

**TOGETHER WE
RISE**

ANNUAL REPORT
2025 - 2026

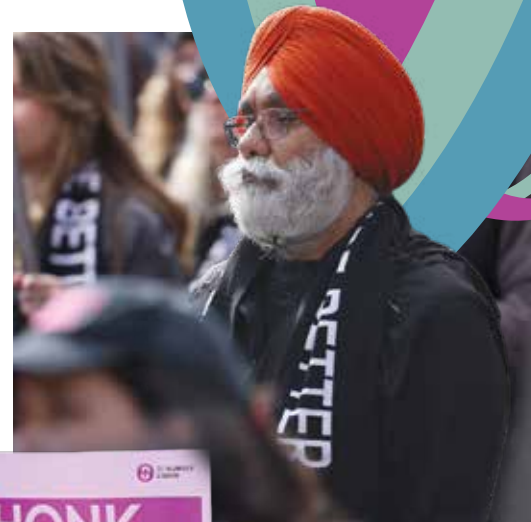




We acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of over 200 First Nations in what we now call British Columbia. We do so with gratitude for the traditional stewards of these lands and waters - the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Land Defenders - who, from time immemorial, have cared for and nourished communities of human and more-than-human beings. We are committed to redressing the harms of colonization through a process of genuine and just reconciliation - guided by, and in solidarity with, Indigenous Peoples.



WE RISE TOGETHER



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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.

Equality

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

Integrity

By being honest, respectful, accountable and transparent.

Solidarity

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

Democracy

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

Excellence

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

Social Justice

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

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2025-2027

OUR 2026 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

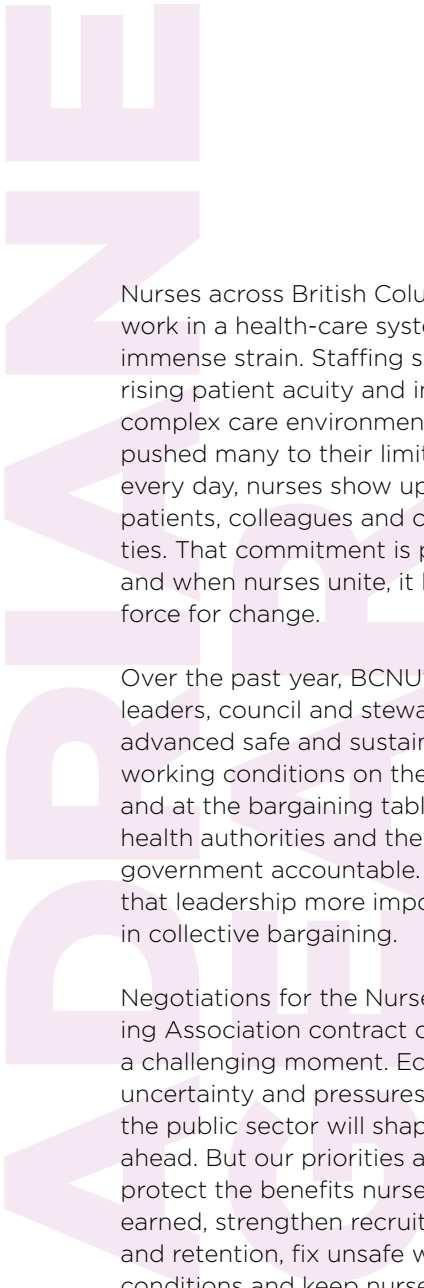
As the professional voice of nursing, continue to advocate for quality practice in health care including the successful implementation of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios.

- > 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.



Nurses across British Columbia work in a health-care system under immense strain. Staffing shortages, rising patient acuity and increasingly complex care environments have pushed many to their limits. Yet every day, nurses show up for their patients, colleagues and communities. That commitment is powerful, and when nurses unite, it becomes a force for change.

Over the past year, BCNU's elected leaders, council and stewards have advanced safe and sustainable working conditions on the ground and at the bargaining table, holding health authorities and the provincial government accountable. Nowhere is that leadership more important than in collective bargaining.

Negotiations for the Nurses' Bargaining Association contract come at a challenging moment. Economic uncertainty and pressures across the public sector will shape the path ahead. But our priorities are firm: protect the benefits nurses have earned, strengthen recruitment and retention, fix unsafe working conditions and keep nurses in the

public health-care system British Columbians depend on. Achieving this demands unity. Members must stick together and be ready to stand up for themselves - including voting "yes" in a strike vote if necessary.

At the same time, BCNU continues to push forward one of the most significant changes our system has seen in decades: minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. Ratios are not just numbers. They are a proven patient safety measure and a lifeline for nurses who have carried unsafe workloads for far too long. Where ratios are in place, nurses are already seeing the difference: safer care, more sustainable workloads and practising nursing as they were trained to. Much work remains; we will continue to make progress thanks to the dedication, knowledge and passion of BC's nurses.

I see that fierce dedication every time I speak with members about their working conditions. These conversations matter. When members work with elected leaders, council members and stewards, they build a foundation for advocacy and

engagement with decision-makers, reminding us that the solutions to many of the challenges in health care come from within the profession.

But serious problems remain. Workplace violence continues to plague health care. No one should face threats, intimidation or physical abuse while providing care. BCNU is pressing for stronger prevention measures, accessible digital reporting, enforceable safeguards and real accountability from employers and government. Working together, BCNU members will fight back, using every tool available to secure safe, violence-free workplaces.

Our culture of advocacy extends beyond provincial borders. Working within national organizations like the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and Canadian Health Coalition and alongside the Canadian Labour Congress, we defend Canada's public health-care system, push back against for-profit staffing models and advance policies that strengthen nursing. These efforts recognize that the complex challenges facing health care are



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Members must stick together and be ready to stand up for themselves.

Adriane Gear
President

interconnected, and demand coordinated, evidence-based solutions. This work reinforces our understanding that nursing is a collective profession, made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures and communities.

We have consistently affirmed that human rights work is fundamental to the strength and future of our union. BCNU has advanced diversity, equity and inclusion through expanding anti-racism education and embedding cultural safety into the union's strategic priorities. We have increased the funded seats for the annual human rights and equity (HRE) conference. We've

granted members of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee automatic convention delegate status. And we've ensured future HRE bargaining conferences are held in person rather than virtually, on the same footing as the union's other bargaining conferences.

BCNU's effectiveness comes from a deep bench of leaders across BC. Our elected council and stewards enforce the collective agreement every day, addressing unsafe conditions, taking the employer to task and building solidarity with members. This year, they have played a critical role in preparing members for potential job action.

The year ahead will demand courage, solidarity and determination. The pressures will not ease overnight, but when those closest to care work together to shape solutions, progress follows. By investing in safe staffing, respectful workplaces and strong public health care, we build a better system for patients, communities and future generations of nurses.

Together, we rise - through shared leadership, collective responsibility and a commitment to building a stronger, safer and more sustainable health-care system for British Columbia.

The past year brought steady progress in strengthening BCNU, both internally among the membership and externally in our power to influence government and the public. Our voice is strong, and British Columbians know they can count on BCNU to defend and strengthen safe patient care in BC and across the country.

BCNU's regional lobby coordinators played a key role in that work, championing union campaigns and ensuring policymakers hear nurses' concerns – and our solutions. They educated the public about minimum nurse-to-patient ratios and advocated for violence prevention measures to keep members safe at work. I have been incredibly inspired by the work they're doing across the province – meeting with mayors, presenting to city councils, engaging with MLAs and representing the union at community events.

Our human rights and equity (HRE) work also made great strides. With the addition of the Senior Nurses' Network, BCNU now has four caucuses and three networks advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. We doubled the size of our annual HRE conference, giving more members the opportunity to engage on these issues. And we're introducing a new annual meeting for HRE regional representatives to connect, share experiences and increase solidarity across our vast landscape of issues and geography.



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British Columbians know they can count on BCNU to defend and strengthen safe patient care.”

Tristan Newby
Vice President

As I tour across BC, I see the positive impact of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in worksites where they've been implemented. While immense progress has been made in acute care settings, these units stand in stark contrast with the many others still awaiting ratios. Much more work remains before all worksites and sectors are activated, and members will play a vital role in that work. All nurses need to be generating conversations on the importance of securing and maintaining ratios.

Many challenges await us, as nurses and as a union. To meet them, we are building relationships and alliances across the province and country, because solidarity is at the core of a strong union and labour movement. President Adriane Gear and I serve on the executive board

of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, and I also serve as secretary of the Canadian Health Coalition. Showing leadership at these tables is one of the important ways we work together as a labour movement.

Members play an essential role in advancing this work. Over the past year, BCNU members have demonstrated their commitment to the broader labour movement by supporting colleagues on picket lines, including those with the BC General Employees' Union and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. These actions reflect a core truth: strong public services depend on strong workers. We rise together to defend our profession, strengthen public health care and achieve lasting progress.

This year has seen significant challenges for nurses, who continue to face heavy workloads and workplace violence amid the ongoing fight for respect and safe staffing. Yet in the face of these pressures, I have seen something powerful: members becoming more engaged, more informed and more determined.

As provincial treasurer, my role is to ensure BCNU has the financial strength and sustainability needed to support collective action and prepare our union for the work ahead.

As chair of the Provincial Job Action Committee, I oversaw significant work to ensure our readiness for potential job action in 2026. That work focused on strengthening coordination, preparing resources and reinforcing the infrastructure required to support members should collective action become necessary. That preparation is not reactive; it is deliberate and strategic, and it reflects our responsibility to members to be ready.

But financial strength alone is not enough. What gives our union power is solidarity. When speaking with members preparing for bargaining and possible job action, I remind them to stay together, stay united and stay positive. We're in this together.

Those words reflect what I see across our union every day – members supporting one another, stewards stepping forward, and nurses refusing to accept unsafe or

unfair conditions. When members rise together, change becomes not only possible, but inevitable.

While job action planning requires significant focus, our commitment to equity and inclusion remains central to our work. BCNU continues to invest effort and money to support our human rights and equity (HRE) groups and diversity initiatives. To strengthen transparency, we established a distinct budget section identifying the resources allocated to this work, so members can clearly see how their dues support equity across our union. I also joined Vice President Tristan Newby in weekly drop-in sessions for HRE chairs, creating space for dialogue about governance, financial stewardship and our collective responsibility to foster inclusion.



Sharon Sponton
Treasurer

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When members rise together, change becomes not only possible, but inevitable.

Looking ahead, my focus remains on strengthening financial transparency, improving members' understanding of how the union invests their dues and aligning our resources with the priorities set by Council and members. I am also committed to expanding financial education opportunities so members feel confident not only in their union's future, but in their own through understanding the resources available to them.

The year ahead will bring challenges, particularly as advocacy and bargaining efforts continue, but I am confident in this union and in the determination of its members.

We are organized. We are prepared. And together, we will continue to rise.

BCNU members are rising together through collective action, mutual support and a shared commitment to safer workplaces. As the pressures on our health-care system intensify, it's never been more important for nurses to unite, listen to one another and act to defend the occupational health and safety rights they and their patients rely on.

Our union has been focused on supporting the activists and leaders who are assisting members when workplace safety concerns arise. BCNU stewards and regional occupational health and safety (OHS) and mental health representatives are often the first to step in and hold health employers to account. I and other Provincial Executive Committee members have witnessed our health and safety teams make a real difference through coordinated, principled action – not isolated efforts – to effectively address issues like workplace violence and psychological injury.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) committees form a critical line of defence in preventing workplace injuries and holding employers accountable. We are working closely with BCNU staff to provide JOHS committee reps with the practical education, tools and confidence they need to raise safety concerns effectively and create safer, more respectful workplaces.

BCNU's Enhanced Disability Management Program (EDMP) representatives are also there to support members when injury or



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



We're helping
shape the future
of nursing in
British Columbia.

illness does occur, helping them recover from stressful experiences and navigate the return-to-work and accommodation process. As council liaison for EDMP, I'm proud to support these representatives and deeply appreciate the care and advocacy they provide to members during their most vulnerable moments.

Our members' health and safety will always be among the union's top bargaining priorities. I and other members of the NBA Provincial Job Action Committee (PJAC) are working with regional and worksite representatives from across the province to coordinate job action planning and ensure BCNU is ready to act and secure a contract that nurses deserve. Our focus has been strengthening communication, building solidarity and ensuring members understand their collective power.

I'm especially proud of how members have supported one another during increasingly crucial conversations around the implementation of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios – a solution that's needed to help prevent violent incidents linked to inadequate staffing levels and create safer care settings for patients and nurses. This bargaining round will be challenging as we push for meaningful health and safety improvements while protecting the benefits nurses before us worked hard to achieve.

Looking ahead, I'm encouraged by our members' shared readiness to move forward on ratios, defend members' rights and strengthen workplace safety. Together, we're not just responding to challenges in health care. We're helping shape the future of nursing in British Columbia.

The engagement and unity of BCNU members has been tremendously inspiring. Members are showing up in record numbers over the past year, talking with their colleagues, completing important surveys and learning about the union and their rights. This solidarity will take us far as we approach the many challenges ahead.

Much of my work this year focused on pension education, helping members improve their financial literacy, better understand their pension and plan for their futures. Travelling through the regions has afforded me new perspectives into the questions and concerns members face, which I am using to develop regional education that takes a holistic view of what a fulfilling retirement can look like.

In addition to developing a *Pensions 101* e-learning module on the BCNU website and a retirement checklist, I am particularly proud of a new *NU Connections* lunch-time webinar co-produced with the BCNU education team, *Have You Thought About Retirement?* Designed as a high-level introduction, the session familiarizes members with retirement considerations and their pensions – one of the most valuable benefits in their collective agreement.

This year, the Retiree Benefit Committee tackled long-standing tax and compliance barriers within the Retiree Benefit Program. We began distributing payments to eligible retirees – a significant milestone that reflects sustained oversight and responsible stewardship of the program. More work remains to strengthen the plan for the future, but we have established a clearer and more stable path forward.



Solidarity will take us far as we approach the many challenges ahead.

Michelle Sordal

Executive Councillor, Pensions and Seniors Health

Enrolment has now opened for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) eligible to participate in the Retiree Benefit Program. This accomplishment has been years in the making, and it is an important step in expanding the program. Employer contributions began April 1, 2024, and eligible LPN retirees may receive lump-sum payments of up to \$2,000 in 2026. These payments provide meaningful, if interim, relief while we continue to work with the Canada Revenue Agency to clarify the tax treatment of future benefits and explore the long-term design options that members need.

With the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, long-term care and community nurses know dangers persist for their residents and clients. BCNU continues to demand better for these patients and the members providing their care. That is why I

met several times this year with BC's Seniors Advocate, Dan Levitt, and why we are pushing forward with demands for minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in long-term care and community settings. Safe staffing will save lives while retaining nurses in seniors' health care.

Finally, I'd like to reassure members that their pension plans remain financially stable. Despite global uncertainty, both the Municipal Pension Plan and Public Service Pension Plans are well-funded and well-managed. With diversified investments and careful stewardship, public pension funds are built to mitigate risk, ensuring reliable retirement income for plan members.

Engagement, collective action and solidarity are what make all this progress possible, and why *together, we rise*.

This past year has made one thing unmistakably clear: nurses are engaged and ready to fight for the future of public health care. The pressures facing the profession – chronic understaffing, unsafe workloads and growing patient demands – are structural failures that require structural solutions. Meeting this moment requires resolve, discipline and collective action.

When nurses move together, they move the system.

That movement has been on display throughout the year, as we prepared for, then began, negotiations for the next Nurses' Bargaining Association collective agreement. Our bargaining preparations reflect the strongest level of member engagement in BCNU history. Thousands of nurses participated in surveys, meetings and consultations to define our priorities. That input has shaped every aspect of our strategy. This level of engagement is not symbolic – it is leverage. When more than 50,000 nurses align around shared priorities, employ-

ers and government understand they are negotiating with a united profession.

Our counterparts at the bargaining table speak of fiscal constraints and provincial deficits. While there are real pressures facing government, I firmly believe you cannot fix a staffing crisis with half-measures and hope. Underinvesting in nurses does not save money – it shifts costs into overtime, burnout, turnover, injuries and compromised patient outcomes. This round is about whether BC can retain our experienced nurses and recruit the next generation.

Alongside bargaining, BCNU continues the complex work of developing and implementing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios across the system. Achieving ratios required years of organizing and advocacy. Delivering them requires continued work with government, coordination with employers, monitoring compliance and ensuring the standards translate into real staffing improvements on the ground. As implementation pro-

gresses, jurisdictions across Canada and beyond are watching closely to see how this reform improves working conditions, reshapes patient care and workforce stability. BCNU will continue to work with government and hold employers accountable for keeping ratios moving forward.

As CEO, I am equally focused on ensuring BCNU is financially strong, operationally disciplined and positioned for long-term sustainability. We manage significant member resources, and that responsibility demands precision. The launch of BCNU's mobile app and broader digital transformations are practical investments in efficiency, responsiveness and transparency.

We also continue to advance our focus on human rights and equity, understanding that systemic inequities in health care extend to the workforce itself. Nurses who are Indigenous, racialized, living with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ or internationally educated experience the system differently. A profession facing critical shortages cannot afford



Experience has taught me that the side that is organized, united and clear about its purpose holds the advantage.

Jim Gould
Chief Executive Officer

internal barriers that limit opportunity, advancement or safety for segments of its own membership. It requires a workforce that is respected and treated well in policy and in practice.

None of this work happens without people. Staff, elected leaders and activists bring expertise, discipline and commitment to every file. We have invested in internal leadership development and organizational capacity to ensure we can effectively represent nurses across regions, practice areas and communities. BCNU staff have

strengthened coordination across departments, improved response times for member support and enhanced alignment between operations and elected leadership. These are practical improvements that directly increase our effectiveness at the bargaining table and in the workplace.

The year ahead will be decisive. Bargaining outcomes will shape working conditions and the retention and recruitment of members for years to come. Experience has taught me that the side that is organized, united and clear about

its purpose holds the advantage. We hold that advantage and will continue to do so into the future.

That is what I see in BCNU today: alignment, readiness and resolve.

Together We Rise is not a slogan. It is a statement of fact. When nurses rise together, governments listen, systems change and public health care moves forward.

We will keep rising.

REGIONAL LEADERS

BCNU activists work together to advance members' interests in their workplaces and communities. Their leadership inspires unity in their co-workers, building strength across the union to improve our health-care system and advance nurses' professional voice. We asked our regional council members to tell us about how members in their region prepared for potential job action this year.



Central Vancouver strengthened job action preparedness through regular updates, workplace conversations and targeted training for stewards and activists. These efforts emphasized collective rights, strike readiness and mutual support. Transparent communication and consistent engagement have built confidence and unity among members.

GERALD DYER
Central Vancouver



More Central Vancouver members than ever before participated at events and education sessions this year. Members stayed informed, asked questions and communicated what they are prepared to fight for. Many volunteered to support job action, reflecting growing engagement and solidarity.

KRISTINA HERNANDEZ
Central Vancouver



East Kootenay held site visits, mini-regionals and a mock job action exercise. Grounded in the belief that knowledge is power, stewards and JOHS representatives participated in education sessions and peer learning, and members shared insights with colleagues, building job action readiness.

DENISE WAURYNCHUK & CARLY VANDERHART (Interim)
East Kootenay



Coastal Mountain focused on outreach to ensure members understand what is at stake in bargaining. Members actively participated in the benefits survey and discussed job action. These conversations strengthened their understanding of the bargaining process and collective action.

ANGELA CRAWFORD
Coastal Mountain



Fraser Valley region members committed to preparing for job action, completing bargaining surveys, volunteering as job action contacts and encouraging colleagues to complete job action learning modules. These efforts strengthened communication across worksites and reinforced a commitment to standing together.

KATHERINE HAMILTON (Interim)
Fraser Valley



North West region prioritized job action preparedness this year. Holding weekly conversations, helping members fact-check information and training job action representatives helped members deepen their understanding of collective action. Nurses joined other unions on picket lines, demonstrating solidarity and unity.

TERI FORSTER
North West



Pacific Rim members strengthened collaboration and coordination to be ready for job action through regional member engagements. These opportunities contributed to rich, thoughtful discussions that have enhanced the region's job action preparedness, strengthened communication pathways and created a supportive response plan.

DEIDRE KNUDSON (Interim)
Pacific Rim



Our region engaged members through worksite visits, mini-regionals, mock strike exercises and over 60 outreach events this year. Members discussed worksite challenges, job action, the importance of a strong strike vote and accessing reliable information, including BCNU's new mobile app.

DANETTE THOMSEN
North East



The Okanagan Similkameen region spread job action awareness with regular in-person and virtual discussions about what job action may look like for members. WJAC representatives attended a full-day education session and supported HEU and BCGEU workers on the picket line.

CANDI DESOUSA
Okanagan Similkameen



This year, we focused on job action readiness. We held member engagement walks, dinners and presentations on bargaining and job action, including sessions led by Sharon Sponton and BCNU staff. These efforts strengthened member awareness and preparation across the region.

RAINA SIDHU (Interim)
Richmond Vancouver



The Simon Fraser region supported job action preparedness through mini-regional meetings where members reviewed BCNU's online job action modules. Participants deepened their understanding of the bargaining and job action process. These conversations strengthened connections, engagement and readiness across the region.

WENDY GIBBS
Simon Fraser



Simon Fraser engaged members in job action preparedness through regional education meetings, mini-regionals, worksite visits and newsletters. We encouraged members to complete online job action modules and held targeted education for stewards and worksite leaders to share job action information.

**ROY HANSEN &
FRANK MARTENS** (Interim)
Simon Fraser



This year, our region boosted job action readiness through direct member engagement and a visible union presence. By engaging members personally, our team focused on strengthening members' readiness to advocate for their rights through collective power.

CLAUDETTE JUT
Shaughnessy Heights



South Fraser Valley strengthened job action preparedness through lunch and dinner meetings, worksite drop-ins and gatherings. We saw increased member engagement with HRE caucuses and networks, strengthening connections across our membership. Participation has grown, reflecting stronger communication, deeper engagement and growing solidarity.

GLESY BANTON-VICTORIA
South Fraser Valley



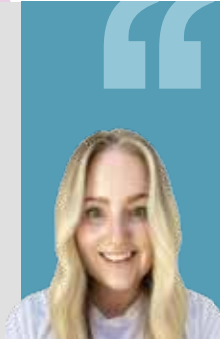
South Fraser Valley took an assessment of the region's job action readiness, then created an info-management system for worksites and recruited key personnel like picket captains. We ran rapid briefings and encouraged members to use the BCNU app to stay informed.

PEGGY HOLTON
South Fraser Valley



The South Islands region strengthened job action preparedness through consistent communication, steward education and integrating job action discussions into regional meetings, worksite visits and education days. These conversations helped build an understanding of bargaining processes and reinforced solidarity among members.

LEANNE ROBERTSON-WEEDS
South Islands



The South Islands region continues building job action readiness through communication, education and active member participation in BCNU events, job action modules and bargaining and benefits surveys. Regional reps identified strategic workers to strengthen coordination and communication across the region.

CAITLIN JARVIS
South Islands



Thompson North Okanagan organized Zoom meetings, worksite visits and mini-regionals in rural communities, encouraging members to follow bargaining updates and complete the job action learning modules. We also onboarded new stewards and OHS activists to build leadership capacity.

SCOTT DUVALL & LEAH TAKATS (Interim)
Thompson North Okanagan



Vancouver Metro region made bargaining and job action central to member engagement through educational offerings, regional meetings, steward planning sessions, engagement events and weekly *Talk Tuesday* conversations. These efforts strengthened communication across worksites and reinforced the commitment to take action

MEGHAN FRIESEN & FRANCES BESWICK (Interim)
Vancouver Metro



The West Kootenay region educated members and built collective preparedness through dinner meetings, worksite visits and Zoom sessions about bargaining priorities and job action. Regional members demonstrated solidarity on BCGEU picket lines, creating tangible experiences that reinforced commitment and unity.

SHALANE WESNOSKI
West Kootenay

WEAVING EQUITY THROUGH THE FABRIC OF BCNU

Unions have always fought for workers' rights, but not always for the rights of all workers. BCNU is no exception. Throughout our history, members from diverse racial backgrounds, cultures, genders and gender expressions have challenged racism, discrimination and underrepresentation – both in their workplaces and within their own union.

Because of that activism, four caucuses – Indigenous Leadership Circle (ILC), Mosaic of Colour (MOC), 2SLGBTQ+ and Workers with Disabilities (WWD) – along with three networks – Men in Nursing (MIN), Senior Nurses (SNN) and New and Young Nurses (NYN) – now play a formal role in shaping our union and strengthening representation.

BCNU strives to be a safe and welcoming place for all, but we know equity is not a destination. Rather, it is a journey that demands members' sustained commitment, willingness to have hard conversations and courage to hold ourselves accountable.

2005
BCNU establishes the multicultural caucus, beginning our journey towards a more diverse, equitable and inclusive union. Inspired by the Combahee River Collective (1977), an organization of feminist Black women, the caucus and network model recognizes that “major systems of oppression [racism, hetero/sexism, ableism, classism] are interlocking.”

2008
BCNU hosts its first Human Rights and Diversity conference (later called the Human Rights and Equity [HRE] conference), bringing together members of the Aboriginal Leadership Circle, LGBT, Workers of Colour and WWD caucuses with nurses from across the province. The event creates space for meaningful and politically engaged discussions about equity, justice, diversity and genuine inclusion – laying the foundation for a conference that continues to grow in reach and impact.



Human Rights at



2019
The ILC brings forward a successful resolution to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) to inform BCNU's commitment to a genuine and just reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The resolution commits the union to redressing the harms of colonialism and building a culturally safe, anti-racist and welcoming organization for all members.



2019
Responding to the Nestlé corporation siphoning water from unceded Stó:lō territory, the ILC successfully advances a convention resolution to boycott Nestlé products from all BCNU events, aligning union practices with commitments to Indigenous rights and environmental justice.



2020
Following a request from the 2SLGBTQ+ caucus, BCNU invites staff to include pronouns in email signatures and business cards. The request supports a more welcoming, inclusive environment for all members and employees regardless of their identity.



2011

BCNU has a long history of supporting harm reduction strategies. In 2011, the union took on a high-profile role in the courts to protect Vancouver's Insite safe consumption site from the federal Conservative government's efforts to shut it down. BCNU's legal support helped ensure the landmark unanimous Supreme Court decision upholding Insite's right to continue operating.



2013

The LGBT caucus brings forward a convention resolution calling for inclusive, accessible washrooms in BCNU's Burnaby office and provide everyone the use of these spaces without fear of judgment or harm. In 2023, BCNU updates the washroom signage to represent the fixtures (sinks, toilets, transfer bars) that users require, irrespective of their identity.



2015

At the HRE conference, Abenaki First Nation's filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin screened her documentary *Trick or Treaty?* about Treaty 9 territory (in what we now call northern Ontario). The film considers the many meanings of home and reconciliation during ongoing colonial dispossession. That same year, BCNU formally endorses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.



2016

The HRE committee launches a campaign highlighting watershed protection and equitable access to clean drinking water, noting that far too many First Nations and rural communities still experience water scarcity due to colonial and corporate theft.



2017

Author and activist Sarah Schulman's HRE conference keynote speech on her book *Conflict is not Abuse* (2016) reminds members that "conflict is rooted in difference and people are and always will be different... Most of the pain, destruction, waste and neglect towards human life that we create ... are consequences of our over-reaction to difference. This is expressed through our resistance to facing and resolving problems, which is overwhelmingly a refusal to change how we see ourselves..."

Rights and Equity BCNU



2022

BCNU launches a *Gender Diversity in the Nursing Profession* survey following increased reports of discrimination towards gender diverse members during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey aims to better understand challenges gender diverse nurses face and inform strategies to improve workplace inclusion and support.

2023

The Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) secures key equity measures in the 2022-2025 provincial collective agreement, including leave for gender-affirming care and Indigenous cultural leave. The agreement is the first NBA contract to include a territorial acknowledgement, reflecting a shared commitment with health employers to reconciliation.



2024

BCNU installs a memorial stone at its Burnaby office, on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, following a recommendation from the ILC and TRC. The stone honours children lost to residential schools and affirms BCNU's ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation.



2025

Convention delegates vote to double attendance at the annual HRE conference, expanding space for members to take part in the union's critical work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.

Change starts with honesty.

Add your VOICE to the DEI SURVEY

2026

BCNU invites members to share their experiences of discrimination through its *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Nursing Practice Environments* survey that aims to better understand how workplace discrimination affects professional practice environments and quality of life while guiding efforts to foster belonging.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

BCNU proudly supports four human rights and equity (HRE) caucuses and three networks as we strive to make our union a safe and welcoming place for all members.

These groups bring members together to share common issues and build on their lived experience to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion. They work to create change in health-care units across the province and within the union itself, contributing to our strategic directions, fostering equity and inclusion in governance and applying a human rights and equity lens to union operations.



We are a Circle of Indigenous members connected to these unceded, traditional and ancestral homelands and waters. Our presence affirms our survival, resilience and responsibility to advance equity and justice.

Guided by BCNU's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the commitments in the NBA Collective Agreement, we work toward a culturally safe and welcoming health-care system for all. We support Indigenous members to exercise their inherent rights to attend culturally significant ceremonies, build relationships with Indigenous student nurses, youth and communities and strengthen our relationships with allies as we advance reconciliation.

At the 2025 HRE Conference, we highlighted the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People and the Calls for Justice, while raising funds for the Women's Memorial March.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (ILC)

Joint Statement



MOSAIC OF COLOUR

The Mosaic of Colour caucus hosted a successful HRE dinner event this year, creating another welcoming space for members to share experiences, learn from one another, offer support and engage in dialogue on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and systemic racism. The event fostered connection and strengthened solidarity by centring members' lived experiences and collective learning.

We also worked collaboratively with DEI stewards to ensure they are equipped with the awareness, knowledge and cultural understanding needed to effectively advocate for diverse members in their workplaces.

In addition, the caucus continued to advocate for internationally educated nurses. Through bargaining initiatives and government advocacy, we pressed for fair access, recognition of credentials and successful integration into British Columbia's health-care system.

MOSAIC OF COLOUR (MOC)

Chair Peter Gill



Since 2025, the 2SLGBTQ+ caucus developed a campaign centered on the joy of pronouns - highlighting the sense of affirmation and respect we all experience when others use our correct pronouns. The campaign shifts the conversation away from obligation and toward connection, dignity and belonging, modelling BCNU's commitment to inclusion and equity while building member trust through meaningful consultation.

To support this work, the caucus created information cards, a presentation for members and staff and a series of video vignettes. These videos became some of the most highly engaging content on BCNU's Instagram account in 2025, reflecting a strong appetite among members for thoughtful, values-driven dialogue.

This campaign helped members uphold their rights to psychological health and safety, in the workplace and their union.

2SLGBTQ+

Chair Frances Beswick



The Workers with Disabilities caucus worked this year to strengthen our union through a focused kindness campaign. By promoting respect, inclusion and support for one another, we reduce division and reinforce a common goal – protecting our members and supporting them to use their voices. When we lift each other up instead of tearing each other down, we build a stronger, more unified BCNU.

We have also educated members about the accommodation process, developing a presentation outlining our vision, role and work within the union, and presenting it across BC to ensure members better understand disability rights and supports within BCNU.

WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES (WWD)

Chair Kelly Woywitka



Men in Nursing strengthened our union this year by actively recruiting, engaging and connecting with network members. Through outreach and events, we encouraged members to participate in union activities and build solidarity grounded in the principles of unionism and collective action. The network encouraged open, respectful peer-to-peer communication and created a space free from bias.

We provided practical resources and offered guidance, step-by-step support and direct assistance to members navigating union processes. This approach helped increase awareness, confidence and involvement.

By encouraging participation, supporting regional MIN reps and promoting BCNU's organizing model, MIN contributed to recruitment and retention efforts. When members feel engaged, informed and supported, the union is stronger.

MEN IN NURSING (MIN)

Chair Sunil Munjaral



In 2025, the Senior Nurses' Network (SNN) was established to represent nurses aged 55 and older, advancing BCNU's strategic direction to strengthen our union by building engagement and solidarity among our senior members. Representatives from 16 regions stepped forward to help define the roles and priorities of senior nurses, developing the network's terms of reference and logo while building connections across regions. Members attended conferences to deepen their knowledge and help guide the network's early work.

This year, the SNN is focusing on provincial education and regional initiatives that address ageism, supporting health and retirement planning and collaborating with other HRE networks and caucuses to advance issues relevant to senior nurses.

SENIOR NURSES' NETWORK (SNN)

Chair Melina Kerrivan



This year, NYN advanced BCNU's strategic priorities through focusing on inclusion. Changing our network's name from YNN to NYN reflects our commitment to better include nurses within their first five years of practice, many of whom may not identify with age-based labels. We are also proposing to expand our age eligibility from 35 to 40, including members who enter the profession and start families later in life.

In addition, we advocated for improved communication and transparency between BCNU Council and members, resulting in a new policy requiring written responses to amended or defeated proposals. Finally, we pushed for the launch of the BCNU app for real-time bargaining updates, promoting equitable access to information and stronger member engagement.

NEW AND YOUNG NURSES (NYN)

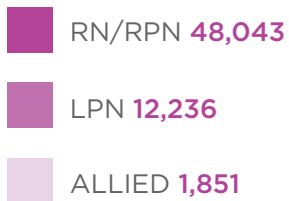
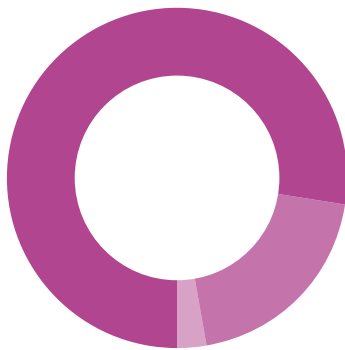
Chair Michael Woywitka

WHO WE ARE

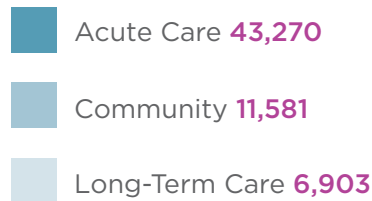
The BC Nurses' Union represents more than 55,000 professional nurses and allied health-care workers who provide care in hospitals, long-term care facilities and the community. We speak up and speak out for safe, quality, public health care. We value and respect diversity, and pride ourselves in providing protection, representation and services to all members.

Our Members

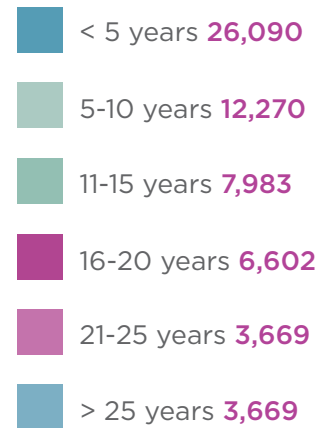
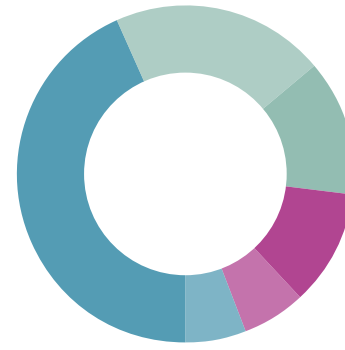
BY DESIGNATION



BY SECTOR

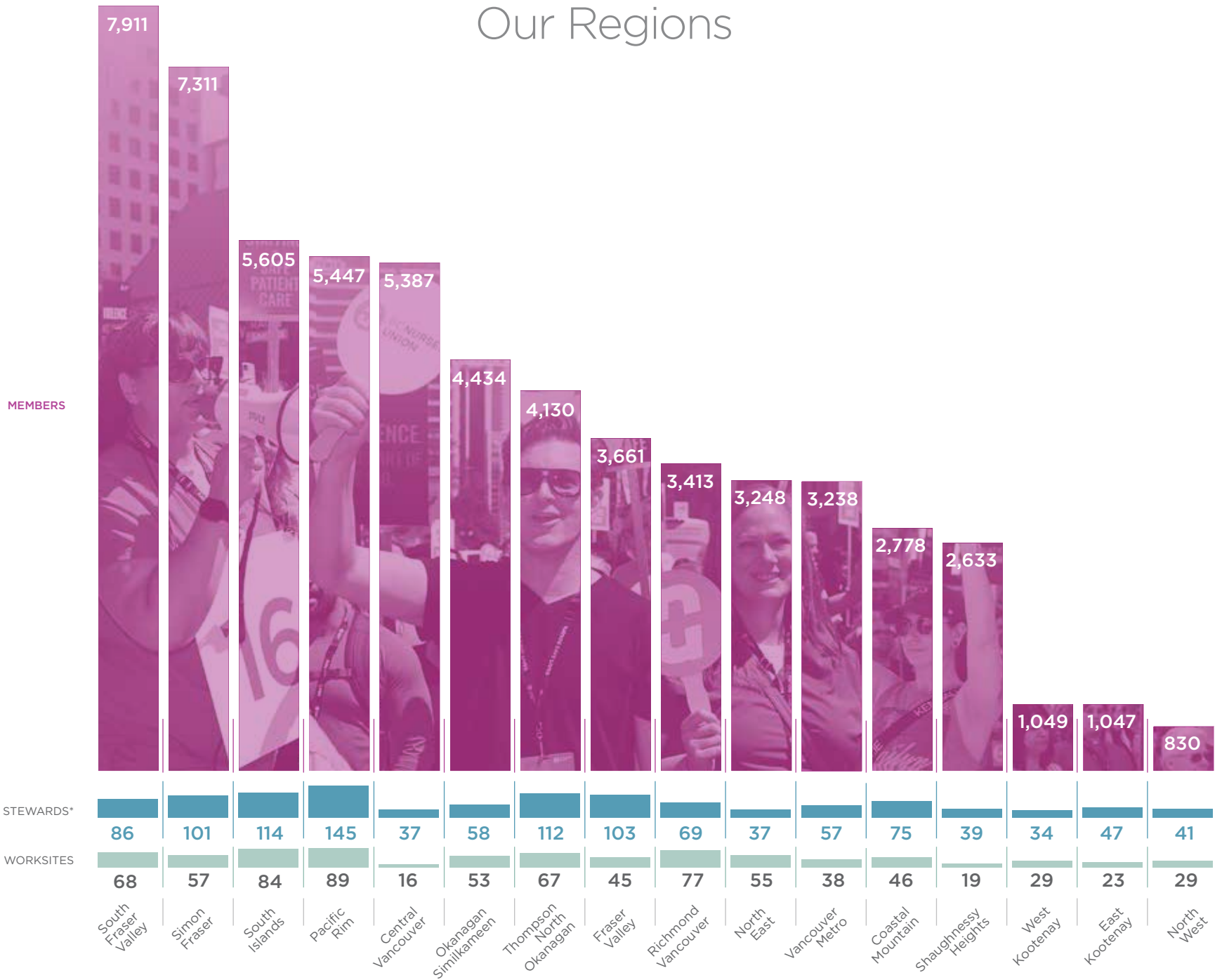


BY SENIORITY



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



*Note: The steward numbers represent the number of roles per region. Some stewards work in multiple regions.




RATIOS BRING HOPE

Years of advocacy, collaboration and consultation bring better outcomes for nurses and patients through minimum nurse-to-patient ratios


Across BC, a years-long effort to improve patient care is beginning to deliver results. Driven by nurses and supported through collaboration across the health-care system, minimum nurse-to-patient ratios are starting to change what care looks and feels like on the front lines.

For nurses on units where minimum nurse-to-patient ratios are in place, the difference is already clear: more time with patients, safer workloads and care that feels sustainable again.



 NURSES UNION
NURSE-PATIENT RATIOS WORK!

PATIENTS DESERVE BETTER RATIOS

 NURSES UNION
NURSES KNOW RATIOS WORK

 NURSES UNION
SAFETY SAVES LIVES

IF I'M SAFE YOU'RE SAFE

SAFETY SAVES LIVES

IF I'M SAFE YOU'RE SAFE

RATIOS WORK

RATIOS WORK

IF I'M SAFE YOU'RE SAFE



Kyla Dres is a licensed practical nurse working at Nicola Valley Hospital in Merritt who is feeling the early positive impacts of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. Her workplace is part of the 73 percent of units that are implementing ratios as of March 2026. This first phase of implementation includes medical and surgical inpatient units, rehabilitation, palliative care, focused and high-acuity care, intensive care, rural and remote facilities and some pediatric services.

Dres says the number of nursing vacancies in her unit have noticeably declined as a direct result of ratios coming into effect. Her hospital's transition liaison, who hears from nurses each day about clients who may need home care, is reporting a significant improvement in their morale.

"They're actually able to meet the requirements of their job," Dres says. "People want to work in a unit where they feel like their workload is manageable, that they can fulfill their standards of practice and not leave in a state of moral distress."

Dres also serves as a regional ratio representative, a BCNU role created for front-line nurses to monitor progress in ratio implementation, strengthen engagement and bring together nurses, management and local teams to ensure safe staffing and better patient care. At the mostly rural and remote sites she monitors, she has seen meaningful improvements to the quality-of-care nurses are able to provide.

"Ratios have resulted in increased dignity for the patients," she says. "They're able to have things like assistance with their washes, getting up to the bathroom

and more involvement in their care planning. We're able to set them up for success upon discharge. Nurses actually have time to listen to them and treat them holistically."

Having that time is critical. It improves care across the board but also helps reduce barriers for traditionally marginalized patients – a goal specifically embedded in the policy directive that health authorities use to implement ratios. With more manageable workloads, nurses have more time to provide culturally safe, trauma-informed care grounded in trust, attention and respect. Ratios can also help offset fatigue, information overload and overcrowding – factors that can worsen implicit bias and compassion fatigue.

The story of ratios in BC thus far, however, is an uneven one. Even in activated units, there are still days where staffing levels fall short. And in settings that are not part of phase one, the contrast is stark.

"Where ratios are in place, nurses can deliver the kind of care they were trained to provide – safe, focused and patient-centred. Where they're not, we're still seeing the strain: unsafe workloads, rising injuries and nurses leaving the profession," says BCNU President Adriane Gear. "That contrast makes it clear. That's why BCNU continues to push for implementation, because ratios aren't a luxury, they're essential."

Phase two includes emergency departments, operating rooms, alternative level of care units, maternity care, post-anaesthesia care and neonatal intensive care,



where implementation is about to begin. Community and long-term care will follow, though implementation in those settings requires a different level of planning. BC will be the first jurisdiction in the world to extend ratios into those areas, a milestone that will require the same level of collaboration that has driven progress so far.

Dres says phase two can't come soon enough.

"Not having ratios is actually causing people to leave those departments because they don't want to work in such a chaotic environment and not feel good about the care that they're able to provide," she says. "And there are increased injuries in those departments compared to the units at ratio."

Shawna Atkinson has been a registered nurse for 20 years and works at both the Campbell River and Comox Valley hospitals in emergency and intensive care. She has closely monitored ratio implementation on the front lines and helps members address problems in implementation.



Like many members, she sees the same challenges in settings that have yet to see ratios activated. Her role as a full-time steward involves urging the employer to be proactive and take action to address gaps.

“At my two hospitals, the alternative level of care units and emergency departments are struggling,” says Atkinson. “Our members who look after patients waiting for long-term care are seeing a 1:17 ratio. We’re saying to the employer, ‘Our workplace injuries are up in these areas. We’re going to be implementing ratios, you know we need them.’”



“

People want to work in a unit where they feel like their workload is manageable, that they can fulfill their standards of practice and not leave in a state of moral distress.”

Ratio Rep Kyla Dres

Experience elsewhere reinforces the results BC’s collaborative approach has shown. In California and the Australian state of Victoria – the first two jurisdictions in the world to implement ratios – the results have been impressive.

After adopting ratios in 2000, the number of employed nurses in Victoria, Australia increased 24 percent, with 7,000 inactive nurses returning to the workforce and vacancies in urban hospitals all but disappearing.

California saw similar results after rolling out ratios in all acute care settings in the early 2000s, with a 60 percent increase in nurse registrations in the state and a 69 percent decrease in vacancies at

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NOT PART OF THE JOB.

SAFE PATIENT CARE



VIOLENCE. NOT PART OF THE JOB.

RATIOS WILL KEEP ME SAFE

VIOLENCE. NOT PART OF THE JOB.

VIOLENCE. NOT PART OF THE JOB.



SAFE PATIENT CARE



DELEGATE

VIOLENCE. NOT PART OF THE JOB.



VIOLENCE. NOT PART OF THE JOB.



A BLUEPRINT TO END VIOLENCE

Nurses have come together to create ten demands to end violence in health care. Now it's up to decision-makers to do their part.

For the nurses holding up British Columbia's health-care system, violence is not an abstract policy issue – it is something they brace for ahead of every shift. Nurses are hit, threatened, harassed and intimidated in hospitals, long-term care homes and community settings across the province. For too long, these incidents have been dismissed as “part of the job.”

For years, nurses have been pushing back – together – against the idea that workplace violence is something they should just accept. Now, they are putting forward a clear plan for change.

Nurses have been speaking out publicly about what they face while caring for others through the union's *Violence. Still Not Part of the Job* campaign – and, critically, what could be done to prevent violence in the first place. The campaign, along with years of research, advocacy and consultation with BCNU members, has culminated in ten concrete measures they are asking employers and government to follow – a blueprint to prevent violence in health care.

These measures did not come from a boardroom. They were built from the ground up by nurses dealing with violence in real time – on night shifts, in understaffed units and in long-term care homes without security. They were refined by joint occupational health and safety (JOHS) committee representatives and union staff whose job is to analyze incident data, push to enforce health and safety standards and support members. Now, BCNU's elected leaders are presenting the measures and demanding action when they meet with politicians and health employers. The recommendations represent what happens when union members, experts and leaders work together to define what a safe workplace looks like.

For Brigette Henning, a BCNU occupational health and safety representative and emergency department nurse at Arrow Lakes Hospital in Nakusp, that refusal is deeply personal. In a small rural site without dedicated security, she says nurses often feel exposed.

"We rely on the police as our security because we don't have any other

options," she explains. "We don't have anything else."

On night shifts, she says staffing levels are hard to maintain, and nurses are often unsure if they'll have enough coverage to provide care, which can leave them feeling pressured to take on unsafe assignments.

"We're one sick call away from having our patients diverted to another hospital," she says. "You never know who's coming through the door. Until you start triaging the patient, you don't know whether they have been violent with health-care workers before."

After dealing with the problem for years, Henning and nurses like her have had it with the status quo.

In Nakusp, Henning says the lack of dedicated, trained security has led nurses to adopt their own informal safety measures. "We have some really violent people in our community. One guy is 6'6" and close to 400 pounds, and he comes in frequently," she says. "We always carry our personal cell phones with us on shift and about a year ago, nurses on night shifts were bringing in their dogs while working in isolation." She adds that management later stopped the practice due to policy concerns. While nurses complied, Henning says there's been little done since to make these nurses feel safe.

These aren't solutions – they're workarounds.

In worksites across BC, nurses are seeing the same pattern and calling it what it is: a systemic failure.



FROM NURSES' VOICES TO A PLAN OF ACTION

The process to create the 10 violence-prevention measures began with listening.

BCNU surveyed members and held health and safety check-ins across the province to listen and gather their observations. Members shared what they have observed: similar patterns of chronic understaffing, insufficient security, escalating patient acuity, poorly designed workspaces and reporting systems that fail to capture what's really happening.

Those similarities extended beyond the broader patterns and into specific examples ranging from broken panic buttons, inconsistent risk flagging, delays in implementing corrective measures after serious incidents and absent relational security officers.





“

I was told by a doctor that this is just part of the job – and I reminded her that no, this is not part of my job.”

Tash Minwalla



When comparing members' stories with employer incident reports and WorkSafeBC data, the mismatch was striking. Incidents of violence were both widespread and underreported.

“Nurses know what the problems are, and they have solutions. It’s time to listen,” says BCNU President Adriane Gear. “Violence leaves lasting scars – physically, emotionally and professionally,” says Gear. “Every act of violence pushes another nurse out of the profession. We cannot continue to accept this as the cost of care.”

BCNU leaders gathered the survey data and members' accounts of violence and brought nurses' voices directly to elected officials at the Victoria legislature in October 2025. The union met with MLAs from all parties to present 10 specific →

The five asks for government:

The first five measures call on the provincial government to set clear expectations, provide funding and enforce standards across the health system:

1. Implement minimum nurse-to-patient ratios.
2. Enhance the role of relational security officers across the province.
3. Adopt an effective safety alert system and technology to aid prevention.
4. Improve data collection and monitoring to mitigate risks.
5. Fulfill the government's 2016 promise to deliver a violence prevention framework.

Together, these ten measures form a blueprint for change – one rooted in evidence and frontline expertise.

The five asks for health authorities:

The remaining measures focus on actions health employers can and must implement at the operational level:

1. Standardize violence risk assessments, so patients are placed appropriately.
2. Provide mandatory, role-specific violence-prevention training.
3. Establish effective incident reporting, debriefing and support systems.
4. Improve facility design to support safety for health-care workers and patients.
5. Establish a culture of safety and leadership accountability.

→ RATIOS BRING HOPE
continued from page 29

Sacramento hospitals. An astounding 74 percent of California's nurses said they were able to provide their patients with higher quality care because of ratios.

More recent research close to home points in the same direction. A peer-reviewed study by Dr. Karen Lasater, Dr. Linda H. Aiken and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania looked at the links between staffing conditions, patient outcomes, quality of care, patient safety and nurse job outcomes in BC hospitals. It confirmed that unsafe workloads are the number one reason nurses plan to leave their jobs - with 66.6 percent of those considering leaving citing inadequate staffing, followed by 61.9 percent for burnout and 50.2 percent for dissatisfaction with management.

"Given the variability in staffing, quality and patient outcomes across BC hospitals, the implementation of a minimum nurse-patient ratio policy has the potential to improve patient care safety and retention of nurses," the authors concluded.

Atkinson says that shift is already beginning.

"Even retired nurses are coming back, as are international nurses. People are moving from the mainland," she says. "Nurses that were part time are wanting to increase to full time, and casuals are wanting to work more."

While many units are still awaiting ratios, early results point to what is possible, and have many nurses, patients and communities eager to reap the benefits Atkinson sees.

"It's really everything we hoped for."



→ measures to prevent violence before it escalates - and directed five measures each to government and health authorities.

UNION STRENGTH IN ACTION

One of the most powerful aspects of this campaign has been the breadth of leadership behind it.

Grassroots activists have shared their stories publicly in a series of campaign videos launched on BCNU's social media, including Henning and BCNU OHS rep and long-term care nurse, Tash Minwalla, who both spoke about the urgent need for relational security officers in their respective sectors.

JOHS committee reps are pushing for hazard assessments and corrective measures at the worksite level. OHS staff are backing up what members have been saying with data, investigations and enforcement. The bargaining team is raising violence-prevention at the negotiating table, and BCNU's regional executive and lobby coordinators are meeting with politicians of all stripes and every level



“

You never know who's coming through the door. You don't know whether they have been violent before.”

Brigitte Henning

of government to demand action.

This is what bench strength looks like: members, activists, leadership and staff aligned around a clear set of demands.

The campaign has also evolved beyond internal advocacy to engage the public through a province-wide letter-writing initiative inviting patients, families and community members to contact their MLAs

and demand implementation of the five measures directed at government. The message is clear – violence in health care is not only a workplace issue; it affects everyone who relies on the system.

By opening the campaign to the public, nurses are making it clear that safety in health care is a shared responsibility – and that elected officials will be held accountable for their response.

The tone to government and health authorities is no longer patient.

For years, nurses have been told to raise concerns through internal channels. Many filed incident reports, joined employer-led committees and trusted that promises would translate into action. Too often, their earnest efforts have met delays, deflections or partial changes. Publicly, BCNU has been advocating for years, first launching its groundbreaking *Violence. Not Part of the Job* campaign in 2015, which is credited with shining a light on the issue and forcing conversations about violence in health care.



After years of advocacy and empty promises, patience is running out for nurses like Minwalla,

“Some days are really bad for staff,” she says of her work in long-term care – a sector where nurses often experience high levels of violence. “There was a time I was told by a doctor that this is just part of the job – and I reminded her that no, this is not part of my job.”

Unlike acute-care sites, long-term care homes often have no dedicated security presence. “We don’t have security officers in long-term care. We rely on the staff that is available to us at that time,” Minwalla explains. She believes the presence of trained relational security officers would make an immediate difference. “Unfortunately, sometimes people take advantage of the fact that there’s only staff here,” she adds. “When a trained security officer shows up, things change.”

“Violence is driving experienced nurses out of the profession,” says Gear. “It is undermining recruitment at a time when the province is trying to bring more nurses on to implement minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. It costs the system millions in injury claims, sick leave and private agency staffing. Most importantly, it is traumatizing the very professionals British Columbians depend on for care.”

Nurses are not prepared to accept a future where assault is normalized.

Unsafe working conditions and systemic violence are central issues at the bargaining table as negotiations continue between the Nurses’ Bargaining Association and health employers for a new collective

agreement. Through legislation, advocacy, enforcement and operational change, nurses are raising their voices to ensure meaningful progress is made at the worksite level, and employers and government use every tool available to them to secure safe workplaces.

THE PATH FORWARD

BCNU’s 10 violence-prevention measures are practical, evidence-based and achievable. Many have already been piloted with positive results. What is missing is consistent, province-wide implementation and accountability.

“The province cannot hope to retain or recruit the nurses needed to stabilize emergency departments if those workplaces remain unsafe, unpredictable and unsupported,” says Gear. “Our violence-prevention campaign makes it clear: protecting nurses is inseparable from protecting patient care, and the status quo is no longer tenable.”

Gear says members have done the work: identifying the problems, building solutions and standing together against violence, and she is grateful they have brought forward their expertise in good faith. “Nurses have invited everyone to come to the table and assess the current working conditions – now, we are looking to decision makers for results.”

British Columbians deserve a health-care system where safety is foundational – for patients and the nurses who care for them. The 10 recommendations are a roadmap. What remains is the political will to act. Violence is still not part of the job – and the status quo is no longer acceptable.

READY FOR THEIR MOMENT

BC's nurses are preparing for a possibility few have experienced: job action. From mock picket lines and worksite meetings to real-time updates in their pockets, BCNU members are ready for their moment.

In health-care workplaces across the province, a whisper grows into a murmur. Nurses gather in break rooms and get together after hours. They pass out signs and take headcounts, share information and ask questions. Quietly, but insistently, they get ready.

What are they preparing for? Potentially the most significant nurse-led job action in British Columbia's history. If necessary, it could become one of the largest this country has seen.

BCNU has been preparing members for every possible outcome at the bargaining table.

The Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) negotiates the collective agreement that covers most of BCNU's 50,000 plus members. The history of job action for NBA members is – proudly – sparse. In its 44 years, the NBA has declared only two province-wide strikes and one overtime ban. These examples are rare but potent. Job action helped secure pay parity for public service nurses in 1990, and delivered major wage increases for NBA members in 1989 and 2001. More importantly, these conflicts hit the reset button on nursing work, reshaping our health-care system for the better – for nurses and patients.





NBA BARGAINING

MAKE HEALTH CARE BETTER

DELEGATE

If the NBA bargaining committee calls for job action, the decision will not be taken lightly. BC's nurses are not spoiling for a fight, but they are fed up with workplace violence, staff shortages and attacks on their hard-earned benefits. They refuse to hold the bag after years of mismanagement, underfunding and short-sighted decisions that have undermined the health-care system. They are willing to do what it takes to defend their rights and their patients.

MEMBERS ARE READY

Sabrina Vogt is a member of the NBA's Provincial Job Action Committee (PJAC). She, like many nurses, feels a growing determination to fight for her colleagues and her patients. "I'm fired up. If I've got to go to war, I'm going to war," she says. "I'm tired of seeing people treated unfairly. We shouldn't have to take the fall for bad choices the employer has made."

Vogt's words reflect the sentiment of nurses across BC. Since ramping up bargaining preparations last year, BCNU has held conferences, regional meetings and worksite visits to hear directly from NBA members about their priorities. That active spirit drew thousands of members to events, regional meetings and bargaining committee visits.

Showing up ensured members stayed tuned in to negotiations. At the same time, these events helped foster the person-to-person connections needed to organize on the ground in the event of job action.

BCNU's 16 regions have been building on that momentum to strengthen local support. In the interior, BCNU East Kootenay region members held picket line dress rehearsals to iron out the kinks well ahead of a potential strike.

Gina Neumann is a PJAC member and BCNU East Kootenay regional treasurer. "We set up a picket line and went through every possible scenario: What do you do if you work from home? Where do members park? What forms do they need?" For Neumann, the drill was not only successful from a planning perspective; it showed her that her region has the right attitude when it comes to preparation. "That experiential learning starts conversations," she says. "The mock strike was incredibly well received. It was the highest-rated event at our annual general meeting."

While there are strong indicators that members are preparing for job action – taking BCNU's online job action modules, subscribing to bargaining updates and downloading the BCNU Connect app – it's the shared sense of purpose that has PJAC members most energized.

"There's a fire in the belly right now," says BCNU Okanagan Similkameen region steward and PJAC member Tannis Keteca. "Enough members are saying, 'We're tired of this. We need to push back.'" According to Keteca, the PJAC is working to channel that momentum into a plan for success in the event of job action. "Capture that energy, and we'll get somewhere," she says.

BCNU IS READY

While union members' energy, enthusiasm and solidarity are the most important ingredients, anyone who has been involved knows there are many logistics behind job action. That's why BCNU has been pulling out all the stops to get ready to support NBA members in defending their rights.



"I told the staff that it's all hands on deck," says BCNU CEO and NBA lead negotiator Jim Gould. "We're prepared to use every tool at our disposal to secure a fair agreement.

That includes potentially asking members to do what it takes to defend their rights and their patients. Because we know how much power nurses hold in our health-care system."

The union has held training sessions for staff and distributed materials to the regions. Strike task forces are ready to consider every detail before a single picket sign is raised. Administrative staff have digitized paper job action forms to track every moment on the picket line. The team launched the BCNU Connect app to give members down-to-the-minute updates – and to rapidly deploy them where they are needed during job action.





“

This bargaining season is going to be in the memory of BCNU for decades to come. This is our moment.”

Jose Huberdeau

Sharon Sponton is BCNU's provincial treasurer and PJAC chair. She and elected committee members have been meeting regularly to strategize and prepare detailed plans. “The committee has been forecasting potential job action scenarios and troubleshooting issues,” Sponton explains. “That way, we're ready for anything.”

The committee is preparing a toolkit of job action options to apply pressure if negotiations stall. “We escalate strategically,” she says. “The goal is to maximize pressure on the employer while minimizing impacts on members, always ensuring the public continues to receive care.”

While her PJAC work is demanding, Sponton is not frightened of the fight that may come. Like her colleagues, she has seen a strong resolve among members and knows that, if a strike vote comes, members will give the bargaining committee a strong mandate.

“Members are ready. Our benefits survey showed that more than 80 percent would strike to protect what they have,” Sponton says. “They're frustrated with the lack of progress on violence prevention and with the employer trying to strong-arm changes to their benefits. Many see job action as necessary to secure a fair contract.”

For Sponton, the work is deeply personal. “Our struggle is not just for nurses now, but

for those who come after us,” she says. “We have to make nursing attractive to the next generation, and we do that through ratios and a fair contract.”

BRITISH COLUMBIA IS READY

BC's nurses have one extra advantage in the event of a strike or other job action: the public.

“Patients show up at hospitals on the worst – and best – days of their lives,” says BCNU President Adriane Gear. “That forms an incredibly strong bond. The public knows that nurses – not health authorities and bureaucrats – are the ones at their side in desperate times, and they know whose side they need to be on.”

And the union has the data to back it up. Nurses and firefighters enjoy the highest esteem of any public employees in British Columbia. Findings from BCNU's recent holiday advertising campaign showed a 14 percent increase in viewers saying they respected nurses and a 21 percent increase in support of job action for better working conditions.

With nursing shortages leading to closed emergency rooms in rural – and increasingly urban – British Columbia, long wait times, and spiraling costs for private nursing agencies, the public's patience with the system is wearing thin.

“British Columbians want the health-care system to be there for them when they need it,” says BCNU Interim Executive Councillor Denise Waurynchuk. “And they know we can't do it without nurses.”

For BCNU members, it is difficult to take any action that might take them away from →

“

I'm tired of seeing people treated unfairly.”

Sabrina Vogt

→ their patients. “The union’s goal is to put pressure on the employer, not to punish the public or impact patients,” says PJAC member Julie Bodden. “Essential service planning is in place, both by the union and employer, to limit disruption to patient care.”

As Neumann explains, taking temporary time away from their patients is a sacrifice needed to deliver the care those patients deserve in the long run.

“Collectively we’re working toward something that will improve things for everyone,” she says. “Not just nurses, but patients, families and communities.”

That collective effort doesn’t stop at nursing. From public service to health care, unions are seeing strong engagement and overwhelming strike mandates – clear signals that workers are ready to demand better.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with our labour partners, including BCGEU

and others who are also advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions and stronger public services, BC’s health-care workers are a force to be reckoned with.

HOPING FOR PEACE, READY TO FIGHT

While BCNU’s 55,000 members are all working hard to prepare for potential job action, they are doing so hoping it won’t be necessary.

“No BCNU member takes the prospect of walking off the job lightly,” says BCNU Executive Councillor Michelle Sordal. “But they’re ready to do what’s necessary to defend their rights and protect patients.”

Anyone thinking of picking a fight with BCNU members should know what they’re getting into. Being ready to act at a moment’s notice is what nurses do every day. They prepare for worst-case scenarios, collaborate with colleagues to support patients, triage what matters most and manage crises when things go wrong.

For BCNU members, the goal remains clear: a stronger health-care system, safer workplaces and a profession that attracts the next generation of nurses.

“Whether we take job action or not, this bargaining season is going to be historic,” says PJAC member Jose Huberdeau. “It’s going to be in the memory of BCNU for decades to come. This is our moment.”

BCNU members are ready for that moment. Is the government?

Labour Relations

BCNU protects and advances the health and economic well-being of our members. That’s why we dedicate significant resources to defending members’ rights with health employers and WorkSafeBC.



2,354

Grievances opened

2,596

Grievances closed



83%

Success rate on members’ LTD appeals

71%

Success rate on members’ WorkSafeBC appeals

1,400+

Submissions for Mental Health Awareness Month

1,224

OHS queries sent to the safety and health email

BY THE NUMBERS

Students

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



1,676

New student member registrations

2,205

Employed student nurses

Education

BCNU's education programs offer members the chance to grow personally and professionally, while gaining a better understanding of their union, their workplace and the health-care system.



400%

increase in provincially delivered courses

1,200+

members attended provincially delivered regional education

53

Building Union Strength courses taught by member educators

250+

members took webinars on topics like parental leave

Cultivating Leaders

BCNU members show leadership in their union by advocating for their patients, speaking up for their colleagues and engaging in their union.



535

BCNU Convention Participants

206

Human Rights and Equity Conference Participants

200

Practice Conference Participants

Investing in Members

Investing in BCNU members pays dividends. Providing the resources and support members need helps them know their rights, build their careers and remain strong advocates for their colleagues – and their patients.



1,103

Member education bursaries provided

24,501

Salary replacement days

33,272

Bill/expense forms processed

\$3.7M

in LPN to RN/RPN laddering funds paid

BCNU LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2025 winners Jessica Machado and Abbey Glowicki

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 their profession through leadership, activism or social justice efforts.

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

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



EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY AWARD

Jessica Machado

Jessica Machado is a registered nurse at Vancouver General Hospital. She has been nursing for 10 years and serves as her region's occupational health and safety representative.

Machado intends to continue advocating for better conditions in nursing.

"Leadership means creating safer conditions for our profession. I remain committed to fighting for a health-care system where safety is non-negotiable," she says. "To my frontline colleagues, I see you. I will continue to advocate for you."

Abbey Glowicki is a registered nurse at St. Paul's Hospital known for her passion for working with surgical patients and the young adult population. Her certifications and professional development experiences reflect her commitment to lifelong learning.

Glowicki says she uses her practice to promote gender equity, decolonization and reproductive justice.

"I'm deeply honoured," says Glowicki. "I feel more inspired than ever and more committed to providing exceptional care. I'm proud to be part of a profession that constantly shows dedication, hard work, intelligence and commitment to serving people."



RAVEN STEALS THE LIGHT

Award recipients received an etched glass plaque featuring art by Erik Prytula, a Haida artist from the eagle clan Tsits Gitane, called *Raven Steals the Light*. The piece depicts a creation story told in many coastal first nations communities in which the raven steals the sun, moon and stars and places them in the sky – creating life as we know it. The artwork resonates with nurses who bring light to dark places.



NU LEADER AWARD

Abbey Glowicki



Together we **RISE** for
SAFER workplaces,
BETTER care and
a **STRONGER**
health-care system.



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