotiations have been continuing since January. SUN represents approximately 8,400 nurses in long term care, home care, acute care, public health and community health.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

Rosalee Longmoore will be available for interviews after 8:15 p.m. tonight at the Sands Hotel in Regina.

### **SUN strike notice**

"Please be advised that effective today, SUN has given the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations and the Minister of Labour notice of intent to strike. Job action could commence as early as Wednesday, April 7, 1999, at 2000 hours. During any strike action, SUN will undertake to provide essential services as developed by the membership on a facility or agency basis. The Employer will be notified in advance of such plans.

As you have probably heard, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses also received threats of back to work legislation and a legislated agreement from the Minister of Health even before we gave strike notice. We are very concerned that such a threat would be given to a union in this province. We will be counting on your support in the days to come to ensure collective bargaining continues to be a right for workers in this province."



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SUN Strike Notice to Trade Unions.

**TO:** All Trade Unions in Saskatchewan  
**c.c.** Barb Byers, President Saskatchewan Federation of Labour  
SUN District Council Chairpersons  
**FROM:** Rosalee Longmoore, President,  
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.

**DATE:** April 5, 1999

**SUBJECT: SUN STRIKE NOTICE**

Please be advised that effective today, SUN has given the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations and the Minister of Labour notice of intent to strike. Job action could commence as early as Wednesday, April 7, 1999, at 2000 hours. During any strike action, SUN will undertake to provide essential services as developed by the membership on a facility or agency basis. The Employer will be notified in advance of such plans.

As you have probably heard, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses also received threats of back to work legislation and a legislated agreement from the Minister of Health even before we gave strike notice. We are very concerned that such a threat would be given to a union in this province. We will be counting on your support in the days to come to ensure collective bargaining continues to be a right for workers in this province. When SUN members undertake strike action, we would ask for your support in the following ways;

Communicating with your members of impending SUN strike action;

Requesting and ensuring your members support the SUN strike by not doing SUN bargaining unit work;

Reporting on what is happening in strike facilities to the Local executive;

Reporting "scabs" who work during the strike to the picket captains or Local executive;

Local executives to contact SUN locals to offer support in a fashion requested by the SUN locals in their community;

Picketing with SUN members during lunch hour or days off;

If your union members teach or provide students with experiences in striking facilities or agencies, that you refrain from taking students into the striking facility or agency;

If legislation is enacted to force striking workers back to their jobs we may be asking for further support from you.

At this time, it is not an expectation of SUN that other Union's membership honour the picket line by not crossing the picket line to do their own non-SUN bargaining unit work.

SUN members may also occupy a position within another Union's bargaining unit. We have advised locals to tell those members that they will not be prevented from crossing the picket line to do their non-SUN scheduled shifts. However, those members must not do SUN bargaining unit work and we have asked that they not pick up additional casual shifts in the other bargaining unit. We have asked that if there is a picket line, that they identify themselves to the picket captain, identify the reason for

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going into the facility or agency and request a picket pass which must be returned upon exiting the facility.

If you have any questions or information, please do not hesitate to contact the SUN offices at 525-1666 (Regina SUN office) or 665-2100 (Saskatoon SUN office).

We look forward to your support. Solidarity forever!

"A rally for all SUN members is being planned for Thursday afternoon, April 8 in Regina. Buses are being arranged throughout the province at various sites to bring members to Regina and return them home later that day. The list of the tentative routes is attached. Local Presidents may be asking you for this information. It may not be possible to have as many buses as we would like, so seats will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Locals that are about 100 kilometers or more from a bus pick-up location can submit a claim for mileage if they are car pooling.

Thanks for your help. By working together we can fight for our right to collective bargaining, our right to strike in this province and our right to improved working conditions and benefits."

SUN Notice to SDC re: Strike Notice and Rally

**To:** SUN District Council Chairpersons

**From:** SUN Provincial Strike Steering Committee

**Date:** April 5, 1999

**Re: Strike Notice and Rally**

SUN served SAHO with Strike Notice this evening, Monday April 5, 1999 at 8:00 pm. SUN members could be on strike as early as Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m.

A TalkMail message has been sent out to the Local contact people. It is important that each and every Local receives the TalkMail message. Your assistance in confirming that each Local in your District has received the message would be appreciated. Please find attached a checklist for your District. When a Local President calls to confirm they received the TalkMail message regarding strike notice, please check them off your list. If a Local has not checked in with you, please try to contact them and alert them to the TalkMail message.

Please fax the checklist to the Regina or Saskatoon office as specified and by the time noted on the checklist. Office staff will then try to contact those Locals who have not checked in.

In the event you are not available to the Local Presidents they will be directed to call their Region Rep on their cell phones or call the SUN office directly.

**RALLY:** A Rally for all SUN members is being planned for Thursday afternoon, April 8 in Regina. Buses are being arranged throughout the province at various sites to bring members to Regina and return them home later that day. The list of the tentative routes is attached. Local

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Presidents may be asking you for this information. It may not be possible to have as many buses as we would like, so seats will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Locals that are about 100 kilometers or more from a bus pick-up location can submit a claim for mileage if they are car pooling.

Thanks for your help. By working together we can fight for our right to collective bargaining, our right to strike in this province and our right to improved working conditions and benefits.

### **April 6**

"SUN served strike notice last night, April 5th at 8 p.m. to SAHO. SUN gave SAHO the essential services plans for the districts and SUN explained that requests for essential services must go to the Local Essential Services contact person."

SUN Hotline Message, April 6, 1999 11:30 a.m.

*This is an update for the Hotline message at 11:30 a.m. April 6, 1999. SUN served strike notice last night, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. to SAHO. SUN gave SAHO the essential services plans for the districts and SUN explained that requests for essential services must go to the Local essential services contact person. Locals will now advise their employer of the process of contacting the Local or SUN District Council reps for essential services in the event job action occurs.*

*The earliest SUN can take job action is Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. This is notice only and does mean a walkout at this point. Continue to work your shifts as scheduled until you hear from your Local or the Union of job action. You will be advised of further action through the Hotline as well as your Local phone fan out. Today SUN and SAHO are continuing to bargain with the assistance of the facilitator.*

*On Thursday April 8, 1999 there will be a rally in Regina to support bargaining and to give a message to the government that we want negotiations and not legislation. The rally will be held at the Centre of the Arts in Regina at 2 p.m. Buses are being arranged and members are also encouraged to car pool. If you are interested in riding a bus to the rally please call your Local President as soon as possible. The Local President will then call the Saskatoon SUN office by noon Wednesday with the number of members from your Local.*

*Thanks for calling the Hotline and please check the Hotline for further updates.*

"Today at 4:30 p.m. Rosalee received an invitation from Roy Romanow to attend a meeting with Brian Rourke, the SAHO Board Chairperson and the Premier in his office at 9 a.m. tomorrow April 7th."

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See SUN TalkMail Message April 6, 1999 9:00 p.m.

*This is a TalkMail message for Tuesday, April 6, at 9:30 P.M. Rosalee Longmoore asked me to update this message for you. As you probably heard, today at 4:30 p.m. Rosalee received an invitation from Roy Romanow to attend a meeting with Brian Rourke, the SAHO Board Chairperson and the Premiere in his office at 9 a.m. tomorrow April 7<sup>th</sup>. SUN has decided that we will attend this meeting. You will be updated later tomorrow regarding the outcome of this meeting. Bargaining has continued today. Some progress was made regarding a number of articles. Of note is that we now have 5 weeks vacation after 15 years and 6 weeks after 25 years. There will be a rally on Thursday April 8 at 2 p.m. in Regina at the Centre of the Arts. Bus routes are available from your SUN District Council Chairperson. We know this is short notice but we urge all locals to do a phone fan out to obtain numbers of members wanting to take a bus. Local Presidents need to call the Saskatoon office with their Local numbers as soon as possible. We need to give the government the message that we want negotiations not legislation. The strike notice remains in effect. This is notice only and does not mean a walkout at this point. Continue to work your shifts as scheduled until you hear from your Local or Union regarding job action. Please share this information with other SUN members and call back to get updates tomorrow.*

Premier Roy Romanow made the following statement today..... "For my part, I am going into the meeting with two objectives in mind. First, I hope to achieve agreement in outline on a fair salary settlement in line with agreements signed by every other public sector union in Saskatchewan. Second, I hope the two parties will agree to pursue negotiations over non-monetary issues in a reasonable manner, or to agree to refer non-monetary issues to a conciliator."

See Executive Council News Release 99-272

**Apr 07, 1999**

**Executive Council 99 - 272**

**PREMIER ROMANOW OFFERS TO MEET WITH SUN, SAHO**

Premier Roy Romanow made the following statement today (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY):

I want to make a statement today regarding labour negotiations in the health sector.

First, I want to report that good progress is being made in negotiations with the majority of the health care unions currently in bargaining.

CUPE



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SAHO reached a tentative agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Both CUPE and SAHO are undertaking their ratification. And we are hoping to receive the results in the next two weeks.

CUPE represents 12,000 health care workers, who are critical to the health system.

This agreement is fair to CUPE members and fair to taxpayers.

### SEIU

I'm also informed that SAHO is making good progress in discussions with the SEIU, which represents 9,000 health care workers, also critical to the health system.

We believe SAHO is on track to a tentative agreement that is fair to SEIU members and fair to taxpayers.

### SGEU

Negotiations with the Saskatchewan Government Employees Union in the health sector are also on track and we are optimistic SAHO will arrive at a fair agreement with them as well.

All of these agreements are within the seven per cent mandate, and all include additional adjustments to address Dorsey and pay equity issues.

### SUN

I very much regret to report that similar progress is not being made with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.

SUN is demanding a 22 per cent wage increase.

They have repeatedly emphasized that the 22 per cent raise they are demanding is their key issue.

For example, On January 5, 1999, Ms. Longmoore told CBC Radio that "wages and benefits for nurses across the province tops her list." She said: "We have some members that are earning \$9,000 annual salary more than other SUN members, and we are asking that all SUN members be paid at that higher salary."

In pursuit of this 22 per cent wage demand, SUN has put SAHO and the Minister of Health on notice that they plan to begin disrupting the health system with strike action, within the next 48 hours.



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Health Boards have told us very clearly that arrangements with SUN for essential services are not adequate.

For example, the Regina Health District reported in a press release today: "a walkout would put the safety of its patients, residents and clients at risk." They continued: "The essential services proposal from the union is inadequate. It would not be possible for the Regina Health District to handle safely all those who need our care."

Therefore, in all the circumstances, the government has no choice but to act in the public interest and to ensure health services are not disrupted.

SUN's request for 22 per cent is too much.

SUN is asking for a wage increase that would be unfair to other health care workers, to other public sector workers who have already settled or are in progress and to the taxpayers of this province.

Forty cents out of every dollar in the provincial budget goes to health care. We are doing everything we can to improve health services.

But we can't afford 22 per cent wage increases.

I have therefore written today to the President of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Ms. Rosalee Longmoore, and to the Chair of the Saskatchewan Organization of Health Organizations, Mr. Brian Rourke.

I have invited these two individuals to meet with me tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. to discuss this situation.

I'll listen carefully to everything and anything either side has to say.

For my part, I am going into the meeting with two objectives in mind.

First, I hope to achieve agreement in outline on a fair salary settlement, in line with agreements signed by every other public sector union in Saskatchewan.

Second, I hope the two parties will agree to pursue negotiations over non-monetary issues in a reasonable manner, or to agree to refer non-monetary issues to a conciliator.

## 1999 Strike Diary

If we cannot find common ground on these matters in a timely fashion, or if health care is disrupted by SUN in pursuit of their 22 per cent pay demand, then the government will have more to say, very shortly thereafter.

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For more information, contact:

Anna Arneson  
Media Services  
Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-0850

### **April 7**

"Thank you to all SUN members for remaining poised, ready for job action while bargaining continues and political interference abounds. We realize this is very difficult for you, but we are attempting to reach the goals set to us by the membership that included avoiding job action if at all possible.

Unfortunately we can no longer avoid job action. This became clear at the meeting held today with Roy Romanow and Brian Rourke from SAHO.

SUN will begin a province-wide walkout at 0700 Thursday, April 8th."

### **See SUN TalkMail Message, April 7, 1999 2300**

*This is a SUN TalkMail message for April 7, 1999 at 2300. This is Rosalee speaking.*

*Thank you to all SUN members for remaining poised, ready for job action while bargaining continues and political interference abounds. We realize this is very difficult for you, but we are attempting to reach the goals set to us by the membership that included avoiding job action if at all possible.*

*Unfortunately we can no longer avoid job action. This became clear at the meeting held today with Roy Romanow and Brian Rourke from SAHO. The Union has attempted to discuss our issues with the Premier*

*but \_\_\_\_\_ (exact text of this part of the message not available)*

*SUN will begin a province-wide walkout at 0700 Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. This has not given Locals as much notice as we had planned, but we are confident that Locals are ready to go out.*

*This message must be communicated to all your Local members immediately. Institute your phone fanouts now. To ensure all Local Presidents have received this message, a check-back system is in place. If you are the Local President, please contact your SUN District Council Chairperson to let her or him know you received this message. If you are unable to reach the SDC Chairperson please call either the SUN office or your Region Rep by cell phone.*

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*When you institute your phone fanouts please include the Rally information. The Rally will commence at 2 p.m. at the Centre of the Arts in Regina on Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. Wear your walking shoes as we will be walking to the legislature. All members are encouraged to attend. Spaces on the buses are still available. Phone your Local President or the Saskatoon office today to reserve a seat on the bus. Essential services must be maintained during the rally.*

*By standing together as one voice we will be heard around this province and around Canada. Our right to collective bargaining, our right to strike and our right to improved working conditions and wages are on the line. Once again - job action will commence at 0700 hours, Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. All SUN members will report-off to their out-of-scope management and exit the workplace at 0700 hours. Essential service plans are to be instituted for 0700 hours Thursday. If you are locked out of your agency or your facility is closed prior to 0700 hours Thursday, contact the SUN office immediately.*

*Please contact you Region Rep, the SUN office or your SUN District Council Chairperson with questions or problems.*

### **April 8 Nurses commence strike action**

"The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) commenced province-wide strike action at 0700 this morning, after yesterday's last minute discussions with Premier Romanow and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) failed to result in an agreement.

*According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, "Unfortunately, after months of negotiations, the Premier and SAHO have still not offered nurses an agreement that would retain and attract nurses to the province. They are still acting as if there is no nursing shortage, despite the reality that nurses across the province have been working forced overtime for months and hospital beds are still closed. There are 8,400 frustrated, stressed, and overworked nurses in this province who are depending on these negotiations to provide some relief, some hope for the future."*

See SUN News Release, April 8, 1999

Thursday, April 08, 1999

### **Nurses commence strike action**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) commenced province-wide strike action at 0700 this morning, after yesterday's last minute discussions with Premier Romanow and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) failed to result in an agreement.

*According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, "**Unfortunately, after months of negotiations, the Premier and SAHO have still not offered nurses an agreement that would retain and attract nurses to the province. They are still acting as if there is no nursing***

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***shortage, despite the reality that nurses across the province have been working forced overtime for months and hospital beds are still closed. There are 8,400 frustrated, stressed, and overworked nurses in this province who are depending on these negotiations to provide some relief, some hope for the future.***

SUN says that nurses are providing essential services. SUN's collective agreement expired on March 31, 1999. Negotiations have been continuing since January. SUN represents approximately 8,400 nurses in long term care, home care, acute care, public health and community health.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

### **Bill to be presented to end nurses' union dispute**

Premier Roy Romanow issued the following statement this morning: "I must report, with deep regret and disappointment, that the Government of Saskatchewan will introduce legislation today to end the nurses' union dispute and to restore normal health services.

Let me begin by expressing my astonishment – indeed my incredulity – that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses would endanger the safety of patients with the action they have taken today, in pursuit of a 22 per cent increase."

See Executive Council News Release 99 – 277 Apr 08, 1999

**Apr 08, 1999**

**Executive Council 99 - 277**

### **BILL TO BE PRESENTED TO END NURSES' UNION DISPUTE**

Premier Roy Romanow issued the following statement this morning:

I must report, with deep regret and disappointment, that the Government of Saskatchewan will introduce legislation today to end the nurses' union dispute and to restore normal health services.

Let me begin by expressing my astonishment -- indeed my incredulity -- that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses would endanger the safety of patients with the action they have taken today, in pursuit of a 22 per cent increase.

I am advised by the Department of Health that SUN's province-wide strike could leave patients at serious risk. Health Boards have advised the government in writing that safety cannot be assured for any length of time.

Today's action is a remarkable and deeply disappointing act by SUN.

Two days ago, when issuing strike notice, SUN claimed that negotiations with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations

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were proceeding too slowly.

In consequence the Government of Saskatchewan stepped into the talks.

SUN participated in only one day of discussions with us.

Yesterday, SUN told me in all apparent sincerity that they believed more progress had been made during our one day of direct talks than had been achieved in the preceding weeks of negotiations at the table. We agreed to resume our talks this morning.

Unfortunately, it would appear that the SUN strike committee is determined to disrupt health care services, in pursuit of a 22 per cent wage demand that is not fair to other health workers, not fair to other public servants, and not fair to taxpayers.

In the circumstances, the government has no alternative but to act. The government will seek unanimous agreement today to proceed to all stages of a bill ending this dispute.

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For more information, contact:

Anna Arneson  
Media Services  
Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-0850

### **See Bill 23 Resumption of Services (SUN-Nurses) Act in Appendix A**

#### **April 8 at 2:45 p.m.**

This is a message from SUN. Legislation was passed this afternoon ordering nurses to return to work.

"It was a proud day when 2,000 nurses met in Regina and decided to continue strike action and to continue to press for better working conditions and wages."

See SUN TalkMail Message, April 8, 1999 2:45 p.m.

*This is a TalkMail message from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. It was a proud day in Regina tonight when 2,000 nurses met in Regina and decided to continue strike action and to continue to press for better working conditions and wages. We will continue to assess the situation on a day-by-day basis.*

## 1999 Strike Diary

*SUN will pay any fines which are assessed, with the help of others, against individual nurses.*

*Contact your Region Rep or a SUN office for information and assistance.*

*Thank you.*

### **April 9**

#### **Premier Romanow speaks to SUN actions**

Premier Roy Romanow made the following statement today:

*"I want to speak about four matters today. First, I want to speak about patient care. Second, I want to direct a few words to our nurses. Third, I want to speak about the rule of law. And fourth, I want to speak about how we got here, and where we go next."*

See Executive Council News Release 99 – 278 Apr 09, 1999

Apr 09, 1999

Executive Council 99 - 278

#### **PREMIER ROMANOW SPEAKS TO SUN ACTIONS**

Premier Roy Romanow made the following statement today (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY):

I want to speak about four matters today.

First, I want to speak about patient care.

Second, I want to direct a few words to our nurses.

Third, I want to speak about the rule of law.

And fourth, I want to speak about how we got here, and where we go next.

Let me begin by speaking about patient care.

I begin by expressing my profound thanks and gratitude not only mine, but of the people of Saskatchewan, to the doctors, the managers the many workers who are on the job today maintaining health services under very difficult circumstances. These are truly heroes.

Health care is the most important public service our government provides. And medicare is the proudest achievement of our province, and of the party I have the privilege to lead.

Our government is committed to maintaining and improving health care services.

Better health care is the government's biggest priority. That's why we increased the health budget by \$195 million this year. That's why

## *1999 Strike Diary*

we've been working to improve health services for eight years.

And that's why we intervened in this dispute. Our government acted to protect patient services after the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses issued a strike notice and executed it, threatening our health system over a demand for a 22 per cent increase.

Again, I want to express my profound thanks to the managers, doctors and workers who are on the job today, maintaining health care services. But it is obvious they can't replace the 8,400 nurses who belong to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses for any length of time.

Health Boards have been clear with us that patient care is at risk.

So to my second subject.

I'd like to direct a few words to our nurses.

Your union has walked away from the best contract offer SUN has ever received from the employer, and has provoked a strike over a 22 per cent increase.

We understand the priceless value of the work that nurses do and that all health care workers do.

But 22 per cent is too much.

We simply can't afford it.

And it's not fair to other public sector workers who have settled contracts for what we can afford.

I know you want to be with your patients today. I urge you not pursue this dispute at the expense of your patients. I urge you to respect the law and to return to work.

Third, let me speak about the law.

When this union refuses to obey the law, they are saying that their 22 per cent demand is more vital and more important than the needs of the people, as expressed in validly enacted laws.

By defying the law, the fundamental principles of a civilized and democratic society are violated.

Laws are vital to our collective well-being.



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When they are rejected because some feel they deserve higher salaries or because they feel their demands were not fully met, we no longer have a system of law, and we no longer have a system of democracy.

That is why, like every concerned citizen, I am appalled by the actions being taken, and the choices being made.

A grave disservice is being done to patients, to the union's own members, and to the public interest in Saskatchewan.

Fourth, let me conclude by briefly reviewing how we got here, and what happens now.

The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) and SUN have been engaged in one of the most complex negotiations ever undertaken in the health field.

Nine collective agreements were being merged into one.

And SAHO was dealing with a very tough 22 per cent demand from the union.

In many ways, negotiations had barely begun. The Canadian Union of Public Employees spent more than a year after their contract expired negotiating their current tentative agreement.

SUN negotiated with SAHO for less than two months

Their contract expired less than two weeks ago.

On Monday night, SUN issued strike notice, thereby threatening patient care unless the employer agreed to their 22 per cent demand.

On Tuesday, I invited SUN and SAHO to meet with me to see if we could find common ground and get negotiations back on track.

On Wednesday, I met with the President of SUN and the Chair of SAHO for more than eleven hours.

I listened carefully to what both sides had to say. Everything I heard told me that negotiations were deadlocked.

I outlined a series of ideas that could have formed the basis of an agreement.

## *1999 Strike Diary*

Our suggestions focused on improving the workplace, so that patient care would be improved.

These included:

Joint activities to recruit and retain more nurses.  
More permanent, rather than part-time or casual, jobs for nurses.

Joint work on nursing practices.  
Stronger seniority provisions.  
Pay equity.

These ideas amount to the best contract proposals on workplace issues that SUN has ever received.

These ideas address key workplace issues that nurses have been working towards for a decade.

If the issue was quality of care; if the issue was improving the workplace for nurses then SUN would have accepted these proposals and made them the basis for an agreement.

As testimony to what I've said, the two parties agreed to take our ideas back to their respective committees, and we agreed to meet again Thursday morning.

Wednesday night, SUN announced a province-wide walkout, and reiterated their 22 per cent demand.

Health Boards informed the government that patient care was at risk. In consequence the government was left with no choice but introduce legislation ending the dispute.

Yesterday, the Legislature adopted a bill which extended existing agreements for three years, provided for a fair seven per cent pay hike, and committed the two parties to return to the table, to work on a new collective agreement.

Yesterday, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses chose to continue to pursue their 22 per cent demand. They are now conducting an illegal strike, which continues to put patients at risk.

They have chosen to disregard the laws of this province a very serious matter.

That's where we've been. What now?

First, I again urge nurses to return to caring for their

## 1999 Strike Diary

patients.

Second, I am informed that counsel for SAHO will appear in the Court of Queen's Bench as soon as possible to seek an injunction ending this continuing breach of the law.

The consequences of a continuing breach of the law will become increasingly serious thereafter.

I still hope we can avoid all of this, and that nurses will work with us to return the health system to normal as soon as possible.

Finally, I reiterate the commitments I made at our meeting on Wednesday, and which Minister Atkinson confirmed last night.

Once the Health System is back to normal, we will work with nurses to improve their jobs, to address the issues in the workplace, and to help them improve patient care a commitment we have made to all health care workers and to the people of Saskatchewan.

30 -

For more information, contact:

Anna Arneson  
Media Services  
Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-0850

"SAHO has now made an application to reduce the time limit so that they may make an application for an injunction in the next day or so. Candle vigils are going on tonight in North Battleford, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina."

See SUN Hotline message April 9, 1999 at 5:15pm.

*This is a SUN Hotline message for April 9, 1999 at 5:15pm. SAHO has now made an application to reduce the time limit so that they may make an application for an injunction in the next day or so. There has not been an actual application for an injunction. We believe that SAHO will have to serve the union with notice and a hearing will then be set in the next day or so. We'll keep you posted at to the date and time of that event.*

*Candle vigils are going on tonight in North Battle, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.*

*Strong messages from support from all over the country were received and read.*

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*We'll keep you posted and updated on messages of support and will be updating you later on any further proceedings on the injunction.*

### **April 10**

#### **Nurses say intimidation is destructive**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) President Rosalee Longmoore told reporters outside the courthouse today in Regina that nurses across the province are outraged by the latest attempt to force them back to work without a negotiated collective agreement. The Court of Queen's Bench heard an application by the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) for an injunction to force nurses back to work. The judge indicated he would issue a written decision by Monday at 10:00 a.m.

See SUN News Release Saturday, April 10, 1999

#### **Nurses say intimidation is destructive**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) President Rosalee Longmoore told reporters outside the courthouse today in Regina that nurses across the province are outraged by the latest attempt to force them back to work without a negotiated collective agreement. The Court of Queen's Bench heard an application by the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) for an injunction to force nurses back to work. The judge indicated he would issue a written decision by Monday at 10:00 a.m. According to Longmoore, ***"Nurses are outraged by this new threat of fines and jail terms. Nurses have increased essential services to relieve exhausted nurse managers and physicians. We are committed to providing whatever essential services are required to ensure that patient safety is not jeopardized. But, nurses on essential services teams tell me that they are sitting and waiting to provide essential services, and health districts are transferring patients without even asking nurses to come in and provide care. In some cases, these transfers are just grandstanding for the media to try to alarm the public, and support their court case."***

The SUN president says that nurses tell her they will return to work when a collective agreement is negotiated. The union also says many nurses have reported that they will either resign or revert to casual status rather than submit to threats of fines and imprisonment. ***"Premier Romanow should consider that he may be able to pass laws forcing nurses back to work, but he can't force nurses to stay in nursing. The actions of the Premier and SAHO will make recruitment of nurses to Saskatchewan impossible. Imagine the effect this intimidation will have on the nursing shortage! Nurses are professionals, we're not criminals and we're not slaves."***

SUN's collective agreement expired on March 31, 1999. Negotiations have been continuing since January. SUN represents approximately 8,400 nurses in long term care, home care, acute care, public health and community health.

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### **April 11 Noon**

"We have not yet received any indication from the courts about an injunction. In anticipation of either a success to celebrate, or an injunction to protest we are planning a rally for Monday, at 2:00 p.m. at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in Regina."

See SUN Talkmail message April 11, 1999 at noon

*This is Rosalee Longmoore with a SUN talk mail message. As you probably know, we have not yet received any indication from the courts about an injunction.*

*In anticipation of either a success to celebrate, or an injunction to protest we are planning a rally for Monday, at 2:00 p.m. at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in Regina. Buses and routes are currently being organized and more information will be forwarded as soon as possible. If an injunction is issued SUN members can together decide our next course of action. Let's challenge ourselves and see if we can have even more SUN members and supporters rally to fight for free collective bargaining.*

*In the meantime stay strong and continue your excellent judgement regarding essential services.*

*Messages of support continue to pour in expressing solidarity with nurses. Representatives from the UNA, BCNU and others will be there tomorrow to rally with us.*

### **Nurses to rally Monday**

*The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) has scheduled a rally at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in Regina for Monday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. so that members can be advised of and respond to the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench concerning SAHO's application for an injunction to force nurses back to work. The judge has promised a written decision by Monday at 10:00 a.m. Attendance is expected to exceed last week's rally.*

See SUN Media Advisory Sunday, April 11, 1999

### **Nurses to rally Monday**

*The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) has scheduled a rally at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in Regina for Monday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. so that members can be advised of and respond to the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench concerning SAHO's application for an injunction to force nurses back to work. The judge has promised a written decision by Monday at 10:00 a.m. Attendance is expected to exceed last week's rally.*

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The rally is open to Media representatives for the first part of the agenda, and following an "in camera" session, Rosalee Longmoore will be available for interviews.

SUN will be holding a news conference at the SUN office in Regina as soon as possible after receiving a copy of the decision. Another advisory will be issued to confirm the time of the conference once the decision is released. SUN says that nurses remain available to provide essential services as required. SUN's collective agreement expired on March 31, 1999. Negotiations have been continuing since January. SUN represents approximately 8,400 nurse in long term care, home care, acute care, public health and community health.

### **Nurses remain determined**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) President Rosalee Longmoore says she will not order striking nurses back to work without a collective agreement in place that addresses nurses' concerns about safe staffing and other nursing practice issues. She was responding to news that Court of Queen's Bench Judge T. Zarzeczny has granted an injunction which directs SUN officers to urge nurses to comply with Bill 23. The legislation imposed a three-year agreement with a 7% wage increase and no resolution of nursing practice issues.

See SUN News Release Sunday, April 11, 1999

Sunday, April 11, 1999

### **SUN responds to court decision**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) has scheduled a news conference at the Regina SUN office for 7:00 p.m. on Sunday April 11 to respond to the Court of Queen's Bench decision concerning SAHO's application for an injunction.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

**For background only, contact Larry LeMoal, Communications ERO at 566-5572**

### **April 12 Minister appeals to nurses**

The following letter from Health Minister Pat Atkinson was delivered to Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore this afternoon:

Dear Ms Longmoore:

"I am writing to you today following the granting of an injunction to the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations. Please share the full contents of my letter with your bargaining committee, your executive, and any other decision-making body in your union as you decide what to do next. Today, we find ourselves in a situation in which nobody wins."

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See Health Minister's News Release 99 - 287 Apr 12, 1999

Apr 12, 1999  
Health 99 - 287

### **MINISTER APPEALS TO NURSES**

The following letter from Health Minister Pat Atkinson was delivered to Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore this afternoon:

11 April 1999

Ms Rosalee Longmoore  
President  
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses  
2nd Avenue  
Regina SK S4R 1A5

Dear Ms Longmoore:

I am writing to you today following the granting of an injunction to the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations. Please share the full contents of my letter with your bargaining committee, your executive, and any other decision-making body in your union as you decide what to do next.

Today, we find ourselves in a situation in which nobody wins.

I know that the decisions you and your membership have made were not easy ones.

Some patients have found themselves without the care of nurses. Some are being treated in strange surroundings far from home. Others are not receiving the full level of care that they would normally receive. Still others are having medical treatment delayed.

How did we come to this point?

The government that I am a part of must share a part of the blame. When we took office in 1991, we faced tremendous challenges. Simply put, Saskatchewan was on the verge of bankruptcy. As a government, our attention was focussed on dealing with this crisis.

This was absolutely necessary, and I am proud to have been a part of the government that dealt with these problems and issues.

However, while we were dealing with these vital issues, we made some mistakes.



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One mistake was being too busy to really listen, to really hear, all the legitimate concerns facing nurses and other health care workers. Some problems that should have been dealt with promptly were allowed to fester. For this, I apologize.

One beneficial effect of the events of the past few months is that we've heard you. We have heard nurses.

We heard you when Premier Romanow and I met with you and Ms. Crossman for 11 hours last week. At that meeting, we genuinely believed and still believe -- that we had put forward proposals that addressed many legitimate concerns of nurses.

When you began job action on Thursday, we were advised that the health system could not function for any length of time without the work of your members. As a result, we felt it necessary to introduce back-to-work legislation.

Some of the predictions of risk to patients have materialised. Other effects have been mitigated by the tireless work of managers, doctors and other health care providers. In addition, many SUN members have worked to provide essential services and we are thankful to SUN for cooperating with health districts in negotiating the provision of essential services.

But we still find ourselves in the same undesirable situation. Legislation has been passed, and is being defied. Some patients are not receiving the care they need. And, while this is going on, we cannot act upon the messages that we have heard from you over the last few weeks.

We can continue in our present course of action.

You, on one side, continuing to refuse to obey the law. Us, on the other side, witnessing the workings of the legal system, as it uses sanctions and penalties to enforce the law.

I know one thing in my soul. This course of action does nobody any good.

There is another way.

Let us return to what we began last Wednesday. Let us get back to resolving the issues facing nurses, and, together, to work to build a better health care system. A health care system where care providers are treated with dignity and respect.

In a confrontation of this nature, the hardest thing is to stop

## *1999 Strike Diary*

the escalating course of bitterness and recrimination. However, it is an absolutely necessary step. On behalf of our government, I am offering to take that step. I am asking you and your membership to take it as well.

I would like to make some commitments to you.

First, I want to assure you, both personally and on behalf of the government, that we will listen and act on the concerns of nurses and other health care providers. Never again will we allow ourselves to get too busy with other vital issues to fail to listen and to respond.

Second, I want to commit that the issues we discussed at our meeting last Wednesday will be addressed. I believe that our proposals will provide a good start at resolving the issues that your members face in the workplace. If there are other workplace issues that also need to be addressed, I promise you that they will be addressed quickly and effectively.

Finally, I want to advise you that I have asked SAHO to be available to begin bargaining the minute your union agrees to recommend that nurses return to work. SAHO has agreed to this request.

These are the steps towards reconciliation that I want to make. I am asking for a step from you as well.

I am asking that your members return to your workplaces to provide the nursing care so essential to the people of this province.

We have a long way to travel together before we can put the events of the past behind us completely. But someone once said that the longest journey begins with a single step. Let's take it today.

Sincerely yours,

Pat Atkinson

30 -

For more information, contact:

Anna Arneson  
Media Services

## 1999 Strike Diary

Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-0850  
Cell: 536-0551

### **April 13 Nurses won't go back without negotiated contract**

The misleading taxpayer funded political advertising regarding a supposed "best contract offer ever" with nurses has served only to infuriate nurses and the public. At best there were portions of the proposal which were an actual offer but other portions would actually have to be negotiated with SAHO – items which the previous 40 days of negotiations with SAHO were not agreed to by SAHO.

"We are glad to report that SUN members remain strong and committed across the province. Members are rallying together in Yorkton tonight and tomorrow members are meeting at the Royal University Hospital picket line at 10:00 a.m. in Saskatoon. We're sure other activities are taking place across the province as SUN members stand together in solidarity.

On the technical front, this afternoon SAHO brought an application before a judge to find the Union in contempt of court. They are seeking an order to have the union fined an unspecified amount. SAHO went before a judge to have the application fast-tracked. We are pleased the hearing will not occur until next Monday, so we will have adequate time to work with our lawyer to respond to the application."

### **See SUN Talkmail message April 13, 1999 5:45 p.m.**

*This is a talkmail message for Tuesday, April 13, at 5:45 p.m.  
Good afternoon everyone. We are glad to report that SUN members remain strong and committed across the province. Members are rallying together in Yorkton tonight and tomorrow members are meeting at the Royal University Hospital picket line at 10:00 am in Saskatoon. We're sure other activities are taking place across the province as SUN members stand together in solidarity.*

*On the technical front, this afternoon SAHO brought an application before a judge to find the Union in contempt of court. They are seeking an order to have the union fined an unspecified amount. SAHO went before a judge to have the application fast-tracked. We are pleased the hearing will not occur until next Monday, so we will have adequate time to work with our lawyer to respond to the application.*

*On the essential services front, some health districts have decided to close facilities despite essential services. This means you need to reassess your essential services based on redeployment of the out of scope staff to other facilities.*

*There has also been a request from members for information regarding ways to rebut the governments full page ads. A backgrounder sheet will be faxed to SUN district council chairs this evening for your use.*

## 1999 Strike Diary

*We are hopeful and committed to trying to reach a collective agreement and resolve all related matters over the next few days.  
Talk to you later! Remember to take care of yourselves and each other.  
Together we are one!*

### **April 14**

#### **Nurses' aid-public support from unusual sources**

**Barts Support Photo here**

### **April 15**

#### **SUN President extends peace offer**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore (SUN) is sending Health Minister Pat Atkinson a personal letter today proposing a solution to the 7-day-old nurses' strike. While Longmoore says she won't release copies of the letter until Minister Atkinson has had an opportunity to receive and review it, she hopes it could lead to a quick return to work by nurses, followed by a negotiated settlement.

See SUN News Release Thursday, April 15, 1999

Thursday, April 15, 1999

#### **SUN President extends peace offer**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore (SUN) is sending Health Minister Pat Atkinson a personal letter today proposing a solution to the 7-day-old nurses' strike. While Longmoore says she won't release copies of the letter until Minister Atkinson has had an opportunity to receive and review it, she hopes it could lead to a quick return to work by nurses, followed by a negotiated settlement.

According to Longmoore, ***"The government has said they won't negotiate unless nurses return to work. Nurses have said they won't return to work without an agreement, because they don't trust SAHO and the government to negotiate in good faith because of our experiences at the bargaining table, and because Bill 23 prevents real negotiations. In my letter to Minister Atkinson, I've indicated that I will personally ask nurses to return to work immediately if:***

***She provides a written commitment that the government will remove the impediments of Bill 23, and***

***We have a signed memorandum of understanding, acceptable to SUN, which provides a framework for negotiating an agreement that addresses pay equity and patient safety issues. If we reach agreement on the broad framework, the details of the collective agreement can be negotiated over the next several days.***

Longmoore admits that nurses are so angry about how they've been treated by SAHO and the government that she can't be sure that nurses

## 1999 Strike Diary

will return to work even if she urges them to do so. Longmoore says that the government has been misleading the public by saying they can't afford to give nurses a 22% wage increase. **"We didn't ask for 22% over one year. We proposed an increase of \$9026 over a three year term. It could be 7, 7 and 8, or some other combination. But a 7 % increase over three years won't solve the nursing shortage. The government can pay for some of that increase in this budget, some in 2000, and some in 2001. Let's get nurses back to work, so we can provide the care people require, and start seriously negotiating."**

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

**For background only, contact Larry LeMoal, Communications ERO at 566-5572**

### **SUN President sends letter to Minister of Health**

"Nurses are off the job because they can't go back to workplaces that have not been repaired. We need to resolve nursing practise issues, and we need to ensure we have adequate compensation packages to retain and recruit nurses to work in the province. The workplace problems may only be fixed if these issues are addressed."

See April 15 letter to Minister of Health

April 15, 1999  
Honourable Pat Atkinson,  
Minister of Health,  
Department of Health,  
3rd Floor, 3475 Albert Street,  
Regina, Saskatchewan.  
S4P OB3

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

I am writing today in response to your letter of April 11. Since that time, many events have occurred which have failed to resolve the differences between nurses, their employers and their government.

While we were encouraged in part, by the content of your letter when you indicated that *"some problems that should have been dealt with promptly were allowed to fester,"* we are subsequently distressed by government advertisements attacking the position of nurses and the continuing refusal of the employers and government to meet and seek resolutions on all of the issues in dispute including contents of the collective agreement, Bill 23, nurses' return to work and the court order regarding compliance with the legislation.

We are hopeful, given the contents of your correspondence, that you understand the reluctance of the Union and its members to believe that SAHO and the employers will address the members' issues quickly and effectively. For nearly a decade now, nurses have taken on faith that the employers and the government will hear us and act on our concerns. The

## *1999 Strike Diary*

strike action undertaken by nurses last week, and which has continued to date, is an expression of the frustration and anger compounded over years. Our experience over the last decade makes it difficult and unlikely that nurses will take on faith that their issues will be dealt with. After 40 days at the bargaining table, with all of those major issues outstanding, as well as many others, the view of the members is that SAHO and the employers, and by extension, the government, had no interest in addressing our problems.

The Union believes that the dispute between the government, the employers and the Union is not a contest. Rather, we believe we should be searching for solutions to our disagreements and we believe we should be doing so quickly in the interest of everyone concerned and the public. You indicated in your correspondence that both personally and on behalf of the government you will listen and act on the concerns of nurses. We are asking you to act now.

Nurses are off the job because they can't go back to workplaces that have not been repaired. We need to resolve nursing practise issues, and we need to ensure we have adequate compensation packages to retain and recruit nurses to work in the province. The workplace problems may only be fixed if these issues are addressed.

For these reasons, I want to tell you that I am personally prepared to ask SUN members to return to work if the government and the employers provide up-front, written commitments to meet the needs of nurses, to address workplace problems, compensation, some major rights provisions and a return to work agreement with no recrimination. Appropriate expedited collective bargaining processes would be initiated immediately. Part of that, of course, would be the necessary removal of the impediments of Bill 23.

We would urge you to consider our proposal. We would be prepared to meet and discuss this with you as soon as possible.

Yours truly,  
Rosalee Longmoore,  
President, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.  
C.C. D. Ball

### **How to really screw up handling a nurses' strike**

"Somewhere there's a book entitled 'How to really screw up handling a nurses strike.' Somehow the provincial cabinet got hold of this book and is now busy following it to the letter."

See Larry Haiven commentary April 15

Somewhere there's a book entitled 'How to really screw up handling a nurses strike.' Somehow the provincial cabinet got hold of this book and is now busy following it to the letter. Roy Romanow and the NDP in 1999? No, actually that witty quote is from an Edmonton journalist way back in 1988, when Alberta nurses defied a law banning health care strikes. The

## *1999 Strike Diary*

better part of a million dollars in fines could not force them back until they had an acceptable collective agreement.

Since then we've had no fewer than ten nurses' strikes across the country, three of them illegal, and governments still don't get it. Quebec nurses struck illegally in 1989 and docking their pay, loss of seniority and fines didn't get them back to work until they were ready to go.

The latest government to screw up is Roy Romanow's Saskatchewan NDP. These erstwhile "Friends of Labour" must have read the book from cover to cover because they just legislated the nurses' union back to work, threatening fines of up to tens of thousands of dollars a day and the nurses have refused to go back. The employers got a court injunction and the nurses still refuse to go back. The public is behind the nurses and with an election in the offing, everybody's watching the government wield a big stick but unable to use it without looking like a bully. How do you punish a bunch of lawbreakers who were peaceful citizens yesterday?

What's dumber is that the Saskatchewan government did what few others have done -- it also legislated the monetary terms of settlement, leaving the parties no way to negotiate out of the standoff.

The lesson governments haven't learned is that there's no quick fix in regulating strikes in the public sector, especially in what are known as essential services. You can't eliminate labour unrest and the causes behind it by legislating it away. And when it comes to nurses, well, there's no labour group that can better wrestle with government over protection of the public interest than nurses. They've been the main buffer softening the blow of health reform as hospitals close and patient acuity rises.

Tommy Douglas's 1944 CCF government was the first, by 20 years, to give public service workers the right to bargain and strike. In addition to believing it was the right thing, the wartime surge of labour militancy convinced Douglas that coercion would only screw the lid tighter on a pressure cooker and make the inevitable explosion all the more damaging. Canada has the highest level of strike activity among G7 countries. And we've achieved that with some of the severest legal restrictions on strikes in the world. Nobody can strike while a collective agreement is in effect. Whole swaths of public service workers don't have the right to strike at all. Others who do are legislated back to work the minute their strike has any impact. Up to recently Saskatchewan was the exception. And it seemed to work. Much as we may dislike public sector strikes, they're another one of those prices we pay for living in a modern, complicated industrial country - what we sometimes call a democracy.

For Commentary, this is Larry Haiven, in Saskatoon.

### **April 16**

#### **Update - SUN situation**

"In light of today's announcement by SUN that striking nurses will not return to work unless the union's wage demands are met, I enclose a chronological report on the SUN strike, You may wish to share this with your managers - it may be of some comfort to know the sequence of events."



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See SAHO chair memo to Health Districts

SAHO

Head Office

April 16, 1999

UPDATE - SUN SITUATION

To: Chairs & CEOs, Member Agencies

From: Brian Rourke, Chair

### **Re: HISTORY OF SUN STRIKE**

In light of today's announcement by SUN that striking nurses will not return to work unless the union's wage demands are met, I enclose a chronological report on the SUN strike. You may wish to share this with your managers - it may be of some comfort to know the sequence of events.

Last Wednesday, April 7, Arliss and I were invited to meet with Premier Romanow, Minister Atkinson, Rosalee Longmoore and Bev Crossman. At that meeting, issues were identified and it was felt that significant progress was being made. While I am unable to report what was on and what was not on the table prior to that date, SUN knew that the total financial package for CUPE was 11.6%, which would also be available to SUN. This would include the implementation of the Dorsey recommendations as it relates to their union.

At the meeting, it was proposed that following 90 days of collective bargaining the facilitator would arbitrate any issues still outstanding. SAHO indicated to both SUN and the Premier that we agreed with most of the ideas put forth, and would seriously consider the remaining few issues. There was also some movement with respect to some of the non-monetary issues. We were encouraged to make concessions we have resisted for years. The parties expressed a desire to speak to their negotiating teams and it was agreed that they be given an opportunity to do so. It was agreed in the interim that a Memorandum of Understanding would be prepared and available the next morning at 8:30 for the parties to consider.

As you are aware, SUN's response was strike action taken later that evening. This took us by surprise. We believed that good progress was being made at the bargaining table. Talks were adjourned for a few days due to the unavailability of the facilitator. Bargaining was progressing and issues were being settled right up to the day talks were adjourned.

As you have likely read in a newspaper advertisement recently placed by government, part of the discussion included a 56 million recruitment and retention fund to be jointly administered by SAHO, SUN and the Department of Health. As well, pay equity was to be implemented beginning in 2001, and the government guaranteed that a minimum of \$20 million would be available, (No other union had a guaranteed minimum.) There were also commitments to create more permanent full-time jobs and improve overtime and sick leave rules. Throughout this process, it was made clear that the three-year basic salary increase of 2%

## *1999 Strike Diary*

in each of three years with a 1% benefits option set by government as the mandate could not be broken.

Responding to the health districts written concerns about public safety, on Thursday, April 8, back to work legislation was introduced by the government. The legislation called for nurses to return to work and contained provisions to regulate the basic mandate and Dorsey portions of the proposal.

Faced with the situation that there would be no more money and given SUN's position, we could see no alternative to stop the illegal strike but to apply to the Court for an injunction. That application was made on Friday, April 9 and argued on Saturday, April 10. Prior to the court hearing on Saturday, April 10, Arliss and I met with Ms. Longmoore and Ms. Crossman. We asked them what it would take to get nurses back to work. They indicated that their members would not return to work until there was a signed contract and that this contract must include significant money for wages at the front end. The decision was rendered on Sunday, April 11 and directed SUN and its leadership to instruct their members to return to work. Immediately upon learning about the decision, I had Arliss arrange a meeting with Ms. Longmoore and Ms. Crossman for that evening. We then held a news conference at which time I was as conciliatory as possible in the hope and anticipation that SUN would see this as an opportunity to save face and instruct their members to return to work. We could then resume collective bargaining. Coincidentally, Minister Atkinson issued a letter to SUN, which carried a similar, very conciliatory message.

Almost immediately, SUN announced that it did not intend to obey the judge's order. Notwithstanding that fact, Arliss and I met once more with Ms. Longmoore and Ms. Crossman. We agreed to continue to use the services of the same facilitator when talks resumed. However, they were maintaining the position that they would not instruct their members to return to work until a collective agreement was signed with substantially more money for wages - front end loaded. We agreed to bring the bargaining teams together Monday, April 12, at 5 p.m., to exchange positions. This took place but the union continued to refuse to instruct its members to return to work.

The advice we had received from our solicitor, is that one cannot bargain with a union that is engaging in an illegal strike and ignoring both legislation and a court order, Monday night our bargaining team made it very apparent that such action should never be taken. There being no other apparent alternative, we instructed our solicitor to apply to the court for an order finding the union to be in contempt of court and imposing a penalty against the union only. No penalties were sought against individuals, and no consideration has been given to placing anyone in jail. The judge has set Monday, April 19, at 10 a.m., for the hearing. The judge said that he had to give the union leadership sufficient time to prepare a full defense under the Charter of Rights because the potential consequences for the union are serious. He said he wanted to give SUN some breathing space and some food for thought.

On Thursday, April 15, SUN sent a letter to Minister Atkinson. I will not comment on it, but I do note that SUN's news release demands 22% -

## 1999 Strike Diary

7%p 7% and 8%, This is over \$50 million for the wage settlement alone. Please note the position of the other health sector unions all along has been "me too."

You should all have received a copy of Minister Atkinson's response to SUN dated April 15. Talks have continued throughout today, April 16, in the hope that a way could be found to have SUN obey the Court Order so that the parties could return to the bargaining table. However, SUN has rejected the minister's overture once again and has announced its members will not go to work unless the union's monetary demands are met.

This is the status at this time. I continue to try and get out the message wherever possible that we are ready and willing to get back to the bargaining table, with a facilitator, as soon as SUN obeys the court order. Hopefully, we will see some movement shortly. As the situation continues, patient safety across the province becomes an increasingly serious issue, and we are seeing the closure and consolidation of many services and hospitals throughout the province.

We will keep you posted. If you have concerns, or questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 3475535 or by cell at 629-7573. If you are going to take other steps, please let me know.

BR/dn

### **April 17**

#### **SUN President asks nurses to return to work**

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore (SUN) says that she is asking nurses to return to work at 0700 on Sunday, April 18, or as reasonably practicable thereafter. Saturday discussions between SUN and government officials resulted in a tentative memorandum of understanding that is a "framework for negotiations."

*According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, "I advised Minister Atkinson that I would ask members to return to work if the government committed to removing the impediments of Bill 23, and if we had a signed memorandum of agreement that addresses pay equity and patient safety issues. That agreement has been reached and will be signed tomorrow morning, so I am recommending to nurses that they return to work."*

See SUN News Release Saturday, April 17, 1999

Saturday, April 17, 1999

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Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore (SUN) says that she is asking nurses to return to work at 0700 on Sunday, April 18, or as reasonably practicable thereafter. Saturday discussions between SUN and government officials resulted in a tentative memorandum of understanding that is a "framework for negotiations."

## 1999 Strike Diary

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, ***"I advised Minister Atkinson that I would ask members to return to work if the government committed to removing the impediments of Bill 23, and if we had a signed memorandum of agreement that addresses pay equity and patient safety issues. That agreement has been reached and will be signed tomorrow morning, so I am recommending to nurses that they return to work. Nurses are angry about the threats and intimidation and the government's advertising and how they've been treated since negotiations began. It's been a difficult two weeks for everyone. This frustration and anger will not go away overnight, but we are confident that we will be able to resume negotiations and conclude a collective agreement,"*** said Longmoore.

**Ms. Longmoore will be available for interviews at the legislature "news room" after 0700 on Sunday, April 18, and at the Regina SUN office later in the morning.**

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

**For background only, contact Larry LeMoal, Communications ERO at 566-5572**

**April 19, 1215 hours**

### **Premier, SUN and SAHO sign back to work agreement**

Premier Roy Romanow, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) President Rosalee Longmoore and Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) Chair Brian Rourke today signed a Memorandum of Understanding ending the nurses strike and restarting negotiations towards a collective agreement.

*"I'm sure every citizen of Saskatchewan will join me in a huge sigh of relief that this is over," Romanow said. "Nobody wins as long as a strike like this goes on. But we can all win-nurses, the health system and the people of Saskatchewan-if we can build on the common ground we've finally found today and if we can work together to improve medicare, starting today."*

See Executive Council News Release 99 - 316 Apr 19, 1999

Apr 19, 1999

Executive Council 99 - 316

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## *1999 Strike Diary*

strike like this goes on. But we can all win nurses, the health system and the people of Saskatchewan if we can build on the common ground we've finally found today and if we can work together to improve medicare, starting today."

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed today provides that:

SUN members will receive salary increases of two per cent each year for the next three years.

SUN members will receive an additional one per cent, which will be used to cover professional fees.

Health and dental benefits will be normalized across the health sector and adjustments will be made to pay and benefits flowing from the Dorsey process.

A fund will be established to assist the government, SAHO and SUN in improving recruitment and retention of nurses.

Workplace issues including seniority, nursing practices and the creation of more full-time jobs have been addressed.

In total, the contract is worth 13.7 per cent of payroll over three years the same rate provided for in recent agreements with the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Service Employees International Union.

"The terms of the MOU will result in a contract that is fair to nurses, fair to other health care providers and fair to taxpayers," Romanow said. "I am particularly pleased that we have been able to agree on measures that will improve working conditions for nurses to better allow them to concentrate on patient care.

"To the volunteers, health workers, health administrators, essential services nurses, doctors and all others who kept our system going, I want to offer you my heartfelt thanks and eternal gratitude," Romanow said. "You are the heroes of these hard days.

"To the patients and families affected by this dispute, I want to say that I understand how frightening and disturbing this dispute has been for you. Foremost in the minds of all of us at this table is our obligation to get the health system back in business, to provide the best patient care we possibly can and to find ways to never have this happen again.

"This dispute is now behind us. We're going to make every effort

## 1999 Strike Diary

to pick up the pieces, to get back to work on the basis of this year's health care budget and to do what I know you expect of us to continue to build and maintain the best health care system in Canada."

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For more information, contact:

Anna Arneson  
Media Services  
Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-0850

"To all SUN members from Rosalee Longmoore. Thank you for standing tall through the last few weeks. Yesterday, we returned to our workplaces. We must all remain strong and let employers know that we are not returning to the same workplaces."

See SUN Talkmail, April 19, 1999

### **TalkMail Message, April 19, 1999, at 1215 hours**

*To all SUN members from Rosalee Longmoore  
Thank you for standing tall through the last few weeks.  
Yesterday, we returned to our workplaces. We must all remain strong and let employers know that we are not returning to the same workplaces.  
If patient safety is at risk, you have the right under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to refuse the work. When there are too many patients for you to safely provide care for them, we must call upon employers to close beds. They did it for the out-of-scope nurses.  
Reports are already coming in of overloaded emergency rooms. They are not being used as true emergency rooms. Staff are missing meal breaks and being mandated back on overtime. We must stand firm and reclaim our rights under the collective agreement and reclaim our workplaces.*

### **April 21**

Bargaining has resumed with Stephen Kelleher mediating. The provincial strike steering committee continues to meet and assess the bargaining status.

SUN has filed an appeal to the court injunction based on a violation under the international labour organization agreement of which Canada is a signatory."

## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN Talkmail message April 21, 1999

**APRIL 21, 1999**

**THIS IS A SUN TALKMAIL MESSAGE FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21**

*THIS IS ROSALEE SPEAKING. BARGAINING HAS RESUMED WITH STEPHEN KELLEHER MEDIATING. THE PROVINCIAL STRIKE STEERING COMMITTEE CONTINUES TO MEET AND ASSESS THE BARGAINING STATUS. LOCALS NEED TO SUBMIT THEIR LOCAL STRIKE PAY FORM THE REGINA OFFICE. THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF STRIKE PAY AVAILABLE PER MEMBER IS FOUR DAYS AT \$30.00 PER DAY = \$120. EACH LOCAL DETERMINES THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS RECEIVING STRIKE PAY BASED ON EITHER THE PARTICIPATION IN THE WHOLE STRIKE OR BASED ON PARTICIPATION ON DAY 8 TO 11. YOUR CONTINUED STRENGTH IN THE WORK PLACE WILL BE: INSISTING ON THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT BEING FOLLOWED; FILING WORK SITUATION REPORTS IF UNSAFE STAFFING LEVELS; CALLING IN THE ADDITIONAL NURSES OR SUPPORT WORKERS YOU NEED; TAKING EVERY REST AND MEAL BREAK AND PUTTING IN FOR EVERY MINUTE OF OVERTIME; ALL CANCELLED SHIFTS TO BE PAID AT DOUBLE TIME; CONTINUE TO PRESSURE YOUR MLA TO REPEAL BILL 23. SUN HAS FILED AN APPEAL TO THE COURT INJUNCTION BASED ON A VIOLATION UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT OF WHICH CANADA IS A SIGNATORY.*

**April 22**

Nurses gathered at the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) annual meeting in Saskatoon told their bargaining committee this afternoon that they will support a wide range of possible actions to press SAHO and the government to honour the memorandum of understanding signed by Premier Romanow and Brian Rourke, SAHO chief.

*According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, "Nurses have discussed their options thoroughly, and have directed the union's strike steering committee to implement whatever action is necessary to negotiate a satisfactory collective agreement. We will not reveal those plans today. The outrage that nurses feel at what they see as a betrayal by SAHO and the government has led many members to talk about resuming the strike."*

See SUN News Release April 22, 1999

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## 1999 Strike Diary

***steering committee to implement whatever action is necessary to negotiate a satisfactory collective agreement. We will not reveal those plans today. The outrage that nurses feel at what they see as a betrayal by SAHO and the government has led many members to talk about resuming the strike. The irresponsible actions of the government and SAHO continue to put patient safety in this province at risk. If SAHO won't negotiate in good faith, then the government should send someone who will negotiate with nurses."***

Pressed for details regarding possible action, Longmoore says that nurse have suggested resignations, refusal of overtime, change to casual status, rotating strikes, and another withdrawal of services, as well as a public information campaign and political action. Facilitator Steve Kelleher suspended negotiations between SUN and SAHO this morning, concluding that the parties were too far apart to reach an agreement.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

### **5:30 p.m.**

"Members attending the Annual Meeting today have expressed their outrage at SAHO's failure to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Premier Romanow and Brian Rourke, SAHO chief."

See SUN Talkmail message April 22, 1999 5:30 p.m.

### **This is a Hotline/TalkMail message for Thursday, April 22 at 5:30 p.m. This is Rosalee speaking.**

*Members attending the Annual Meeting today have expressed their outrage at SAHO's failure to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Premiere Romanow and Brian Rourke, SAHO chief.*

*Nurses have discussed their options thoroughly at today's annual meeting, and have directed the union's strike steering committee to implement whatever action is necessary to negotiate a satisfactory collective agreement. We will not reveal those plans today. The outrage that nurses feel, at what they see as a betrayal by SAHO and the government, has led many members to talk about resuming the strike. The irresponsible actions of the government and SAHO continue to put patient safety in this province at risk. If SAHO won't negotiate in good faith, then the government should send someone who will negotiate with nurses.*

*The Strike Steering Committee met late today and will advise members of plans when appropriate. Continue to work your scheduled shifts. Ensure your collective agreement is followed. Call your Local President if you need to file a grievance. If you are working in unsafe situations advise your employer and request the additional staff you require. Complete work situation reports and submit these to your Nursing Advisory Committee Just a note about provincial strike pay: Local Presidents need to complete the Request for Provincial Strike Pay form. Please fax this form to the Regina office by Monday April 26<sup>th</sup>. There are 4 days of strike pay available to members who participated during the strike. Only one form is to be submitted per Local. Individual forms are for the Local's use only.*

## 1999 Strike Diary

*We must all work together to get this collective agreement concluded. Continue calls to your MLA, Health Minister Atkinson and Premiere Romanow*

### **April 22**

#### **Kelleher's report to Romanow**

"Dear Mr. Romanow;

You have asked me for a report on the state of collective bargaining between the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) and Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO). As you know, I have been meeting with the bargaining committees since March 6, 1999. The latest set of discussions commenced April 19, 1999 and came in the wake of the Memorandum of Understanding which was signed by SUN, SAHO and the Province on April 18, 1999.

The Memorandum called for the mediation of all outstanding issues including issues surrounding the implementation of the Memorandum. I have met with both parties on several occasions since Monday. There are differences existing regarding the implementation of the Memorandum:"

#### **See Kelleher's report to Romanow April 22 in Appendix B Premier Roy Romanow Statement re SAHO/SUN talks**

"I'd like to make a brief statement today regarding the state-of-play of negotiations between SUN and SAHO. As you know, last weekend the union, the employer and our government signed a memorandum of understanding, which established a framework for a settlement of this dispute. Both SAHO and SUN signed that agreement.

Both said publicly that it constituted the full framework for a final agreement. I was therefore, once again, profoundly disappointed to see that discussions on implementing the details broke down yesterday, and that the mediator, Mr. Kelleher, has adjourned the talks."

See Romanow statement April 23

#### **Premier Roy Romanow Statement re SAHO/SUN talks**

April 23, 1999

I'd like to make a brief statement today regarding the state-of-play of negotiations between SUN and SAHO. As you know, last weekend the union, the employer and our government signed a memorandum of understanding, which established a framework for a settlement of this dispute. Both SAHO and SUN signed that agreement.

## *1999 Strike Diary*

Both said publicly that it constituted the full framework for a final agreement.

I was therefore, once again, profoundly disappointed to see that discussions on implementing the details broke down yesterday, and that the mediator, Mr. Kelleher, has adjourned the talks.

I asked Mr. Kelleher to prepare a written report on what happened. I am releasing his report this morning. I can see after reading this report why Mr. Kelleher adjourned the discussions.

For example, Mr. Kelleher reports that "a significant issue" surrounds implementation of one of the provisions that would improve working conditions for nurses. SAHO wants to delay a key item governing seniority until the year 2001.

There are other issues.

Last weekend, all parties agreed that the value of the contract would be 13.7%, and that the significant non-monetary issues are the ones contained in the MOU.

Mr. Kelleher nevertheless reports that SUN is still seeking additional gains on seventeen separate monetary items.

He reports that SUN will not confirm that the contract is to be worth 13.7%, as agreed. Without that understanding, we seem to still be discussing a monetary demand of 22%.

Further, SUN is pursuing twenty-three other gains in the collective agreement, not discussed in the MOU.

So what happens now?

As long as no disruption whatsoever occurs in the health care system, I think it's appropriate in the circumstances for us to take the advice of Mr. Kelleher.

Both parties will clearly benefit from a brief cooling-off period, to reconsider their positions.

We'll be making clear to SAHO and SUN that our government is serious about improving working conditions for nurses.

We expect the letter and spirit of the MOU to be reflected in the final agreement, including new clauses that promote more full-time work, improve seniority rules, and improve the way nursing practice issues are handled.

Our government is also serious about the other terms of the MOU - including the principle that this union has the right to a collective agreement worth the same as the others agreed in the health sector and no more.

Mr. Kelleher has done an important public service today in helping the public understand what these two parties were really doing at the bargaining table this week.

I hope members of the public join me in urging both SAHO and SUN not to risk people's lives over the disagreements we learn about today.

Until these parties do reach agreement, Bill 23 serves as a legal collective agreement for the next three years, with the full force of the law.

That collective agreement can be significantly improved, when the parties choose to work on the basis of the memorandum of understanding all have signed.

## 1999 Strike Diary

Let me conclude by asking both SAHO and SUN to put patients first, to behave responsibly, to reconsider the entrenched positions outlined in this report, and to get this done - in their own best interests, and in the public interest.

### **SUN response to Kelleher report**

"Dear Mr. Kelleher:

We have now received a copy of your report to the Premier, via fax at 9:32 a.m. this morning. Unfortunately we became aware the report had been issued by the media via the Premier's press conference. We would have expected receiving the report in advance of its public release.

With regard to your comment on the Memorandum, we note the following:"

See B. Crossman letter to Kelleher April 23

April 23, 1999

Mr. Stephen Kelleher, Q.C. Barrister & Solicitor,  
650 - 475 West Georgia Street,  
Vancouver, British Columbia.  
V6B4M9

Dear Mr. Kelleher:

We have now received a copy of your report to the Premier, via fax at 9:32 a.m. this morning. Unfortunately we became aware the report had been issued by the media via the Premier's press conference. We would have expected receiving the report in advance of its public release. With regard to your comment on the Memorandum, we note the following: *There have been no substantive monetary discussions since the signing of the Memorandum.*

SUN has not tabled a monetary proposal since the signing of the Memorandum. We indicated to the employer, through you, that we would table a monetary proposal at an appropriate time, following discussion of non-monetary items. *In addition, we note that you have not identified the outstanding issues surrounding the IAC..*

The employer, contrary to including in their proposal the language contained in the Memorandum, proposed instead that "The IAC shall not have the power to make decisions that affect employees or the work of those employees not covered by this agreement". This could preclude many issues related to nurses' workload and practice issues from the realm of the IAC. In our view, this is in direct contradiction to the Memorandum of Agreement. *The Memorandum of Agreement also contains a commitment to create permanent fulltime jobs.*

While SAHO has included those words in their proposal, they also contain a proposal to maintain regularly scheduled shifts of two hours for Home Care Nurses. We believe this to be directly contradictory to the creation of

## 1999 Strike Diary

permanent full-time work. Our understanding of the Memorandum is that the parties have 30 days to conclude an agreement; it is not surprising then that we have not agreed to all of the language on the nursing practise issues, for example. We have additional comments on what you have identified as "monetary issues". You indicate that the Union has proposed increased premiums for working stat holidays at Christmas. The position of the Union, as articulated to both SAHO and yourself, is that we redistribute the funds currently spent in stat holiday pay to achieve that. SUN no longer has proposals on the bargaining table to pay out unused sick leave on retirement, layoff or termination for ill health. Instead, we have proposed a Letter of Understanding that would maintain that benefit for employees who currently have such provisions in their agreements. SUN's proposals on medical and dental plans will be dealt with as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

e) SUN's proposals on long term disability/sick leave again is for a reallocation of funds already spent in the sick leave area and would cost the employer no more than currently.

f) Many issues entered in your report arise from the merging of collective agreements and already exist for many SUN members. Some of the issues you list, we propose only be retained for those who currently enjoying them i.e. the right to access vacation before it is earned.

g) We note also that you have not included proposals from SAHO that remain outstanding: expansion of out-of-scope relief and working in and out-of-scope at the same time; mandatory split shifts for full-time Home Care Nurses, a reduction in standby compensation for many nurses; a reduction in "charge pay" for Home Care Nurses; a reduction in the rights of nurses during bumping.

While we could continue listing proposals made by SAHO, we don't believe that would be useful for these purposes.

Finally, as I indicated to you yesterday, the position that we forwarded to you was prepared during the Union's job action and has not been discussed extensively since the signing of the Memorandum nor was it intended to be forwarded to the employer.

We are extremely disappointed that we learned of your report and its contents from the media. While this response is intended to articulate what we believe to be errors and omissions in your report, this is not intended to provide a complete response on every item.

Yours truly,

Beverly Crossman, Executive Director.

c.c. Honourable Pat Atkinson, Minister of Health

Premier Roy Romanow

### **April 27**

#### **SUN complies with Court order**

Today, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses provided Mr. Justice Ted Zarzeczny with written assurance that SUN would comply with the April 11, 1999 order of the court directing SUN to communicate to its members that

## 1999 Strike Diary

any further declaration or authorization of a work stoppage is invalid and unlawful, and that SUN cannot counsel, encourage, or facilitate further strike action.

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore (SUN), *"The primary objective of the union is to conclude a collective agreement, and we can't do that in the courtroom, so we asked for an adjournment. Nurses remain very angry about the punitive approach adopted by SAHO and the government. SUN has been attempting to address the nursing shortage in this round of negotiations, and we have to convince SAHO and the government that continued threats and intimidation is only going to make the nursing shortage worse."*

See SUN News Release Tuesday, April 27, 1999

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With the consent of counsel for SAHO and the Attorney General, Justice Zarzeczny adjourned the contempt of court hearing until May 27, 1999. SAHO is still asking the courts to find SUN in contempt of court and are seeking a fine of up to \$1 million. SUN and SAHO are expected to resume negotiations on May 10, 1999.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

**For background only, contact Larry LeMoal, Communications ERO at 566-5572**

### **April 30**

#### **Atkinson commits to listening to health providers**

"Health Minister Pat Atkinson today encouraged doctors and all health providers to continue working together to strengthen the health system in

## 1999 Strike Diary

Saskatchewan. She said the government is committed to listen to front-line health providers."

*"We learned a number of lessons from the recent nurses' strike - most importantly, that we must listen more carefully to the concerns of front-line health providers," Atkinson said.*

See Health News Release 99 - 379 Apr 30, 1999

Friday, April 30, 1999

### **Saskatchewan Union of Nurses Protest at NDP fundraiser**

Members of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses are scheduled to protest the lack of improvements in their working conditions at a New Democratic Party fundraiser this afternoon. The picket line will be located in front of the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, 612 Spadina Crescent East from 5:30 p.m. until 6:15 p.m.

Nurses remain frustrated with increased workload, an inability to practice nursing according to established standards of practice and a shortage of nurses. SUN members are still without a new Collective Agreement.

**Contact: Nurses at the protest from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.**

### **May 12**

#### **SUN delivers International Nurses' Day declaration**

SUN President Rosalee Longmoore took a break from negotiations with SAHO today in order to recognize International Nurses' Day. Ms. Longmoore and the union's negotiating committee gathered in the bandshell in the park adjacent to the Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon at noon.

Longmoore read from SUN's International Nurses' Day declaration, saying that *"Today, collectively, we want to protest working conditions which make it difficult for us to abide by our code of ethics and our professional standards of practice which we are legally obliged to maintain. Everywhere, nurses have suffered a deterioration in their working conditions and heavier and heavier workloads. The blatant disregard of nurses' right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike in Saskatchewan and other provinces leaves little room for making the changes needed in our workplaces to ensure retention and recruitment of nurses and improved working conditions."*



## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN News Release Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

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Longmoore also pointed out that yesterday's comments from Saskatchewan Health official Marlene Smadu that Saskatchewan is "positioned fairly well" regarding the supply of nurses is part of a continuing attempt by the government to mislead the public about the nursing shortage. **"When hospital beds are closed in two cities and nurses continue to work forced overtime because of the nursing shortage, this continued denial that there's a problem just inflames nurses. When will this government learn that they must respect nurses and act on what nurses are saying about the nursing shortage and patient safety – will they wait until the last nurse has left Saskatchewan?"**

Negotiations with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) continue this week.

Message delivered to unionized nurses across Canada on May 12.

In over 100 countries around the world, nurses have agreed to celebrate Nurses' Day, May 12, in a very special way. Everywhere, on all continents, nurses take this opportunity to reflect on the role they play with regard to the health of the populations they serve. In all countries, nurses deliver care in health-care institutions, in the home and in the community.

This year, in Saskatchewan and in many Canadian provinces, nurses have moved from words to action. Severe cuts in funding by the Canadian government have resulted in reduced funding of the public health system everywhere. With the drive for a zero deficit, income tax cuts and government disinvolvement, in most provinces, health institutions have had to face even greater reductions in funding. Everywhere, nurses have suffered a deterioration in their working conditions and heavier and heavier workloads. So, their mobilization is not surprising.

## 1999 Strike Diary

The blatant disregard of nurses' right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike in Saskatchewan and other provinces leaves little room for making the changes needed in our workplaces to ensure retention and recruitment of nurses and improved working conditions.

Repeated changes that disregard the input from nurses, with no respect for us as individuals and professionals, have left us disillusioned and demotivated. The loss of motivation has serious consequences in a profession which is based largely on empathy and compassion for others. Moreover, increased workloads has worn us out and the insecurity resulting from inadequate preparation for the upheavals in the system are jeopardizing our mental health. These are all factors which contribute to our anger and determination at a time when the end of downsizing indicates that governments now have some leeway to solve existing problems, redress inequities and improve our situation.

From coast to coast, our demands are the same: creation of positions, conversion of casual/part-time positions into full-time positions, training, catch-up raises, pay equity, the need to address workload and quality of care issues. Everywhere, unionized nurses are fighting privatization as well. We also want to settle the current problem of staff shortages and recruit young nurses. From Saskatoon to St. John's, from Winnipeg to Montreal, from Vancouver to Charlottetown, from Toronto to Halifax, from Regina to Moncton, from the Northwest Territories to the Ungava peninsula, we know that it is increasingly difficult to offer quality care. Today, collectively, we want to protest working conditions which make it difficult for us to abide by our code of ethics and our professional standards of practice which we are legally obliged to maintain. Because we realize that the quality of services depends largely on the conditions in which they are delivered, we want to voice our concern publicly. Together, with the same breath, we extinguish the flame of our candles, symbol of the energy which continues to motivate us, even after years of cutbacks. Tomorrow, we will all take up the torch again.

### **Nursing education expanded in Saskatchewan**

Funding for an expansion of nursing education and training programs was announced today by Health Minister Pat Atkinson, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Minister Maynard Sonntag and Associate Health Minister Judy Junor.

*"As people know, Saskatchewan nurses, like nurses in other provinces in Canada, are feeling the effects of a nursing shortage," Atkinson said. "By increasing the number of spaces in our Nursing Education Program, we believe we can provide future hope and support to nurses in the workplace."*

## 1999 Strike Diary

See Health News Release 99 - 433 May 12, 1999

May 12, 1999  
Health 99 - 433

### **NURSING EDUCATION EXPANDED IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Funding for an expansion of nursing education and training programs was announced today by Health Minister Pat Atkinson, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Minister Maynard Sonntag and Associate Health Minister Judy Junor.

"As people know, Saskatchewan nurses, like nurses in other provinces in Canada, are feeling the effects of a nursing shortage," Atkinson said. "By increasing the number of spaces in our Nursing Education Program, we believe we can provide future hope and support to nurses in the workplace."

Sonntag said, "The number of seats in the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) will increase to 260 from the current approved level of 180 seats. NEPS prepares Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses and is jointly operated by SIAST and the University of Saskatchewan."

The number of seats in the Practical Nursing Program is also being expanded by eight seats to a minimum of 72. The Practical Nursing Program is a SIAST program offered on-campus in Prince Albert and Regina and off-campus by arrangement with Regional Colleges.

The additional positions will cost approximately \$900,000 in the first year and close to \$4 million in the fourth year of operations.

"I am pleased to see that there is strong interest in nursing among young people and we will have no trouble filling all of the education and training spaces," Junor said.

The decision to expand training spaces was based on research which projected a need of approximately 250 Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses and 90 Licensed Practical nurses each year.

"This means young people can train and work in and near the communities they grew up in," Sonntag said. "We will continue to work with the post-secondary institutions to implement this expanded capacity."

"Our government wants to work with health providers on issues of recruitment and retention," Atkinson said. The system relies on a great variety of skilled people all dedicated to patient care

## 1999 Strike Diary

and Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses play an essential role in this."

Junor said, "We recognize there is work to be done in improving our health care system and we are committed to listening to and working with health care providers to achieve a better system. The investments we are now making are part of building and preserving publicly funded health care."

The 1999-2000 Budget included a number of new initiatives to improve health care, particularly in front line services. This includes an increased investment toward women's health programs, improving waiting times, stronger cancer programs and improved wages and benefits for people working in the front lines of health care delivery. Approximately 30,000 people work in Saskatchewan's health care system.

30 -

For more information, contact:

Jeff Brown  
Saskatchewan Health  
Regina  
Phone: (306) 787-4088

### **May 17**

"The employer has indicated they are unable to conclude the deal and have requested a mediator."

See SUN Hotline message May 17, 1999

#### **HOTLINE MESSAGE**

**MAY 17, 1999**

*HOTLINE MESSAGE **MAY 17, 1999, AT 0445 HOURS** FROM ROSALEE LONGMOORE*

*UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT THIS WEEKEND.*

*THE EMPLOYER HAS INDICATED THEY ARE UNABLE TO CONCLUDE THE DEAL AND HAVE REQUESTED A MEDIATOR.*

*THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR HAS BEEN CONTACTED AND WE EXPECT TO RESUME BARGAINING LATER TODAY.*

### **May 18**

"George Semenuik has been appointed as a conciliator in our negotiations. We bargained until 0200 and are making some progress towards resolving outstanding issues."

## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN Hotline message May 18, 1999

### **HOTLINE MESSAGE**

**May 18, 1999**

*HOTLINE UPDATE **MAY 18, 1999, AT 0225 HOURS** FROM ROSALEE LONGMOORE*

*GEORGE SEMINUIK HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS A CONCILIATOR IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS.*

*WE BARGAINED UNTIL 0200 HOURS AND ARE MAKING SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES.*

*BARGAINING IS SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE TODAY AT THE SANDS HOTEL IN SASKATOON.*

### **May 20**

"Today, we have sent a letter to the Premier requesting a meeting to discuss the incorporation of the Memorandum of Understanding into provisions of the Collective Agreement.

We believe we are very close to reaching a collective agreement if we can resolve the "binding IAC decisions" item in the collective agreement."

See SUN Hotline message May 20, 1999

### **HOTLINE MESSAGE**

**May 20, 1999**

*This is a Hotline message from Rosalee **May 20, 1999 at 2:15 p.m.***

*Today, we have sent a letter to the Premier requesting a meeting to discuss the incorporation of the Memorandum of Understanding into provisions of the Collective Agreement.*

*We believe we are very close to reaching a collective agreement if we can resolve the "binding IAC decisions" item in the collective agreement.*

*Membership meetings will be scheduled beginning next week to report on bargaining.*

*If a tentative agreement is reached in the meantime, they will become ratification meetings.*

*Your Local President will alert Local members of the meeting time and locations for your area.*

### **May 26**

*"The court hearing has been adjourned by consent of all parties until June 25, 1999, as circumstances surrounding the last adjournment have not changed. Everyone is hopeful we will have a collective agreement by then."*

## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN Hotline message May 26, 1999

### **May 26, 1999**

*This is a Talkmail message May 26th 1999, from Rosalee at 11:00 a.m. The court hearing has been adjourned by consent of all parties until June 25, 1999, as circumstances surrounding the last adjournment have not changed. Everyone is hopeful we will have a collective agreement by then. Membership meetings are proceeding this week in your area. If you are unsure of locations, please contact one of the SUN offices for information. We will continue to update you as events occur.*

### **June 14**

*"The Bargaining Committee met on June 4 to report back on membership meetings held in the previous week. We believe we will be able to resolve the issues surround the binding Independent Assessment Committee decisions and will remain firm on the composition of the committee being three nurses."*

See SUN TalkMail message June 14, 1999

### **June 14, 1999**

*This is a TalkMail message on June 14, 1999, at 5:15 from Rosalee at the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.*

*The Bargaining Committee met on June 4 to report back on membership meetings held in the previous week.*

*We believe we will be able to resolve the issues surround the binding Independent Assessment Committee decisions and will remain firm on the composition of the committee being three nurses.*

*The Board approved some strategies for lobbying toward resolving this issue. We will keep you updated as events occur.*

*Our committee is available to bargain June 21 and 22 and have indicated we would return to the table if there is some indication the composition of the committee can be resolved.*

*Please continue your lobby efforts regarding this, with your employer, your health district and your MLA.*

*Thank you for your patience and support as we work to conclude a collective agreement for all of us.*

### **June 17**

Nurses say negotiations will resume when SAHO fulfils their commitment on IAC.

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) told the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) in a letter made public today that SUN's bargaining committee is available to resume negotiations next week, but not unless SAHO is prepared to provide written assurance that SAHO will deliver on their commitment that the independent assessment committee would consist of only registered nurses, and that the committee would have the power to issue binding decisions.

## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN News Release Thursday, June 17, 1999

### **News Release**

### **Nurses say negotiations will resume when SAHO fulfils their commitment on IAC**

Thursday, June 17, 1999

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) told the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) in a letter made public today that SUN's bargaining committee is available to resume negotiations next week, but not unless SAHO is prepared to provide written assurance that SAHO will deliver on their commitment that the independent assessment committee would consist of only registered nurses, and that the committee would have the power to issue binding decisions. SUN was responding to a letter from SAHO's chief negotiator inviting SUN to return to the bargaining table at the Delta Hotel in Regina on Monday, June 21 at 10:00 a.m.

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, ***"SAHO signed the memorandum of agreement which said that decisions of the independent assessment committee would be binding. The current contract with SAHO stipulates that this committee must consist of registered nurses, since the committee hears evidence about professional nursing practice standards. From SUN's perspective, unless SAHO is prepared to honour the agreements they've already made, there's no point in meeting. With the contempt of court case pending, and the prospect of \$1 million dollar fines, a negotiating session with no progress would just inflame nurses, rather than get us closer to a settlement."***

Rather than offer such assurance, the SAHO letters suggests that the parties should "be prepared to give and take on the remaining items." Both parties have sent copies of their correspondence to Minister of Health Pat Atkinson.

**Phone: (306) 525-1666 Cell: 539-6162**

### **June 21**

### **SUN/SAHO return to bargaining table today**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is back in negotiations with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) this afternoon at 1:00 p.m. at the Delta Hotel in Regina.

### **June 23**

"We bargained until 0230 hours, when the Conciliator recommended we adjourn talks until next Tuesday due to the fact that a key person from SAHO's committee is unavailable due to personal circumstances."



## 1999 Strike Diary

See SUN TalkMail message June 23, 1999

### **June 23, 1999**

*This is a TalkMail Message June 23, 1999, at 0730 hours from SUN. This is Rosalee.*

*We bargained until 0230 hours, when the Conciliator recommended we adjourn talks until next Tuesday due to the fact that a key person from SAHO's committee is unavailable due to personal circumstances.*

*While it was very disappointing to our committee, we decided in the best interest of concluding negotiations, we would meet next week.*

*Later this afternoon I will be meeting with SUN's lawyers, along with others scheduled to appear in court beginning at 1300 hours Thursday, June 24, 1999.*

*If you are available and would like to spend some time observing the proceedings, that would be great.*

*Thank you for your patience and support.*

### **July 2**

"Hopefully you are sitting down. We are pleased to finally tell you that we have reached a tentative agreement. We were able to negotiate agreement on all issues except some independent assessment committee issues, so have agreed to have them arbitrated within three months of signing the collective agreement."

See SUN TalkMail message July 2, 1999

### **This is a talk mail message July 2, at 0330 hours from Rosalee at SUN.**

*Hopefully you are sitting down. We are pleased to finally tell you that we have reached a tentative agreement.*

*The tentative agreement will be faxed to SDC's and larger locals later today or Monday. We were able to negotiate agreement on all issues except some independent assessment committee issues, so have agreed to have them arbitrated within three months of signing the collective agreement. Ratification meetings will be held as quickly as we can arrange them. SUN members can be proud of the actions and work we have done together to achieve this agreement.*

### **July 8**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says that it will purge its contempt of court penalty by donating \$120,000 to Regina and Saskatoon hospital foundations, as recommended by the Court of Queen's Bench order issued today. Justice Ted Zarzeczny found that the union was in contempt of court for failing to comply with an order directing SUN to communicate to its members that any further declaration or authorization of their work stoppage was invalid and unlawful. However, today's judgement also gave the union an opportunity to "purge its contempt" by donating \$60,000 to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, \$30,000 to the Royal University Hospital Foundation, and \$15,000 each to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation

## 1999 Strike Diary

and Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation, for a total of \$120,000 in donations as an alternative to payment of a fine.

See SUN News Release, July 8, 1999

### **Thursday, July 08, 1999**

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says that it will purge its contempt of court penalty by donating \$120,000 to Regina and Saskatoon hospital foundations, as recommended by the Court of Queen's Bench order issued today. Justice Ted Zarzeczny found that the union was in contempt of court for failing to comply with an order directing SUN to communicate to its members that any further declaration or authorization of their work stoppage was invalid and unlawful. However, today's judgement also gave the union an opportunity to "purge its contempt" by donating \$60,000 to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, \$30,000 to the Royal University Hospital Foundation, and \$15,000 each to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation and Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation, for a total of \$120,000 in donations as an alternative to payment of a fine.

The judgement said in part..."May it be seen as an opportunity for the Union to regain for itself and its members the dignity and respect which all Saskatchewan citizens have for nurses and the public service which they provide in Saskatchewan's health care institutions."

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, **"We think the judgement was very fair. We were obeying the law, and the government changed the law six hours later. SUN's primary objective was to negotiate a collective agreement that would help solve the nursing shortage and address nurses' concerns about patient safety and excessive workloads. Premier Romanow and SAHO used the legislature and the courts to resist that, and to remove our lawful right to negotiate and to strike. "**

SUN and SAHO have reached a tentative collective agreement, which will be put to nurses for ratification on July 27, 1999.

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"The Judge ruled today that SUN's fine should be \$120,000 for our contempt of court. He went on to say that we could purge our contempt of the court by donating \$60,000 to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, \$30,000 to Royal University Hospital Foundation, \$15,000 to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation and Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation. SUN has decided to comply with the Judge's recommendation and will be making those donations."

See SUN TalkMail message July 8, 1999

### **July 8, 1999**

This is a TalkMail message from Rosalee on July 8, 1999, at 1540 hours. The Judge ruled today that SUN's fine should be \$120,000 for our contempt of court. He went on to say that we could purge our contempt of the court by donating \$60,000 to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation,

## 1999 Strike Diary

\$30,000 to Royal University Hospital Foundation, \$15,000 to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation and Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation. SUN has decided to comply with the Judge's recommendation and will be making those donations.

Reminder: All Locals to call SDC chair to find out when.

It was a great relief and I want to personally thank Yvonne Gerbrandt, Gary Reid, Wendy Wolitsky and Glenna Olenick, SUN members who were available to provide testimony regarding essential services. Gary and Yvonne both testified and did a great job of portraying the dedication and detail SUN undertakes in providing essential services. Neil McLeod and Angela Zborosky did an excellent job as our legal counsel as well.

Reminder: All Local Presidents to call SDC chairs to determine when ratification meetings in your area will be held.

SUN members thank you for your continued patience and support while we all work to try to get a collective agreement for all of us.

"The Union must, as it has, accept responsibility for its unlawful conduct and be held accountable for it. SAHO, joined by the representations made on behalf of the Attorney General for Saskatchewan, argues that only a very substantial fine, perhaps \$750,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 or more will be effective as a sanction against the Union's contempt."

### **See Court of Queen's Bench reasons for decision-QB99336 in Appendix C**

#### **July 18**

"Advance polls for the ratification vote have started in various locations across the province. The vote has been set for July 27<sup>th</sup>. The Bargaining Committee is recommending ratification of the tentative agreement and is urging all SUN members to vote in favour of the agreement. While there is some controversy about salary schedules, the overall improvements for all SUN members merit ratifying the agreement."

See SUN TalkMail message July 18, 1999

*This is a Talk mail message on Sunday July 18, 1999 from Rosalee at SUN. I want to warn you that this is a long message but very crucial to SUN's future so please bear with us. Advance polls for the ratification vote have started in various locations across the province. The vote has been set for July 27<sup>th</sup>. The Bargaining Committee is recommending ratification of the tentative agreement and is urging all SUN members to vote in favour of the agreement. While there is some controversy about salary schedules, the overall improvements for all SUN members merit ratifying the agreement. As you are aware, the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Premier and SAHO, and which ended the strike, is subject to ratification by both parties. Through that memorandum, and the subsequent detailed negotiations the following were achieved from various agreements for all SUN members:*

## 1999 Strike Diary

- vacation improvements
- higher sick leave cap
- increased Group Life coverage
- extended health benefit plan
- enhanced dental plan
- professional fees paid
- increased transportation allowance

*In addition we obtained the nursing practice article and binding Independent Assessment Committee decisions as well as seniority driven selection criteria.*

*This new agreement is worth ratifying and significantly improves the wages and working conditions for all SUN members.*

*If the tentative agreement is not ratified, the legislation that rendered SUN's strike illegal will remain in place until a new agreement is negotiated and ratified. Given SAHO and the employers' resistance to the binding Independent Assessment Committee, the nursing practice article, seniority selection criteria and some of the monetary improvements, the entire contents of the memorandum would be at risk.*

*We are in receipt of a letter sent to employers from Brian Rourke at SAHO where he says, "There is no obligation to ratify the agreement simply because the MOU was signed."*

*SAHO and the employers will have succeeded in resisting and defeating the solidarity and united stand of SUN members and the improvements members worked so hard to attain. SAHO and the Employers will be the winners if we defeat this agreement—not nurses!*

*The collective agreement contains more substantive improvements to the wages and working conditions of SUN members than any agreement we have negotiated in recent history. During the lifetime of this agreement we have also negotiated a mechanism to pursue pay equity that will allow nurses' work to be compared to work done by other occupations. We achieve pay equity by comparing nurses' work to male dominated jobs that have been paid more money, not by comparing nurses to nurses.*

*Please distribute this information to SUN members. If you would like additional information, or would like to discuss these issues, please contact the SUN office.*

*Stand strong in solidarity.*

### **July 27**

*"Congratulations SUN members. Our agreement has been ratified by a 76.6% majority of the members voting in favour."*

See SUN TalkMail message July 27, 1999

### **July 27, 1999 – 11:20 p.m.**

*This is a Talkmail message from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, on July 27, 1999 at 2320 hours from Rosalee.*

*Congratulations SUN members. Our agreement has been ratified by a 76.6% majority of the members voting in favour.*

## 1999 Strike Diary

*I know that you have debated this agreement thoroughly and worked through all of the issues in attempts to make the best decisions collectively to move forward. In the end, SUN members have chosen to ratify this agreement so that we can use the tools available to us in this agreement to begin making improvements in our workplace. We ended our bargaining process in solidarity, respecting each other. Let us maintain this solidarity as we implement the new agreement.*

### July 28

Saskatchewan nurses have ratified a new collective agreement by a margin of 76.6 %. Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore says that she is relieved that the contract was approved, but understands why many nurses voted no. *"Nurses have gained a lot with this agreement, particularly in areas like increased benefits. But the substantial no vote indicates that many nurses still don't believe that health districts and the government place enough value on nurses' work. The fact that nurses had to battle every inch of the way to get this agreement will make recruiting and retaining nurses much more difficult. Only time will tell whether the benefits and salary levels are enough to alleviate the nursing shortage in Saskatchewan,"* said Longmoore.

See SUN News Release Wednesday, July 28, 1999

### **Nurses ratify collective agreement**

Wednesday, July 28, 1999

Saskatchewan nurses have ratified a new collective agreement by a margin of 76.6 %. Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Rosalee Longmoore says that she is relieved that the contract was approved, but understands why many nurses voted no. ***"Nurses have gained a lot with this agreement, particularly in areas like increased benefits. But the substantial no vote indicates that many nurses still don't believe that health districts and the government place enough value on nurses' work. The fact that nurses had to battle every inch of the way to get this agreement will make recruiting and retaining nurses much more difficult. Only time will tell whether the benefits and salary levels are enough to alleviate the nursing shortage in Saskatchewan, said Longmoore."***

According to SUN, the agreement provides a total salary increase of 11.5% over three years, and includes improved vacation, increased dental and group life coverage, a new extended health benefits plan, paid professional fees and increased transportation allowance. The total package represents a 13.7% increase. The new agreement means general duty nurses at the top salary step will earn \$45,680 annually, retroactive to April 1, 1999. The process for binding Independent Assessment Committee decisions, still unresolved with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO), has been referred to binding arbitration.

SUN says that the turnout was moderate, with 60% of the membership voting on the agreement.

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## 1999 Strike Diary

### **September 1**

"The collective agreement is now in effect. In a mailout sent today, Locals will receive a copy of the signed agreement and a memo regarding the Joint Job Evaluation Plan Committee."

See SUN TalkMail message September 1, 1999

### **September 1, 1999**

#### **1415 hours**

*This is a Talkmail message on September 1, 1999 at 1415 hours from Rosalee at SUN. The collective agreement is now in effect. In a mailout sent today, Locals will receive a copy of the signed agreement and a memo regarding the Joint Job Evaluation Plan Committee. If you are interested in representing SUN members on the Joint Job Evaluation Committee, please contact your Local office soon. Copies of the memo were faxed this afternoon to SUN District Council Chairpersons and to Locals with a fax number. We need your response by September 13, 1999.*

*Congratulations on working to achieve this agreement and now let us remain strong as we implement and ENFORCE the new agreement.*

For more details of the settlement and updates on ongoing issues arising from the new collective agreement see The Settlement.