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HOW BCNU
SUPPORTS YOU

The BC Nurses' Union respectfully acknowledges the traditional, ancestral, unceded lands of the Indigenous peoples in the area colonially known as British Columbia. We are grateful to the traditional stewards of the lands and waters for their role in caretaking, nurturing and fighting for these lands from time immemorial.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The British Columbia Nurses' Union protects and advances the health, safety, social and economic well-being of our members, our profession and our communities.

VISION STATEMENT

The British Columbia Nurses' Union will be the champion for our members, the professional voice of nursing and the leading advocate for safe and accessible publicly funded health care.

VALUES

The seven core values listed below support the vision and mission of BCNU and reflect key behaviours that guide our daily actions.

BCNU demonstrates:

Collectivity

By acting together to make certain that all activities and decisions are inclusive and accomplished for the betterment of the whole.

Democracy

By actively engaging our membership through egalitarian processes where equal rights to both representation and involvement are guaranteed.

Equality

By recognizing and respecting diversity and by ensuring that each member has access to all services of the union.

Excellence

By incorporating innovation and best practices throughout the organization when responding to and supporting our members.

Integrity

By being honest, respectful, accountable and transparent.

Social Justice

By advocating and promoting that the social determinants of health be equally accessible to ensure the dignity of every human being.

Solidarity

By promoting unity of our members based on shared goals and values.

“

BCNU members can drive the change
we need in our health-care system.

”

Adriane Gear
President

Reflecting on our union's many accomplishments over the past year, the theme of this year's annual report – bold, committed and united – feels incredibly fitting. These qualities capture the spirit of our dedicated members across the province who give their all to advocate for patients, build safer and more respectful workplaces and support their colleagues. Their commitment has inspired us to pursue ambitious goals, grounded in the steadfast support of members.

In recent times, we have witnessed how emerging threats from the US government have brought Canadians together to defend our values and sovereignty. In uncertain times, unity becomes both a strength and a necessity. As nurses, we must mirror that same collective resolve. Our profession faces its own critical challenges, and just as Canadians have stood together to address external threats, we too must unite to demand better – for our patients, our colleagues and ourselves. Only through solidarity and shared purpose can we protect public health care

and ensure a just, safe and sustainable future for nursing in BC.

I've been heartened to witness members' extraordinary unity throughout our bargaining preparations. At our regional, human rights and equity and provincial bargaining conferences, members united in their steadfast demand to protect what is ours, including our benefits, in this round of Nurses' Bargaining Association negotiations. By staying united, working together and showing unwavering support for the bargaining committee, we can achieve a collective agreement that protects our benefits and respects us as nurses.

Our union's bold advocacy for safe minimum nurse-to-patient ratios hit new heights this year. This nurse-driven policy solution is a testament to the research, advocacy and optimism of BCNU members who have worked incredibly hard to bring it to reality. Though many regions have yet to feel the impact, the groundwork laid over the last year is already showing positive results. Our participation on the gov-

ernment's executive steering committee and working groups informed its policy directive and implementation guide that has now established ratios in 25 hospital-based acute care settings. BCNU leaders are also co-chairing joint regional implementation committees to ensure health authorities consistently and effectively apply the ratios prescribed in the directive. And to support the successful implementation of ratios, we negotiated a provincial investment of \$169.5 million in one-time funding for retention and recruitment incentives to address the unique staffing challenges of both rural communities and urban centres.

Members who work in settings where ratios are coming into effect have consistently told us that ratios are making a difference in their workload, stress levels and job satisfaction. Many have reported improved patient outcomes because more time is available for each patient. With a member-monitoring system set to take effect in 2025, we look forward to ensuring consistent implementation and gathering on-the-ground feedback.

Since rejoining the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), BCNU has also taken part in high-impact campaigns. Together with our sister unions, BCNU continues to fight for the future of public health care, advocate for universal pharmacare and seek more support for internationally educated nurses. We have raised the alarm on for-profit nursing agencies, which drained over \$1.5 billion from the public system in 2023-24 and called for mandated safe hours of work to improve patient safety and increase retention.

BCNU members demonstrate their commitment every day as they continue to provide exceptional care despite incredibly challenging workplace conditions. We have taken an uncompromising stance against violence in health care, demanding stronger health and safety protections. This includes securing hundreds of relational security officers, breaking down the barriers to psychological injury claims and seeking strategic partnerships to address violence in health care.

Despite these positive steps, the need for bold action to address violence in health care remains urgent. WorkSafeBC reported an average of 46 time-loss claims per month in the health-care sector over the past year – far surpassing the provincial average. Reports of violence are clearly rising. For minimum nurse-to-patient ratios to succeed, nurses must have safe and

supportive workplaces where they can deliver the care patients deserve.

BCNU elected leaders, activists and staff have shown unparalleled dedication. Regional executives are going the extra mile to connect, meeting members where they are at in worksites, at regional dinners, community events and more. Stewards have worked relentlessly to support members in upholding their rights. BCNU Council has demonstrated its commitment as fiduciaries to make the best decisions on behalf of members by renewing its focus on governance and education, strengthening commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion and advancing Truth and Reconciliation at BCNU. Our strategic directions, on page 16, reflect

these commitments and will increase accountability.

Being bold, committed and united is the formula underpinning BCNU's work in the last year, and it is the foundation for ensuring future success. While we have made significant progress, we have much to do to build the kind of health-care system and nursing profession we want. I challenge every member to get involved: attend regional events, volunteer as a ratio subject-matter expert, learn about your benefits and take the job action and bargaining modules on the BCNU Member Portal. By putting their boldness, commitment and unity to work, BCNU members can drive the change we need in our health-care system.





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The work ahead is to broaden our reach with our members and the public to ensure that nurses' priorities are society's priorities.

”

Tristan Newby
Vice President

Throughout the past year, BCNU members' passion and dedication to make things better have inspired me. Their bold, united and committed actions have enabled us to accomplish much together as we've faced challenges and sought opportunities.

Our 16 elected regional lobby coordinators stepped up in a big way during the 2024 provincial election, engaging candidates from all parties. Thanks to their hard work, 27 of the elected candidates, including nurse MLAs Susie Chant and Harwinder Sandhu, pledged to fully support the implementation of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in all care settings. Their bold actions further strengthen our position as we continue fighting for ratio implementation.

This year, we expanded our advocacy by engaging with elected officials in local governments. We set up booths at local government conventions last year and spoke

with mayors, city and town councillors and rural area directors from all over BC about issues in their health-care systems. Elected officials valued connecting with us and we found new allies open to partnering with us to improve working conditions for BCNU members and care conditions for patients.

Following our successes at these conventions, lobby coordinators prioritized further engaging with local elected officials. I'm so proud of their recent work making presentations to local governments and having one-on-one meetings with these leaders. We'll be doing much more of this in the year ahead, putting us in an even stronger position as we negotiate a new Nurses' Bargaining Association collective agreement and advocate for policy changes.

In our human rights and equity (HRE) portfolio, the highest number ever of HRE regional representative positions have been filled. These positions help members

develop as leaders, building up the union's strength and representation. BCNU council has developed a decision-making framework requiring the union to consider HRE principles, including truth and reconciliation, in organizational priorities. Following a resolution at BCNU's 2024 convention, the union has established a new Senior Nurses' Network. I'd like to extend my congratulations to the network's inaugural chair, Melina Kerrivan.

From our progress on ratios to the new relationships we've built with elected officials to the solidarity shown by our HRE caucuses and networks, we have much to be proud of. The work ahead is to broaden our reach with our members and the public to ensure that nurses' priorities are society's priorities. I encourage every BCNU member to get involved. In the words of the Lorax, "unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

“

After connecting with BCNU members, I've felt an energy that gives me hope for the future of our union, province and country.

”

Sharon Sponton
Treasurer



With the uncertainty of today's global political context, it's not surprising that many of us feel some anxiety about the future. I certainly have. But, after connecting with BCNU members over the past year, I've also felt an energy that gives me hope for the future of our union, province and country.

Whether at a council meeting, a bargaining conference or regional meeting, members have shown a united commitment to making things better for their patients and their communities.

This growing engagement shows they understand how central the union's finances are to the work we do. When I provide updates on the union's strong financial position, I've never seen members ask more in-depth questions or show greater interest in how the union uses their dues. Their commitment to sound financial decision-making shows in the increased number of members putting their names forward for vacant regional treasurers' seats.

I felt a similar atmosphere of solidarity at the Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) regional and provincial bargaining conferences. Members know nothing can be taken for granted – we only make gains when we fight for them. They want to know we have a well-stocked defence fund should job action become necessary. I'm happy to report it is now sitting at \$75 million, putting BCNU in a strong position to negotiate the best collective agreement possible.

We have made great progress in expanding access to funding opportunities for individual members. That includes the \$20-million LPN to RN/RPN laddering fund, which provides licensed practical nurses with up to \$20,000 to help advance their careers. It also includes the NBA Hardship Assistance initiative and the Supplemental Mental Health Benefit – both secured through the negotiated \$60 million Nurse Support Fund – to support nurses' mental health and well-being. Finally, our Strategic Priorities Education

Fund provides up to \$1,000 to members pursuing training in care for frail and medically complex seniors, long-term care and mental health/substance use. These funding streams exist because we fought for them together, and I'm proud of what we've achieved.

My approach to the union's budget is to ensure that all our investments in monetary and staff resources focus on improving members' well-being. An essential part of that commitment is ongoing outreach – connecting directly with members to understand their needs and priorities. To build a strong union, we must focus on what matters to members. That means showing up and listening. I'm hearing that our 50,000 members want us to be bold in our demands, committed to better working conditions and patient care and united in our pursuit of these shared goals.

Solidarity!



“

The past year has been a remarkable journey for the members of BCNU, who have exemplified boldness, commitment and unity.

”

Meghan Friesen

Interim Executive Councillor,
Pensions and Seniors Health

The past year has been a remarkable journey for the members of BCNU, who have exemplified boldness, commitment and unity. It has been an honour to witness their incredible solidarity, particularly during our regional and provincial bargaining conferences. The participation of first-time attendees inspired me. Their eagerness to engage in the bargaining process and speak at the microphone was both uplifting and motivating, showing a readiness to challenge the status quo and advocate for change.

As the co-chair of the Providence Health Care Joint Regional Implementation Committee for minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, I've seen first-hand the impact of members' efforts. Their commitment to becoming subject matter experts gives us a significant edge. These nurses serve as a backbone for our initiatives, and their efforts will benefit nurses and significantly improve patient outcomes.

Members' enthusiasm and energy at our recent pension workshops has been truly remarkable. These workshops, held both in-person and virtually, provided an excellent platform for sharing valuable information about pensions across all BCNU regions. One of the most rewarding aspects of these sessions was the diversity of the participants. While nurses approaching retirement often attend these workshops, it was refreshing to see new graduates and younger nurses engaging and planning for their financial futures.

As chair of the Retiree Benefits Program Committee, I've worked alongside dedicated committee members to safeguard the financial well-being of our retirees and to adapt our plans to evolving needs. We successfully onboarded a new investment advisor and launched the first comprehensive redesign of the plan in over 15 years, ensuring it remains competitive and beneficial for all members. I am partic-

ularly thrilled that licensed practical nurse (LPN) members covered by the Nurses' Bargaining Association have become eligible for the program. To ensure these new members have representation in our decision-making processes, we added one active LPN and one retired LPN to the committee.

For over 6,000 nurses working in long-term care, the call for bold action is both urgent and necessary. Chronic understaffing continues to affect the quality of care provided to residents. Our *Not Okay* campaign is gathering concrete data on members' experiences with workload, violence and substance use in these settings to shape advocacy, lobbying, bargaining and support the efforts to establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios.

“

I feel immense pride in the bold actions members have taken to create safer workplaces.

”

Denise Waurynchuk
Interim Executive Councillor,
Occupational Health & Safety and
Mental Health



Reflecting on BCNU's achievements in occupational health and safety (OHS) and mental health over the past year, I feel immense pride in the bold actions members have taken to create safer workplaces. I've witnessed a shift – members are demanding better for themselves. Nurses have always prioritized patient safety, but rising violence, unregulated substance exposure and employer inaction have compelled members to say, “enough is enough.”

Members' bold demands for safer workplaces pushed BCNU to innovate in 2024-25. During North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, we asked members for ideas to improve physical and psychological safety. The responses were outstanding. Three stood out for their bold vision: a private workspace for nurses to file health and safety reports, kits for community nurses equipped with protective gear and specialized smoke detectors

in patient rooms to reduce the risk of substance exposure. All three have been presented to employers for consideration.

Similarly, I was excited by the high level of participation in our *Break Down the Barriers* campaign, which saw hundreds of members join in our letter-writing effort to BC labour minister Jennifer Whiteside. This campaign demands justice and a more inclusive and equitable WorkSafeBC psychological injury claims process, one that acknowledges mental injuries as legitimate, treats them with the seriousness they deserve, removes unnecessary roadblocks to getting help and reduces wait times that delay treatment and worsen outcomes for psychological injuries.

This collaborative approach has driven our OHS efforts. We've prioritized “meeting members where they are at” and developing new ways to reach more members than ever. Council undertook deep discus-

sions on how to enhance our OHS support, leading to a new framework that strengthens member education, improves support for Joint Occupational Health and Safety committees and leverages technology and data to assess what's working. We've also expanded staffing to focus on prevention and increasing the presence of OHS officers in the regions.

Council's commitment to collaboration has enhanced regional outreach through more worksite visits and dinner meetings. Our regional bargaining conferences, organized by health authority, connected members in a new way, helping each region identify shared concerns. Members left these conferences with a clear realization: we're stronger together. That unity will drive our ongoing efforts to improve health and safety for all BCNU members – because every nurse deserves a safe, healthy workplace.

“

Together, we are bold. We are committed.
We are united. And we are ready to take
on any battle.

”

Jim Gould
Chief Executive Officer

BCNU's work over the last year has been defined by a willingness to be bold and do things differently. Our openness to new ideas has energized our members and positioned the union to adapt, improve and lead.

It's an approach that's delivering results.

For the first time ever, we organized Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) regional bargaining conferences by health authority. These two-day events broadened collaboration by bringing more members together to share their experiences, address common challenges and better align bargaining priorities in preparation for contract negotiations.

These events, along with the union's human rights and equity and provincial bargaining conferences, have strengthened member connections and made a real impact: nearly 70 percent of attendees were first-time participants

who reported a higher than 90 percent satisfaction rate. The more than 2,000 members who attended the conferences were surely inspired by the public's outpouring of support and love when they marched in rallies and shut down major intersections to demand better working conditions – proof that patients and families are on our side and that nurses' voices matter to them.

At BCNU, we're taking bold action. The work we've done to implement minimum nurse-to-patient ratios is already making a tangible difference. Nurses in facilities approaching established ratio staffing levels describe the change as night and day – allowing them to provide safer, more effective patient care.

There is still much work to come – but our commitment is unwavering: we will secure minimum nurse-to-patient ratios across all health-care sectors of the province. And not just for us; we are working closely with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions to advo-

cate for ratios across the country, because all Canadians deserve the best health-care system in the world.

Our top priorities – negotiating a new NBA collective agreement, enforcing members' rights and implementing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios – drive every decision we make. Over the past year, our provincial executive, council and senior staff have visited every BCNU region to listen to members and regional leadership teams. I have made it my personal goal to visit every BCNU worksite in the province and bring members' frontline voices into every hall of power.

NBA contract negotiations will be shaped by members' voices at every stage. We've ensured this by strengthening our bargaining team's engagement with union human rights and equity caucuses, so they always have direct access to caucus chairs. The team also reads every bargaining survey response, analyzes every submis-

sion and acts on the insights members share. That's why it's important for every NBA member to complete their bargaining survey – because every voice strengthens our position at the table.

Hand-in-hand with our commitment to listen and act, our dedication to transparency is stronger than ever. We're providing members with more straightforward and timely information and creating more opportunities for members to ask questions through expanded town halls, open forums and direct communication with President Gear and BCNU leadership. In return, more members are coming to us first – seeking the facts, getting involved and holding BCNU accountable.

Looking inward, BCNU has doubled down on our efforts to reimagine the organization and build the strongest nursing union in the world. We have added two new executive directors – Deb Charrois as executive director of member services and David Tsai as executive director of operations – to oversee our growth as an organization and foster excellence in staff. Along with other senior staff, Deb and David were instrumental in developing BCNU's new strategic directions, which you can read more about on page 16.



As a result of our efforts, I've seen an extraordinary increase in unity among BCNU members. Stewards and activists are stepping up with increased confidence, empowered to drive change at their workplaces. Taken together, our boldness, commitment and unity add up to unprecedented strength. This is the strength that empowers our members to fight back against intolerable working conditions and hold employers accountable to their obligation to provide violence-free, safe and healthy workplaces.

This unity underpins nurses' demands to keep what is theirs – the wages, benefits and respect they earn for the incredible care they provide. It drives us to make health care better in this province, not just for nurses but also for patients.

Together, we are bold. We are committed. We are united. And we are ready to take on any battle.

REGIONAL LEADERS

BCNU activists take bold action to advance members' interests in their workplaces and communities. Their commitment to their work inspires unity in their co-workers, building strength across the union to improve our health-care system and advance nurses' professional voice. We asked BCNU regional council members to tell us about the bold, committed and united actions members in their region took over the past year.



KRISTINA HERNANDEZ

Central Vancouver

"Central Vancouver members united at their regional bargaining conference to identify bargaining priorities, advocate for fair wages and better working conditions and empower the voices of our region."



GERALD DYER

Central Vancouver

"Through bold action, unwavering commitment and unity, Central Vancouver members at the provincial bargaining conference demonstrated they are ready to champion solidarity and be tenacious in building a more just and resilient health-care system."



ANGELA CRAWFORD

Coastal Mountain

"In an affiliate Coastal Mountain care facility, members are standing bold, committed and united to fight for their community, their residents and their rights."



DENISE NELSON

East Kootenay

"East Kootenay members have shown their commitment by engaging with BCNU at a much higher rate over the past year, with an increase in the number of stewards, unit representatives and members attending local events."



PARVEEN GILL

Fraser Valley

"Strong moral principles shine bright in the Fraser Valley nurses who have united behind their message to employers: we will not be scapegoats in an unsafe and congested health-care system."



DANETTE THOMSEN

North East

"North East members brought forward evidence that the health authority was allowing the use of non-prescribed drugs in hospitals. This bold activism helped create new protocols that help keep BC nurses safer."



TERI FORSTER

North West

"North West nurses have united to advocate for each other's safety, resulting in improvements in equipment and staffing. They have shown that they can achieve remarkable outcomes through boldness, commitment and unity."



CANDI DESOUSA

Okanagan Similkameen

"In a powerful show of unity, nearly 300 nurses from Interior Health came together in Penticton to raise their voices, capture attention and remind their employer that strength lies in solidarity."



DEIDRE KNUDSON

Pacific Rim

"Pacific Rim members collectively pursued strategies to support the rural-to-urban nursing concerns they face. The region's strength lies in teamwork and dedication to improve their working conditions."



SARA MATTU

Richmond Vancouver

"Our regional bargaining conference drew members from Vancouver Coastal Health who had not participated in regional events before. Members came together to express their ideas and concerns, creating a strong and unified voice."



WENDY GIBBS

Simon Fraser

"Members have shown their commitment by attending mini regional events to learn about union rights and the bargaining process. Simon Fraser region is united!"



ROY HANSEN

Simon Fraser

"Our regional bargaining conference had a huge influx of first-time attendees from Simon Fraser who reported that the detailed materials about the bargaining processes helped them feel united."



CLAUDETTE JUT

Shaughnessy Heights

"Shaughnessy Heights members are committed to the nursing profession and united for safe patient care. Our members have boldly used grievances to say, 'no more' to unsafe work, short-staffing and schedule changes."



GLESY BANTON-VICTORIA

South Fraser Valley

"South Fraser Valley members are very united and engaged. More than 100 members attended the Building Union Strength workshops in 2024, and we have increased capacity this year, with seven more events planned for 2025."



PEGGY HOLTON

South Fraser Valley

"South Fraser Valley members are informed and engaged in learning about their rights. More than 4,400 members across 16 sites have attended events to learn more about bargaining, benefits and minimum nurse-to-patient ratios."



CAITLIN JARVIS

South Islands

"South Islands members showed solidarity, commitment to meaningful change and unwavering perseverance by collectively reporting physical and psychological injuries to the Provincial Workplace Contact Centre, holding employers accountable for providing safer working conditions."



LEANNE ROBERTSON-WEEDS

South Islands

"South Islands region members were bold, committed and united during our regional bargaining conference, channeling solidarity and resolve as they developed bargaining language proposals for the next collective agreement."



SCOTT DUVALL

Thompson North Okanagan

"Our region's efforts to encourage members to use their voice for health and safety issues are having an effect. For example, one member exercised their right to refuse unsafe work related to non-prescribed substances."



FRANCES BESWICK

Vancouver Metro

"Our Code Blue response teams and Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee at St. Paul's Hospital enacted a bold initiative to improve overdose responses, demonstrating a commitment to safe patient care and safety for health-care staff."



SHALANE WESNOSKI

West Kootenay

"Members mobilized to petition the provincial government to include Trail in the Provincial Rural Retention Incentive. This effort is a great example of nurses' commitment and the team uniting for change."

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

OUR 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN reflects, integrates and affirms BCNU's abiding commitment to the principles of truth and reconciliation, cultural safety and Indigenous-specific anti-racism. This commitment is informed by our values of diversity, equity and inclusion – towards strengthening a sense of belonging for all union members.

MEMBER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Improve technology and digital platforms to make it easy for members to access the information they need, when they need it.

- > Redesign and implement a new website, member portal, mobile app and member case management system.
- > Explore and implement advanced technologies and digital tools to support organizational productivity.
- > Improve communication to activists and regional teams.

STRENGTHEN OUR UNION

Cultivate member solidarity by expanding knowledge on the principles of unionism and the power of collective action.

- > Offer resources to mobilize members on issues that align with the union's values and strategic directions.
- > Implement a recruitment and retention strategy to activate and support stewards.
- > Empower members to utilize the organizing model.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Foster leadership development and effective decision-making that is consistent with our strategic directions, vision, mission and values.

- Model our values and build trust through effective response and clear communications.
- Develop an evidence-based and inclusive decision-making framework, grounded in our principles and values, to inform and facilitate decision-making across the organization.
- Develop a competency-based framework, integrating our values and principles of truth and reconciliation and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), to foster leadership development and succession of elected and appointed members.
- Reimagine the future of our union through inclusive consultation processes.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PRACTICE

As the professional voice of nursing, continue to advocate for quality practice in health care including the successful implementation of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios.

- Engage employers and government on the opportunities to address the nursing shortage through focused retention and recruitment.
- Educate the public on the value of nurses to the public health-care system and the benefits of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios.
- Build relationships with nursing and labour organizations.
- Increase outreach with schools of nursing and nursing students.
- Validate the benefit of minimum nurse-to patient ratios on patient safety, outcomes and nurse retention.
- Advance professional practice and explore other initiatives to address workload.
- Continue to support and advocate for new grads and internationally educated nurses.

ENFORCE MEMBERS' RIGHTS

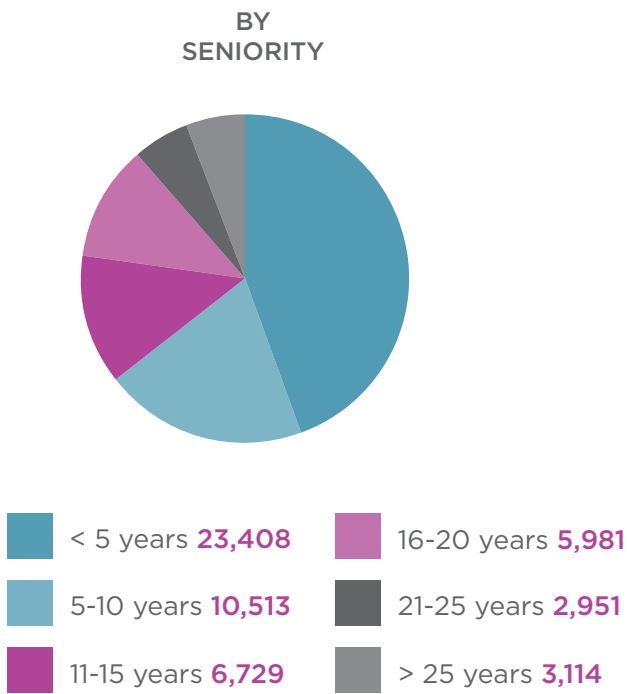
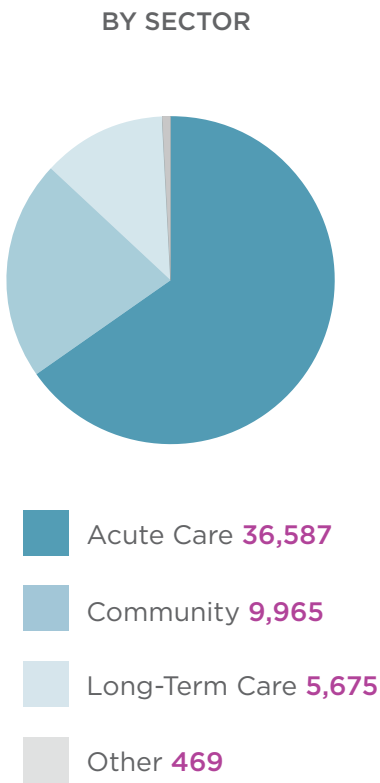
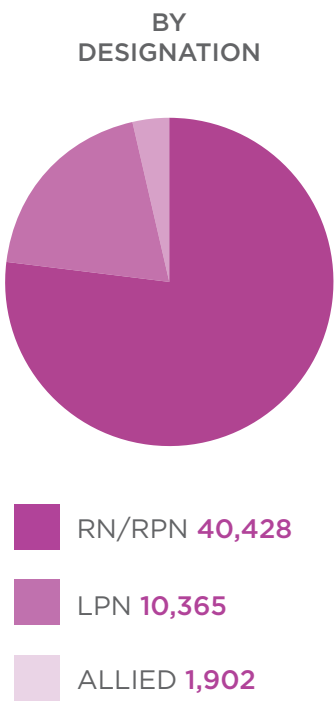
Achieve gains to negotiated agreements and protect members' rights to safe, healthy and respectful workplaces.

- Hold employers accountable for their collective agreement obligations, inclusive of Indigenous-specific anti-racism and DEI.
- Hold employers accountable for their obligations to provide safe and supportive workplaces for members.
- Strengthen member engagement in establishing bargaining priorities.
- Bargain gains to collective agreements inclusive of Indigenous-specific anti-racism and DEI initiatives.
- Address Indigenous-specific racism in health care and support cultural safety.
- Provide members with resources and support to uphold their rights and responsibilities to physical and psychological health and safety in the workplace.

WHO WE ARE

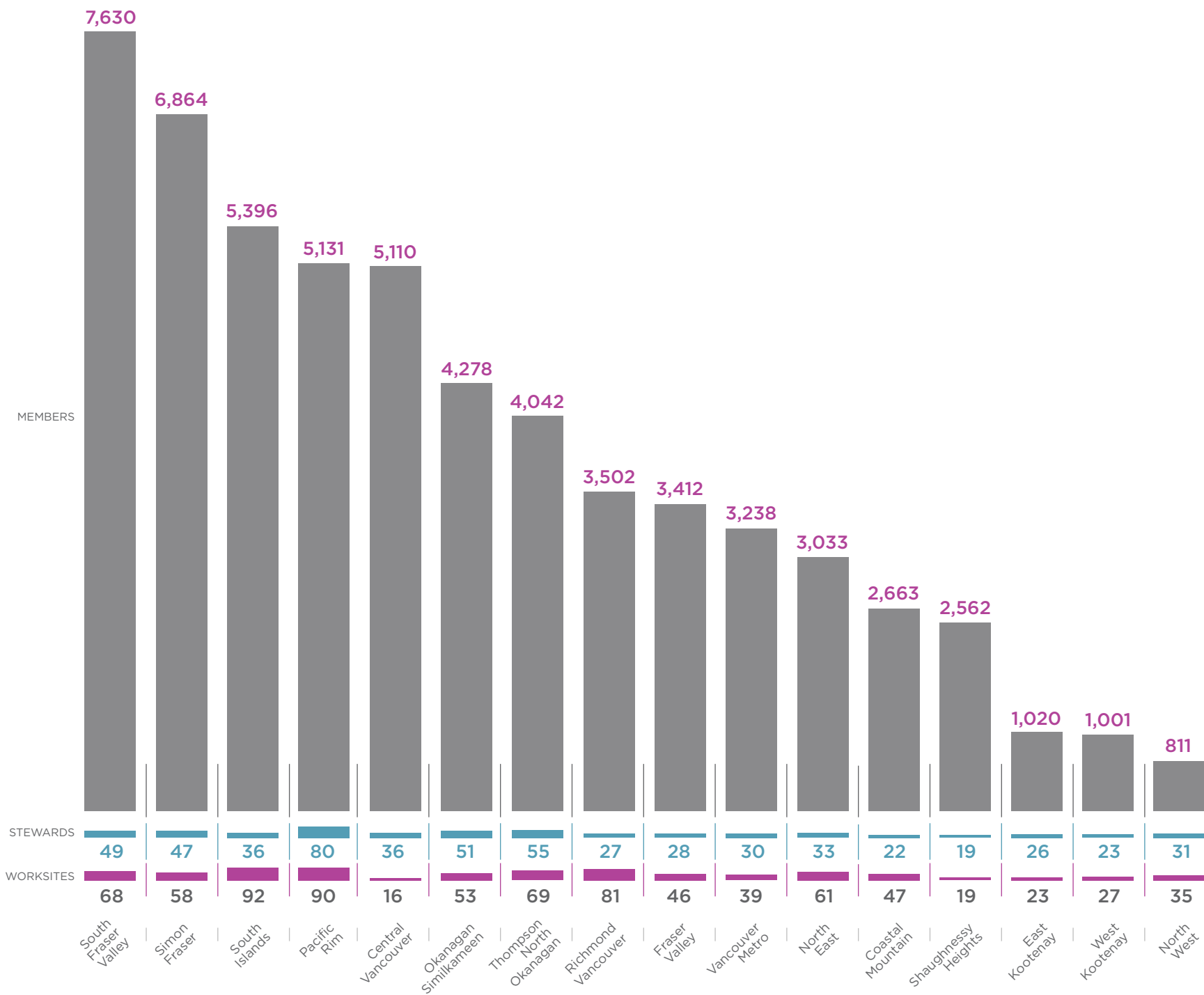
The BC Nurses' Union represents more than 50,000 professional nurses and allied health-care workers who provide care in hospitals, long-term care facilities and the community. We speak up and speak out for safe, quality, public health care. We value and respect diversity, and pride ourselves in providing protection, representation and services to all members.

Our Members



Note: the figures include all dues-paying members over the most recent two-month period prior to the publication of the annual report and are therefore subject to change.

Our Regions



BCNU MEMBERS ARE BOLD

Sparking a culture shift
at BC Women's Hospital

At BC Women's Hospital, a quiet but powerful transformation has been taking place – one led by BCNU members determined to make their workplace safer for everyone.



BY THE NUMBERS

Cultivating Leaders

BCNU members show leadership in their union through daily advocacy for their patients, activism in speaking up for their colleagues and engagement in their union.



1,431

Regional bargaining
conference participants



542

Provincial bargaining
conference participants



531

Convention participants

Raj Johal, an outspoken BCNU occupational health and safety (OHS) representative and Lisa Hennebery, a dedicated steward and BCNU mental health representative, have been hard at work addressing health and safety issues at their worksite. Their work has led to significant safety improvements and sparked a renewed culture of holding the employer accountable.

For over 20 years, Johal has provided specialized support to patients who are pregnant or newly parenting while navigating substance use and mental health concerns in the Families in Recovery (FIR) unit at BC Women's and Children's Hospital. Over the years, she's seen a gradual escalation of safety issues – including exposure to violence, weapons and substances – that have left many staff traumatized.

“We were seeing the employer ignore or downplay safety issues for too long and knew something had to change,” says Johal. “Lisa and I make a great team that tackles logistics at the worksite level and promotes psychologically healthy work environments.”

Hennebery has spent years as a critical care nurse and working in high-risk antepartum care at BC Women's. She says she put on her activist hat when she saw how often the employer ignored nurses' concerns and brushed their safety aside.



“There were staffing issues and daily assaults, from biting, kicking and being yelled at to more serious offences,” she explains. “But staff didn't speak up. Many said they were worried about getting in trouble. When I was elected as mental health rep in 2024, I realized right away that things needed to change. I made it my



“I realized things needed to change – and we began educating nurses about the importance of reporting.”

Lisa Hennebery

goal to educate nurses and empower them to report health and safety incidents every time they occurred.”

One of their most hard-fought battles has been to demand that their employer redevelop the nurses’ station in the mental health building, specifically the eating dis-

order unit. For years, this space left nurses exposed and vulnerable to aggressive behaviour. In this open space, distressed and unwell patients could easily sneak up on nurses or throw things at them while they focused on charting. After raising the issue in Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) committee meetings,

documenting incidents and rallying their co-workers to speak up, their advocacy finally paid off. The employer agreed to a complete redesign of the station, including the installation of plexiglass barriers that reach the ceiling.

The health authority’s recent commitment to complete the new station by October marks a major milestone. “It’s a huge win,” says Hennebery. “I wasn’t afraid to stand up to the employer. Initially, the employer had agreed to put up plexiglass, but the work had stalled. We pushed for a fully enclosed station to protect staff, and in November, the employer agreed,” she adds. “This only happened because nurses started reporting. It shows what can happen when you speak up for your safety.”

Getting to this point wasn’t easy, according to Johal. For years, staff weren’t reporting health and safety incidents – a trend that made it harder for Johal and Hennebery to present a strong case to the employer. “We’d go into meetings and be told there wasn’t any data to support what we were saying,” she says. “But that was because people had stopped bothering to report. They were exhausted after a shift and didn’t see the point. They almost felt like what they were dealing with was normal – and we know it’s not.”

The pair tackled the reporting issue head-on, encouraging members to start reporting every incident, no matter how small. Through one-on-one conversations, steward meetings and JOHS updates, they gradually rebuilt a culture where workers



felt it was worth speaking up again. The number of reports began to rise, and with them, the employer could no longer deny that something needed to change.

In addition to structural changes, the team has also focused on preparedness, holding mock code drills with relational security officers, who are a relatively new addition to their team. The drills allowed staff to walk through Code White scenarios – the alert for threats of violence and aggression – in a controlled setting, refining their roles and identifying gaps before a real incident occurred. When a real Code White

happened shortly after these drills, they resulted in a smoother, more efficient process and less stress for everyone involved.

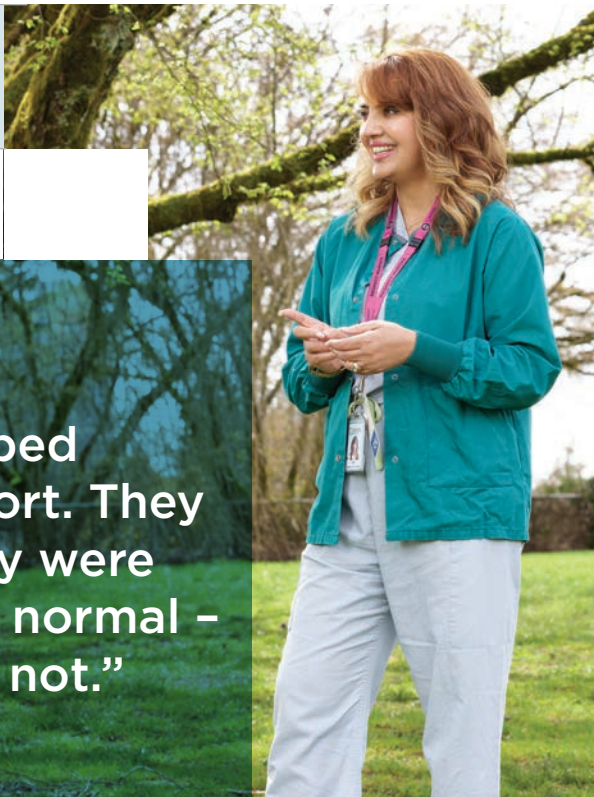
“Giving delegated roles to everyone made such a difference,” says Johal. “We all knew exactly what to do. It was the first time we’d run a code where I felt the whole team was completely in sync and they felt at ease.”

Both members hope this proactive approach catches on at other sites. “It doesn’t take a lot of resources to run a drill, but the impact is huge,” says Hennebery. “It’s one of these things where as nurses, we train for the worst and hope for the best.”

Hennebery and Johal’s advocacy exemplifies what member-driven health and safety work can accomplish. Their story is a reminder that meaningful change often starts with a few people willing to ask tough questions, challenge the status quo and support each other along the way.

There’s also another major motivator that brought the two activists together: they are both determined to make working conditions better for the next generation of nurses – including their daughters. Johal’s daughter works in the FIR unit with her mom, and Hennebery’s daughter is completing her nursing degree.

“Before I retire, I want to know that the next generation of nurses is safe and in good hands,” says Hennebery. “I want my daughter to be empowered, and I’d like to know that things are better than they were before.”



“

People had stopped bothering to report. They felt like what they were dealing with was normal – and we know it’s not.”

Raj Johal



BCNU MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED

Building awareness and
advocating for inclusivity
in BC's interior

Across the province, members are creating a safer
culture for gender diverse nurses – and patients –
one pronoun at a time.

Imagine walking into work every day, only to be called by the wrong name. Again.

Or having to constantly explain who you are, only to be met with indifference, or worse, hostility.

For too long, transgender, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse (T2SGD) nurses in British Columbia have experienced deadnaming, misgendering and discrimination as a painful, everyday reality. These experiences lead to emotional distress, burnout and, in some cases, drive nurses out of a profession they love.

But BCNU members are pushing back.

Members of BCNU's 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus have spent years building awareness and advocating for change – from winning contract language that protects gender-diverse nurses and patients to taking everyday actions that shift culture on the ground. Their long-term commitment to creating more inclusivity for gender expression is helping nurses – and patients – feel more safe in our health-care system.



BY THE NUMBERS

Investing in Members

Increasing member activism and engagement continues to be a major organizational priority. That means providing the financial resources needed to ensure BCNU members across the province have the ability to fully participate in their union.



20,393

Salary replacement days



816

Member Education Bursaries provided



\$3.8M

in LPN to RN/RPN Laddering Funds paid



29,775

Bill/expense forms processed



“

Joy and community
are forms of
resistance, too.”

Laura Dion



For years, T2SGD nurses endured discrimination in silence, their struggles dismissed as isolated incidents rather than evidence of systemic bias. The 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus had always worked diligently to support members facing discrimination, but when reports of transphobia directed at nurses and T2SGD patients surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, the caucus demanded action and presented an emergency resolution to BCNU council demanding that the union study the issue.

“Transphobia and homophobia have always been a problem in the workplace,” says Lindsay Manning, a former 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus representative who advocated for the study. “In the first year of the pandemic, we started hearing

reports of transphobia more frequently and severely. But members didn’t feel safe formally reporting their experiences – so we knew we weren’t hearing from voices that needed to be heard.”

In 2022, following the caucus’s sustained advocacy, BCNU partnered with TransFocus Consulting to conduct a groundbreaking survey revealing the harsh realities of discrimination in health-care workplaces.

The survey’s eye-opening findings uncovered some harsh truths. It found that 81 percent of T2SGD nurses experienced discrimination that most often came from colleagues rather than patients. Many nurses faced daily misgendering, invasive questions about their bodies, or ostracism from

peers. Even more troubling, fewer than 25 percent of these nurses felt safe enough to formally report the discrimination they faced, fearing retaliation, being outed as trans, or incurring professional harm. This discrimination also exacted a significant emotional toll – nearly half of T2SGD nurses described their work experiences as overwhelmingly negative.

For Indigenous and racialized T2SGD nurses, the results showed an even heavier burden. More than half of Two-Spirit and T2SGD nurses of colour reported plans to leave nursing, highlighting the compounded challenges of racism and transphobia.

The survey results provided irrefutable evidence that something needed to change.

BY THE NUMBERS

Investing in Students

BCNU's future leaders can be found in universities and colleges across the province. That's why the union invests in students – some of the strongest advocates for nursing are just getting started.



75%

Increase in student member registration



2,157

Employed student nurses



91

BC participants at Canadian Nursing Students' Association 2024 National Conference

Armed with this data, BCNU's 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus pushed for meaningful reforms.

"We have a responsibility to support gender diverse nurses," says Courtney Blake, BCNU's 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus provincial chair. "We wanted them to know that 'we hear you, your experiences are valid, and you shouldn't have to go through this.'"

One of the caucus's first victories came when gender-affirming leave became part of the Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) provincial collective agreement. This historic policy allows workers undergoing gender-affirming medical care to take leave without sacrificing pay or job security. Across the province, members have been noticing the effects of the leave provisions in the collective agreement.

"It allows people to heal properly," says Ria Dubois, a Kamloops mental health and substance use nurse. "It's really valuable and important that people can take time off to get their medical transition done."

Aside from enshrining gender-affirming leave, the language also codifies the needs of gender-diverse nurses and patients into the contract.

"This language is genuinely changing people's lives," says Laura Dion, a nurse at Vernon Jubilee Hospital. "It explains what deadnaming and misgendering are. It acknowledges the discrimination gender-diverse nurses have faced. It's huge."



Now, the caucus is building on this momentum with a grassroots-led pronouns awareness campaign – an initiative that BCNU members like Dion and Dubois have helped bring to life in their communities.

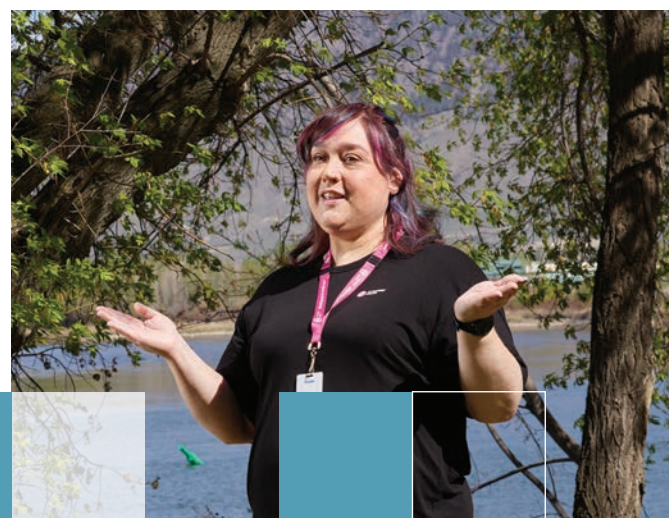
The campaign centers on education, visibility and conversation. It includes gender-pronoun buttons – designed to help normalize respectful introductions – and community events like drag show fundraisers that celebrate queer culture and build allyship among health-care workers.

"The pins go so fast," says Dion. "We went in with 100 pins, and left with five. I've seen them in public, even stopping at the grocery store. That visibility matters."

“

Campaigns like this can give people the tools and the confidence to do better.”

Ria Dubois



But it's not just about buttons. It's about shifting the daily interactions that shape nurses' experience.

One member shared that they were consistently misgendered at work for over two years, even after several colleagues reminded co-workers or introduced them with their proper pronouns.

“That silence can feel so heavy,” says Dubois. “But lately, I've seen more people asking questions in good faith. That's the impact campaigns like this can have – it gives people the tools and the confidence to do better.”

That change doesn't happen by accident.

It happens because members like Dion and Dubois keep putting in the work – day after day, conversation by conversation.

At a recent drag show fundraiser that they organized with other caucus members in Kamloops, more than 70 percent of attendees were nurses or other allied health-care workers. “The venue was so packed they had to turn people away at the door,” Dion reports. “We showed that joy and community are forms of resistance, too.”

For caucus members, this advocacy isn't optional – it's essential.

“The louder the hate gets, the louder we need to be,” says Dion. “It just takes one

voice, then ten, then a thousand – and one day, you won't need to talk about it anymore.”

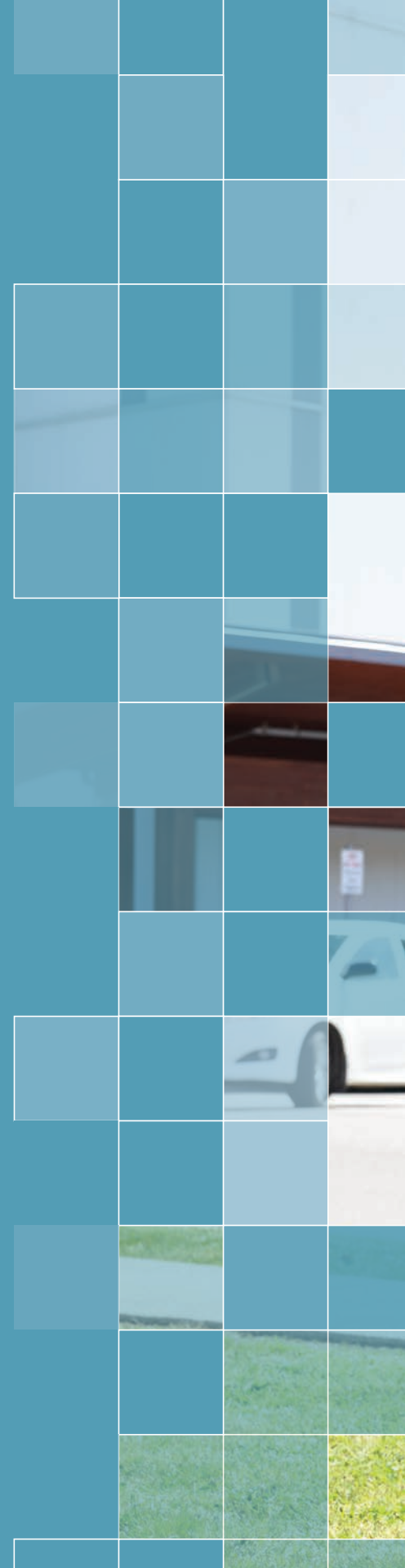
Blake echoes that spirit of steady, invitational change: “The campaign is about reaching out a hand to folks who maybe just don't understand the lived experiences of gender diverse nurses and giving them the opportunity to learn and become allies to our community,” she says. “We won't achieve equity unless we create space for people to grow.”

That growth is already happening – because BCNU members are making it happen.

BCNU MEMBERS ARE UNITED

Working together
for safe and dignified
patient care

At a community hospital, a team of BCNU members are taking action for vulnerable patients – and showing how collective advocacy can drive real change.





BY THE NUMBERS

Labour Relations

BCNU is focused on protecting and advancing the health and economic well-being of our members. We've committed significant resources to defending members' rights when dealing with health employers and WorkSafeBC.



66%

Success rate on members' WorkSafeBC appeals



88%

Success rate on members' LTD appeals



3,163

Grievances opened



2,660

Grievances closed



339

Submissions to the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week contest



1,950

OHS queries sent to the safety and health email

A group of BCNU members on Vancouver Island were concerned about a worsening problem in their community hospital's emergency department.

The number of unattached patients they treated – people who could not be admitted to an appropriate ward in the hospital due to a lack of hospitalists – had been growing for more than a year. Like many community hospitals serving smaller BC towns, the North Island Hospital Comox Valley (CVH) has a small emergency department with limited capacity to house patients needing ongoing care. But last summer, nurses in the ER found themselves struggling with a massive influx of unattached patients.

"These patients are held in the ER until a doctor comes to admit them to the hospital," says Megan Ramshaw, an ER nurse at CVH. "For lack of a better term, they get stuck in the ER."

While nurses are no strangers to a busy and complex working environment, those at CVH became concerned about the standard of care for unattached patients.

"Because of the fractured nature of care for these patients, orders may not have been placed the day before," says Liz Kavouris, also an ER nurse at CVH. "They might not receive their normal medications. They don't get contact precautions flagged on their documentation – you might have somebody who has C-diff or COVID being held in the hallway."

As the number of unattached patients continued to increase, these BCNU members struggled with how the outcomes for these



“

We have been trying everything we can as a collective to make this situation more equitable and safer.”

Megan Ramshaw



patients differed from those properly admitted to the hospital under a responsible physician.

“This felt so morally distressing because these patients aren’t getting universal health care,” says ER nurse Devon Welsh. “You see an elderly person whom you’ve treated every day that week lying on a stretcher under the bright hallway lights. Then you see another person whose family doctor admits them to a proper room receive comprehensive medical care. It’s a matter of people’s rights.”

As the problem continued to build, the nurses felt compelled to act. They began having conversations with each other and bringing their concerns to management about what could be done to better care for these patients. But they found those first efforts frustrating.

“After a really horrendous summer last year, it was clear that there was no plan,” says Ramshaw. “We had no space to work out of, we ran out of stretchers, we didn’t always have a spot available for the next person.”

“It became very obvious that someone needed to do something,” Welsh adds. “And that someone can be us.”

They consulted their local BCNU steward, Shawna Atkinson, who encouraged them to start pressing on all of the levers available to them as unionized nurses. Each member tapped into their unique skill set, and the group started tackling the problem from multiple angles.

Kavouris found that, while managers were interested in what they had to say, a lack of

information on these unattached patients meant that they didn't understand the full scope of the problem. Using her statistics acumen, she started gathering data to support their advocacy efforts and explain how unattached patients were affecting hospital outcomes and costs.

"As emergency patients who haven't been admitted, unattached patients don't exist on the hospital census," she explains. "We prepared numbers showing longer hospital stays for these patients and an exponential increase in our budget."

Welsh worked with the hospital's Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee

to document concerns for nurses' safety and even consulted the local fire department when overcrowding in the ER was at its worst.

Ramshaw focused on advocating from a nursing practice standpoint, drafting a joint letter to the employer using the Nurses' Bargaining Association professional responsibility process to help solve nursing practice issues collaboratively at the local level. Once enough of their co-workers had signed the letter, they presented it to the employer, demanding it take the problem seriously. Additionally, along with their colleagues, the group filed dozens of submissions through the Patient



BY THE NUMBERS

Education

BCNU is a learning organization committed to the growth and development of all our members. Our education programs offer members the chance to grow personally and professionally, and help them gain a better understanding of their union, their workplace and the health-care system.



67

Building Union Strength workshops held



28%

more learners on the BCNU Learning Centre in 2024-2025



135

digital and print resources in Steward Toolkit



78%

of available course seats filled



“

It became very obvious that someone needed to do something. And that someone can be us.”

Devon Welsh



Safety and Learning System – the employer’s web-based tool for reporting patient safety incidents and hazards.

Following their coordinated efforts, the three nurses say that they are starting to see more clinical leadership from management focused on tackling the problem. They now meet regularly with management, professional practice directors and senior hospital administrators to discuss solutions. They have also started meeting with local physicians to collaborate.

The unattached patients problem is not yet solved at CVH – a downstream effect of the shortage of physicians in BC. Indeed,

many hospitals and health-care settings across the province are likely experiencing their own version of the issue. But, thanks to these BCNU members’ united efforts, their local hospital and health authority are paying attention.

“We needed to work as a team,” says Kavouris. “I don’t think being separate or fighting each other would have got us anywhere.”

These nurses also outline how the power and support that BCNU provided helped them have the courage to push the issue and advocate for their colleagues and patients.

“When you have the union behind you, your voice is not just your own,” says Kavouris. “The whole team has your back. It’s very reassuring.”

By uniting to pursue a shared objective, these three nurses made sure their voices – and the voices of their patients – were heard.

“This is our community,” says Ramshaw. “Any one of our family members or friends could be part of this unattached cohort. I want to be able to look them in the eye and tell them that we have been trying everything we can as a collective to make this situation better, more equitable and safer.”

BCNU LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2024 winners

The Excellence in Leadership and Advocacy Award honours a member who has made a difference to the health and well-being of their community, and to their profession through leadership, activism or social justice efforts.

The NU Leader Award honours a student member, or member with less than five years of nursing experience, who has demonstrated outstanding achievements in BCNU-focused advocacy and activism and embodies union values.

Each winner receives beautiful, personalized, original artwork and a monetary prize of \$1,000.



EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY AWARD

Juanita Little

Juanita is a registered nurse in BCNU's Thompson North Okanagan region. Since graduating in 1996, she has worked in multiple hospital settings including emergency, med-surg, palliative care and labour and delivery.

Currently she works as the community integration care coordinator for home and community care at Ashcroft and District General Hospital.

Several colleagues nominated Juanita for this award. Among her supporters is co-worker Sonja Sullivan. "I've grown to respect Juanita's integrity, leadership, clinical expertise, critical thinking and knowledge," says Sullivan. "She's an outstanding advocate for rural residents who fights to ensure clients receive equitable health

services and our team receives equitable service-delivery support."

Another of Little's nominators, Interior Health manager of clinical operations for home health and home support Bethany Ryan, offers another example of why she believes Little deserves the award: "Juanita's energetic petitioning for increased full-time employees helped our team secure a new licensed practical nurse position to help provide rural and remote home health services to Lytton as it rebuilds from 2021's devastating fires."

Juanita is known for her critical thinking ability, broad perspective on rural health care and strong sense of social justice. She builds team strength through dedicating time to listen to her colleagues.



RAVEN STEALS THE LIGHT

Award recipients received an etched glass piece featuring art by Erik Prytula, a Haida artist from the eagle clan Tsiits Gitanee, called *Raven Steals the Light*. It is inspired by the creation story where the raven steals the sun, the moon and the stars and puts them in the sky, creating life as we know it. The print is a representation of nurses bringing light to dark places.



NU LEADER AWARD

Laura Starck

Laura is a registered nurse at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH). She began her nursing career in northern British Columbia, working in acute care before spending time at BC Cancer. She is also a clinical instructor at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

BCNU Central Vancouver regional council member Gerald Dyer says he was thrilled to endorse Starck, who has filled various roles on her region's executive team, including treasurer, lobby coordinator and steward at large.

"Laura has not only embraced her steward responsibilities but has exhibited a genuine passion for union advocacy and activism," Dyer says. "One of her standout achievements was her

pivotal role spearheading the ER campaign at VGH – shedding light on pressing issues nurses face in emergency departments across BC. By rallying campaign champions and activists, Laura has amplified nurses' voices and strengthened the bond between the union, its members and the community at large."



HOW BCNU SUPPORTS YOU

The union offers services to members related to all four domains of nursing: research, clinical practice, leadership and education. We are proud to provide a variety of services and resources to support members throughout their careers.

- > Support members and assist with resolving workplace concerns (grievances through to arbitrations).
 - > Support members returning to work, safe from discrimination (duty to accommodate).
 - > Negotiate independent contracts for members who are not covered by the Nurses' Bargaining Association.
 - > Provide educational opportunities, both virtual and in-person, as well as resources for members and stewards.
 - > Support and mentor members, stewards and regional representatives to address health and safety concerns.
 - > Represent members in appeals of WorkSafeBC decisions, including written submissions or representation at oral hearings.
 - > Represent members with appeals related to LTD claims.
 - > Administer the Enhanced Disability Management Program in a manner consistent with program principles and best practices.
 - > Assist members with licensing and practice issues.
 - > Guide and assist members with the professional responsibility process.
 - > Administer BCNU education bursaries and financial support.
 - > Support student members with education and professional development opportunities.
 - > Support retired members and those preparing for retirement.
 - > Support BCNU's working groups and committees, including Human Rights and Equity caucuses and networks.
 - > Organize provincial conferences and events.
 - > Provide regional and grassroots organizing support.
 - > Offer library services and records management, including personal information requests.
 - > Publish BCNU member magazine.
 - > Host BCNU.org website, a members-only portal and support regional and provincial social media channels.
 - > Provide media relations and media training.
 - > Develop public-facing, issues-based advertising campaigns.
- 

**BCNU is committed to advancing
reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
– a commitment that is necessary and
reflective of our values.**

**Scan the QR code to learn more
about BCNU's commitments to
truth and reconciliation.**



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