

# UNA NURSE PRACTITIONER Application for Determination **FAQ**

## **Why has UNA applied to act as the union for Nurse Practitioners employed by AHS?**

UNA has believed since they were enacted in 2003 that the sections of the Alberta Labour Code preventing Nurse Practitioners from being represented by a union violate the right to freedom of association guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. UNA has now been requested by NPs employed by AHS to act on their behalf.

## **Why is UNA proceeding with this application at this time?**

The request for representation and court decisions affecting the rights of unionized workers both meant that now is an appropriate time to move forward with this application. Since the Alberta Labour Relations Board ruled in 2003 that UNA was the union for AHS employees involved in direct nursing and nursing instruction, an occupational category defined in law that includes RNs, Registered Psychiatric Nurse and Nurse Practitioners, UNA believes it is the only union that is likely to succeed with such an application.

## **Why is UNA the union for AHS employees in direct nursing?**

Legislation passed in 2003 said unionized employees of Alberta's health regions would be represented by one of four bargaining units: General Support Services, Auxiliary Nursing, Professional and Paramedical, and Direct Nursing. That structure was passed to AHS in 2008. UNA is the union for Direct Nursing employees. ALRB Bulletin No. 10 covers this question in technical detail.

## **What if Nurse Practitioners would like to be represented by another organization?**

This would require changes to the current legislative regime for bargaining units in the health care sector. The current regime only contemplates four functional bargaining units. It is UNA's submission that Nurse Practitioners belong in the direct nursing care and nursing instruction bargaining unit and do not belong in the other three bargaining units.

## **What if my duties as a Nurse Practitioner involve managerial duties?**

The Labour Relations Board's Bulletin No. 22 deals with such situations. If a Nurse Practitioner's duties fall into a list of job functions including management of other employees, hiring employees, setting policy and other duties, they would be "excluded" from membership in a union.

## **Is UNA trying to replace the Nurse Practitioners Association of Alberta?**

Absolutely not. The role of unions, professional associations and regulatory colleges are all different, and complimentary. UNA is a union that represents employees in collective bargaining, negotiates appropriate terms and conditions of employment, and works to ensure the contracts it negotiates for its members are adhered to by employers. The NPAA will continue to represent Nurse Practitioners' professional interests, and the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) will continue to act as their regulatory college as set out in legislation.

## **What if I don't want to join a union?**

In Alberta, no one who does not want to join a union is required to do so. If the application succeeds, however, UNA will represent union members and duespayers who chose not to join the union in the same way, as required by the laws of Alberta. If you choose not to join UNA, however, you will not have the right to take part in many union activities.

## **What will happen if the Labour Board agrees UNA is the bargaining unit for Nurse Practitioners?**

UNA will immediately take steps to commence negotiations with AHS for a formal salary scale for Nurse Practitioners, as well as other issues of concern to Nurse Practitioners, such as hours of work. When an agreement is concluded, these provisions will be included in UNA's Provincial Collective Agreement. UNA intends that at least two Nurse Practitioners will sit at the negotiating table, representing their colleagues in Northern Alberta and Southern Alberta.

## **Will this affect my scope of practice or independence?**

No. UNA recognizes that a Nurse Practitioner's scope of practice and ethical and practice standards are distinct from a Nurse Practitioner's terms and conditions of employment.

## **Could Nurse Practitioners end up making less money as a result of the negotiations?**

This is extremely unlikely. In the entire history of UNA, no employee has ever had a reduction in pay by being brought into membership in the union. UNA has successfully negotiated the highest rates in pay in Canada for Registered Nurses, Assistant Head Nurses, Instructors, Nurse Clinicians, Clinical Supervisors, Patient Care Co-ordinators, Donor/Recipient Co-ordinators and others. We expect to achieve the same results for Nurse Practitioners.

**What should I do if I have more questions?**

Call UNA at 780-425-1025 in Edmonton, 1-800-252-9394 in Northern Alberta, 403-237-2377 in Calgary, or 1-800-661-1802 in Southern Alberta.

**UNA**  
www.una.ab.ca