

STANDING STRONG

2017
ANNUAL
REPORT



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As nurses, it's in our DNA to stand strong.

In 2017, that meant drawing on our resilience, our integrity and our commitment to better health care. It meant rebuilding, refreshing and stabilizing our union so we can stay focused on the members we serve. And more than ever, it meant standing up and speaking out for what we believe in.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITY

Strengthen our organization through sound governance and strong member advocacy.

At its June, 2017 planning session, the Provincial Council reviewed our Strategic Plan and Directions. This year the focus was on creating a three-year plan for the years 2017 through to 2020.

In addition to its number-one priority of responding effectively to member issues, you will see a strong focus on sound governance, organizational capacity, improved culture and remaining as the professional voice of nursing.

Council also spent time examining BCNU values—how we live them and how we can demonstrate them.

MEMBERSHIP

By 2020 BCNU will have responded effectively to member issues through:

- increased member activism using constructive engagement
- supported and educated stewards
- informed membership, that understands and enforces contract language
- successful collective bargaining and implementation of agreements
- timely resolution of member issues
- increased diverse representation at all levels
- protected and improved member health and safety

GOVERNANCE

By 2020 BCNU Council will have effectively governed and all leaders throughout the organization will have modeled a culture based on our values through:

- knowledge based and inclusive decisions by Council
- regular review and approval of policies by Council
- effective, responsive and clear communication
- ensuring psychologically healthy and safe workplaces

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND CULTURE

By 2020 BCNU will have strengthened organizational capacity and improved culture through:

- implementing the CSA Standard to create psychologically healthy and safe workplaces throughout the organization
- enabling staff and activists to collaboratively educate and mentor members
- providing seamless interdepartmental service to our members
- utilizing technology to enhance communication
- continued outreach to potential members about the benefits of belonging to BCNU

BCNU VALUES ARE:

Collectivity
Democracy
Equality

Excellence
Integrity

Social Justice
Solidarity

PROFESSIONALISM, RELATIONSHIPS AND REPUTATION

By 2020 BCNU will have demonstrated it is the professional voice of nursing and a respected, influential health-care leader through:

- exploring relationships with nursing and labour organizations
- enhancing collaboration with stakeholders, including but not limited to government, HEABC, health authorities, education and research institutions
- ensuring BCNU values are the foundation of our decisions, policies, procedures and actions
- utilizing evidence and research for innovation
- advocating for front line nurses to be involved in public policy
- engaging with government and health authority professional practice departments in health-care decision making
- advancing clinical practice, education, mentorship, research and leadership in nursing
- promoting our professional profile
- collaborating with schools of nursing and nursing students
- addressing societal inequities in our communities

HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

By 2020 BCNU will have remained a strong defender of a publicly funded and delivered health-care system through:

- promoting its benefits
- challenging its deficits and lobbying for improvement
- researching and publicizing methods of strengthening care delivery



CHRISTINE SORENSEN

Acting President

The last 12 months presented BCNU with some significant hurdles. But there was no shortage of opportunities to reset, be creative and focus on excellence. My vision now is to move the organization from being good to being great, and I'm thrilled with the direction we are headed in.

A renewed focus on good governance was a major highlight for me this year. We have a united council, strong leadership teams, and our members across nursing sectors are more engaged. It's also been exciting to see the growth of diversity in our organization – not just an awareness of diversity, but the acceptance and development of more allies. Our provincial council and regional executives are the most diverse we've ever seen, and better reflect our entire membership.

It's important to note the difficult leadership challenges we experienced last year. But through it all, we stuck by our values and our processes while conducting our elections in a fair and transparent manner, and I'm really

proud of that. Many organizations would not have survived what we went through, but we did and have come out of it stronger and better able to serve our members and the people of British Columbia.

Last year we spent a lot of time rebuilding, refreshing, and stabilizing our union. I led the development of a new, three-year strategic plan, which the council set in place in June. In the past we developed strategic plans on an annual basis, but I felt it was important to establish a longer-range vision. We put an emphasis on sound governance, strong member advocacy, increasing transparency and accountability, and living our values.

Our lobby drive during last year's provincial election was also a major highlight. The organizing team coordinated its efforts with the assistance of BCNU staff, and met with every candidate running in the provincial election to secure a commitment to reduce violence in health care. That was an extraordinary achievement. Now, two-thirds

of the sitting legislature and all provincial party leaders have pledged to reduce violence in health care – and we have the signatures to hold them to it.

The real heroes of BCNU are our members who stand strong every day – the thousands of nurses who strive to deliver safe patient care despite facing challenging practice environments. Many workplaces are not meeting psychological health and safety standards, yet our members remain committed to their work and to providing wonderful patient care in this province. I am lucky to have the pleasure of working on their behalf.

ADRIANE GEAR

Acting Vice President



Advancing the provincial violence-prevention campaign and promoting the implementation of the Canadian Standards Association standard for psychological health and safety have been my 2017 priorities.

Our violence-prevention campaign achieved several of its strategic goals. For example, we successfully engaged provincial election candidates and secured their signed pledges, committing to end violence in health care. Fifty-eight of those candidates were elected and are now sitting MLAs, which puts us in a great position to hold government accountable.

We've also been very successful in raising public and member awareness about the prevalence and impact of violence in health care. Our series of commercials depicting violence in acute, long-term care and the community has been very effective, and I'm pleased to report that the polling we commissioned confirms that the public supports our endeavor to achieve violence-free workplaces.

The implementation of the CSA standard in members' workplaces has been my other key

focus. The standard requires employers to identify psychological hazards and eliminate or mitigate the impact on a worker's psychological health and well-being. BCNU negotiated the mandatory implementation of the standard in the last round of bargaining and I'm proud to report we are the first union in Canada to negotiate this language.

Mental-health system reform and the opiate crisis are other significant issues. I was pleased to represent BCNU at a forum organized last fall by the new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. The objective was to identify short-term solutions to address system-wide deficiencies while a more robust government strategy is developed. BCNU has also collaborated with the BC Centre for Substance Use, sponsoring two members to obtain addictions nursing fellowships.

I'm also very pleased about the success of BCNU's personal resilience workshops. Last September I had the honor of giving a presentation about these workshops at the Canadian Mental Health Association national conference.

Last fall I had the privilege of attending all 16 of the union's regional bargaining conferences. This gave me the opportunity to really understand first hand the various challenges that our members face, depending on where they live and in what care component they work.

As a council, we are working on a certificate in governance and leadership. I think that speaks to our commitment to govern BCNU effectively, and we are really striving to take the union where it needs to go. Internally, we've created a safer environment that fosters discussion, debate, and ensures that we make evidence-based decisions.

Although we've dealt with some very difficult issues last year, council was able to critically evaluate itself, even at its most vulnerable, and revamp BCNU's strategic directions. This reflects our commitment to respectful relationships, professionalism and effective governance on behalf of all BCNU members. Most importantly, it will assure we are achieving psychologically healthy and safe workplaces throughout the organization.



SHARON SPONTON
Treasurer

My primary focus continues to be ensuring that union resources are used to address the concerns nurses currently face. With this in mind, we continued to perform our core functions while recognizing and providing support in several priority areas, such as raising awareness about violence prevention and psychological health and safety, acknowledging diversity within our membership, developing our leadership capacity, and promoting our steward teams.

Ending the year with a budget surplus was a key highlight of 2017. Ensuring that BCNU is fiscally responsible with members' dues continues to be my number-one priority, and it's essential that those dues are being effectively used to address members' needs.

The substantial bargaining gains we made in the last round of bargaining have allowed us to use our damage payments to compensate members for working short, and the \$1.00 an hour raise we negotiated for LPNs came into effect in September.

Last year also saw the union offering members more bursary opportunities. We secured \$5 million related to the health ministry's strategic funding priorities in areas such as community care, care for frail and medically complex seniors, long-term care, mental health, substance abuse, and career advancement. These funds have allowed us to offer additional opportunities to members who are striving to specialize in these areas, and that's been very exciting. We have also continued to provide additional financial support through our member education bursary, the new nurse assistance fund and new NCLEX preparation course funding.

I'm also proud to report that we have continued to build capacity by providing opportunities for groups such as our human rights and equity caucuses. Recently I brought a proposal to council asking that we allow one designate from each of these groups to access some form of education

to help them excel in their roles. This is an important step toward ensuring that we build capacity within the organization as a whole.

In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on effective governance and maintaining a healthy defence fund as we enter bargaining. Our ongoing priority will always be to ensure that BCNU remains financially sound in order to continue providing members with the services they need.

RHONDA CROFT

Acting Executive Councillor



I came into this role in an acting capacity at the end of September 2017, and members' occupational health and safety has been my primary focus. It's a dynamic portfolio that affects everyone in our organization.

Members have been telling us about their struggles with violence in the workplace and untenable workloads. I'm working closely with Acting Vice President Adriane Gear, who previously held this role for some time. Together, we are pushing forward on violence prevention and psychologically healthy and safe workplaces with our partners in government, the Health Employers Association of BC, WorkSafeBC and other stakeholders. We recently initiated a province-wide inquiry where members can safely tell us their stories about how violence at work has impacted them. These stories can be heart-wrenching to hear, but the data we collect from them will be helpful at the bargaining table and further our efforts to create change.

I have also been focused on working with regional OH&S representatives on their priority issues and concerns. These include the running of effective joint occupational health and safety committees, ensuring that members report violence, and making sure stewards are able to participate in incident investigations.

I've clearly heard members' concerns about incivility, bullying, and harassment in the workplace. Our promotion of Pink Shirt Day in February was just one way to start the conversations we need to have to address this problem. My nursing master's degree entailed doing research around incivility, including root causes and ideas for solutions. I am very happy to be able to contribute to the process of empowering nurses with knowledge and ideas for positive change and I look forward to hearing more from members in the near future about their experiences with incivility.

It's been a pleasure collaborating with BCNU staff in the course of my work. They are amazing people who are dedicated to working on behalf of the members and the organization. It's been great to partner with them in planning education days, developing resource materials, and implementing communications strategies.

I have been humbled by the opportunity to take on this role. We have had a challenging year with many uncertainties. I feel I have the ability to contribute to this organization, and I am grateful for the warm welcome from the executive team. That exemplifies BCNU to me: a positive culture, strong organizational capacity, and sound governance. Together, we can make a difference for our members.



DEB DUCHARME

Executive Councillor — Retired 2018

It has truly been an honour to serve as a BCNU executive councillor for the past eight years.

Pensions, and how they impact BCNU members, have always been my core focus. An important part of this role has been ensuring that members understand their pension plans and providing them with information to give them confidence that the plan they are contributing to today will be there for them when they retire.

I myself am retiring this year and handing over the executive councillor portfolio to my successor, Chris Armeanu. In preparation, BCNU has initiated a supportive mentorship plan to allow for a smooth transition and assist with the steep learning curve that comes with familiarizing oneself with the pension plans our members enjoy.

I strongly believe that a member's pension is the second most valuable asset in the collective agreement, right behind their hourly wage. While a salary provides income

while working, a pension provides income throughout retirement.

BCNU's popular pension workshops were the highlight of my work in 2017. So much of the union's work is about assisting members who are struggling or facing challenges. Members appreciate the workshop's positive learning environment and finding out how the choices they make throughout their careers impact their pensions.

The members are the union and I am proud to be a part of this group and where we find ourselves after the year we went through. We've had many positive outcomes despite some difficult changes. But this year has confirmed what I've always believed about BCNU: through difficult times we are strong, we are member-focused, and we have great staff. Our membership understood the challenges we faced and have supported the process in place that allows us to work through them.

COLLEEN McFADDEN

Chief Operating Officer



This year I had the honour of stepping into the newly created role of chief operating officer. As COO, I'm responsible for the internal operations of the union — and hiring and supporting the right number of people was my first major goal.

Several very valuable senior staff members left the organization recently and we needed to improve our staffing levels in order to tackle the servicing workload. I'm happy to report that we achieved this objective by coming up with some very creative recruitment and retention strategies. These included the creation of new training positions for BCNU members and existing staff wishing to increase their responsibilities. It's been very successful, and some people have since moved into regular positions within the organization.

Looking forward, we will focus on providing our new staff members with education, mentoring, and development opportunities to help them grow in their roles. The new staff have brought an energy and enthusiasm that has infused the

organization, while senior staff have stepped up to the challenge of mentoring new people on the team. There's a very positive "going forward" buzz around the office.

We are committed to managing issues proactively to avoid fighting daily fires. Last year we invited staff to provide their ideas about how to improve our organizational systems and culture to better serve members. This exercise allowed us to look at processes more deeply and avoid Band-Aid solutions. One suggestion brought forward that we acted on is the addition of a second reception/switchboard operator that now provides much better service to members who call or drop in.

We've also done a lot of work to ensure that we remain true to the values of the organization while cultivating an openness and willingness to look at different ways of excelling. We are looking at our processes more deeply, asking ourselves how we can do things better, and ensuring that we incorporate our values into the work we do so that everyone is on the same page.

I see 2018 as the year we focus on growth and building skills within our organization. More staff are willing to come forward and help make BCNU the organization we want it to be. It's exciting to see this renewed openness and consider the possibilities that can arise from it.



UMAR SHEIKH

Chief Executive Officer

I have the honour and privilege to serve as BCNU's chief executive officer. It's a role I don't take lightly and I'm proud to work every single day for the union and for the betterment of all its members.

I have been focused on creating an aligned strategy that meets our objectives. Whether that's building a strong bargaining platform, developing external relationships, securing strategic wins in arbitration, or realizing the cost savings that are necessary to the system, we've been busy laying the groundwork for success in the year ahead.

2017 was an extremely challenging year for the union, but those challenges brought new opportunities and the ability to rebuild. First and foremost, the leadership election arbitrations are complete. The matter has now been decided and our election results have been upheld. We have proved over and over again that we are an organization of integrity and strength.

Further, we have reorganized the way we do business with other health-care unions and with the provincial government. We now have strategies and plans in place that will carry BCNU forward for the next five years, allowing us to grow in a way that is sustainable and beneficial to our members.

It really has been a year of rebuilding and standing strong.

Bargaining is my top priority in the coming year. Our goal is to bargain a new collective agreement that satisfies our members' concerns, and they have made it clear that benefits and wages are their top issues.

We want to build a union that is in the top percentile in the country when it comes to satisfying its members' needs at the bargaining table, and I know we have the tools and the talent to get there. The strategy is to create a healthy tension with government based on mutual respect and commitment to the negotiation process,

while also standing our ground when we need to in order to advance our agenda.

I am pleased to see the positive morale among BCNU staff and leadership. When people come through incredibly difficult times it brings a renewed sense of kinship and the ability to work together on behalf of the members. They are why we are here and what our work is always about.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

In every region, our members are working together to defend our health-care system, advance our professional voice and effectively respond to issues as they arise. Our regional leadership help our members to stand strong, every day.



CLAUDETTE JUT
Chair, Shaughnessy
Heights

“We were out in our region more this year and we saw more member engagement, more questions, and nurses becoming increasingly aware of what can happen when they voice their opinions. For example, they stood strong to protect their rights around vacation planning when the employer tried to implement an automated process. I heard from so many nurses that this was not going to be okay, and they were ready to put their name down to advocate for their rights. As nurses, we want to be able to say, ‘No, this is where I draw the line. Don’t take away my work life balance.’

“Our stewards and regional executives play a critical role. They volunteer a lot of their time and energy, and it’s important for the membership to understand that they are the people who are supporting us all. So let’s thank them – we can all play a part in creating positive change going forward.”



DANETTE THOMSEN
Chair, North East

“Our nurses are my superheroes. They do it

all. I’m awestruck every time I’m in the region with rural nurses and I hear their stories. I work in Prince George where the work is very specialized, but in rural areas our nurses need to support a wider range of health-care disciplines. They’ll be on the phone calling an ambulance to get a patient to a larger hospital while giving CPR at the same time.

“The BCNU election was one of the things that mattered most to North East region nurses this year. Our 2017 voter turnout was the largest recorded. I’m so encouraged that the effort we’re making to engage members is working, and people are getting involved. That energizes me. It’s an exciting time to be leading a group of people who are so engaged and dedicated. When nurses feel safe and supported, their patients will be safe and supported too.”



DEANNA JEROWSKY
Acting Regional Chair,
Okanagan-Similkameen

“The work we have completed around violence issues is a huge achievement for our region. We have a couple of sites that see higher rates of violence, like Kelowna Hospital. We have new stewards in place to help address this, but our work is not done. The next step is to keep building the program by finding mentors for our stewards, and increasing their education opportunities. We are building a strong voice for the union.

“I hope our members are seeing how much important work is underway, and are feeling heard. While there is still a lot to be done, we’re continuing to raise awareness around violence in the workplace. We want people to speak up if there are issues or unsafe practices. We cannot fix what we are unaware of. Mindset shifts take time, but changes are happening. You may not see it or feel it, but our members are speaking up, trusting the process, and at some point there will be a win – and that’s huge.”



HARDEV BHULLAR
Co-Chair, South
Fraser Valley

“I believe the BCNU election was the biggest milestone for the South Fraser Valley region this year largely due to a voter turnout of 24.8 percent. We have the largest region in the province and I was so impressed that a quarter of our members engaged in the democratic process and voted. That was a huge accomplishment.

“The union is only as strong as its members, so we want people to be involved. Know your rights, know your contract, and do what you can to participate. It’s important that members share information with your colleagues to increase awareness. I’m committed to engage more members, to go to worksites in the region and listen to their issues and concerns. We need our members to use their voices, and to file grievances for us to be successful and provide support. The only way change will happen is when people create it – so take the first steps!”



HELENA BARZILAY
Chair, East Kootenay

“There was a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of rural nurses in our last contract, but our next one needs even more. For example, we know it is a real challenge to fill positions in small towns, so we are working together to find ways to fill vacancies. If we can’t entice nurses to live here, then how can we meet staffing needs? This is so critical. We don’t have as many staff to share the workload, so in a small hospital the difference of just one nurse can mean working alone.

“In small hospitals, it can be difficult covering so many areas. How do you function with only three nurses when someone comes into the emergency room, a woman goes into labour, and you have 20 other patients? These are demanding challenges, but now that we have more people engaged and empowered, I think our region is aligned for success in 2018. I believe we will see some impactful and positive changes.”



JUDY McGRATH
Co-Chair, Central
Vancouver

“In 2017, we were in contact with more members than ever before, and attendance numbers at our regional meetings have gone up. At our lunch and information sessions in one of the big hospital cafeteria rooms, we see around 200 people attend. We’ve also been going to different units and holding lunches, which tend to be very well received. Vancouver Coastal Health is a big employer, so it’s really important for nurses that we get closer to their units. These are just some of the ways we have reached more members throughout the year.

“Reaching more members also means that we’re hearing more about nurses’ needs. If there are problems on the units, we hear about them in a more timely manner. Our members are also learning more about their rights. They know that when something’s wrong they need to contact their steward, whereas before they would just carry on and struggle. The fact that more nurses are being educated and learning more about their contract is extremely beneficial for the strength of the union.”



KATH-ANN TERRETT
Chair, Coastal Mountain

“Our region is focused on retaining and supporting younger nurses. We want to let them know that there are extra support services for them, and we want to support them in their roles. I’m encouraged by how many of our senior nurses are on board, and we’ve made a pledge to support our new nurses. We have a very engaged region, and we want to make sure everyone’s voices are heard.

“We’re starting to see the impact of this support. Younger nurses are joining the regional executive, becoming stewards, and using the professional responsibility process. They’re very concerned about their licences and they’re aware of overcapacity and the challenge of working short. They’re even coming to our pension workshops! It’s been a difficult year that is shifting and we’ve come out stronger. This new generation of nurses is very motivated – they’re improving the nursing profession and advocating for their rights.”



MARLENE GOERTZEN
Co-Chair, Central
Vancouver

“In the past, our members were often afraid to speak up for themselves. Now I’m seeing more people use the professional responsibility process to stand up for their rights. It’s been a brilliant change. Our members are also coming out to our regional meetings in greater numbers and ready with lots of questions. It’s great that they feel safe in that environment. It helps us equip them with the resources they need to feel stronger in the workplace.

“It’s important for our members to know they have an extremely good contract that acknowledges their right to work in a safe and supportive environment, both physically and psychologically. As we head into another bargaining round, we want to improve our contract further and provide even more support for our members’ practices. This is how we are standing strong together.”



LYNN LAGACE
Co-Chair, Simon Fraser

“Standing strong’ takes many forms in our region because of its size. We have 5,300 members, and each worksite has diverse issues and different needs. That said, we are all unified against violence in the workplace. We’ve made it known that it’s not acceptable, and we will not stand idle in the face of inaction.

“It’s one thing to say, ‘I feel violated,’ or ‘My workplace is not psychologically healthy,’ but I encourage our members to ask themselves, what they can do about it. We encourage our members to act and to think of ways to continuously improve. We now have many members engaging in the professional responsibility process and filling out more grievances. We must choose to be a leader in order to achieve anything. And as nurses and as a union, we have to collaborate toward positive change.”



LYNDA SMITH
Co-Chair, South Islands

“Bargaining was a priority for South Islands region

members this year. An important aspect of this has been the finalizing of language we negotiated in the previous contract. While the contract was strong, there are always different interpretations of the language. The discussions that went forward during contract interpretation sessions and with the Ministry of Health were excellent. Our members on the Bargaining Committee brought a true understanding of what we were bargaining for and made sure that the interpretation was correct. There were also numerous joint education sessions for the professional responsibility process to ensure everyone was on the same page. We felt strongly unified, and those educating them on the process were both supportive and effective in guiding everyone through it.

“Looking forward, we will continue to focus on strong bargaining. The union’s bylaw review is uncharted territory, but we are committed to supporting the current governance renewal process in the year ahead. We also want to make sure we use every opportunity to reach our members. If our nurses want to provide input and participate, we’ll make sure they have the ability to do that.”



MARGO WILTON
Co-Chair, South Islands

“The union’s violence prevention campaign

continues to be a very important initiative that impacts every single member across the province. The campaign has raised the awareness of both our members and the public on the prevalence of violence in the workplace. Our members are also learning about the importance of reporting incidents, and that they need to be vocal when they or their colleagues experience violence. Violence is simply not part of our job. Every member has the right to return safely home from work.

“Another highlight for South Islands region members this year was the issuing of damage awards. Currently practicing RN and RPN members were given a cheque for \$350, which generated a lot of excitement. It was so important and appreciated for everyone involved.”



MEGHAN FRIESEN
Chair, Vancouver Metro

“Having confidence in our employer’s willingness to

honour our contract language was the issue that mattered most to Vancouver Metro region members in 2017. Concerns were raised regarding special leave and the replacement and workload MOUs. Special leave in the case of a family member with a critical or severe illness was denied to members on an ongoing basis. We are now working to ensure that the employer shows greater compassion towards employee needs and requests. The information it requested at times was too personal and violated members’ privacy.

“There were also concerns about the lack of replacement and excess workload on units without enough staff. This is a problem in both acute hospitals and long-term care homes. Unfortunately, high acuity and low staffing levels make workload a critical issue even though we have strong language in the contract to address it. And despite filing many professional responsibility forms and taking grievances to the Nurse Relations Committee, change is something we are still waiting to see. Despite these challenges, our nurses are really trying to be a voice for positive change in the areas they work.”



RACHEL KIMLER
Co-Chair, Pacific Rim

“Island Health opened two beautiful new hospitals in

our region in the fall of 2017, both in the central north part of Vancouver Island in Comox Valley and Campbell River. It’s been a huge event met with a series of significant challenges along the way – and our members are looking forward to resolving those challenges. The opening of the Comox Valley hospital also involved transitioning all the staff from an affiliate employer to Island Health. It’s been a huge undertaking for everyone there. Not only did their physical work environment change, but their employer is new and so are the processes. It’s both a physical change and a mind shift.

“Nurses across our region continue to persevere no matter what situation they find themselves in, and that to me is amazing. They put patient safety first, do their work like champions, and continue to march forth and take care of their patients. They’ve shown considerable resilience while working through the problems, and I’m very proud of them.”



SARA MATTU
Chair, RIVA
(Richmond-Vancouver)

“Change is happening in

our region through the conversations members are having with each other, and the increased awareness of the union’s violence-prevention campaign. Members are starting to ask, ‘If violence isn’t allowed, why is our employer not protecting us?’ Nurses are beginning to feel empowered and supported. They’ve started to advocate for themselves, and shift the culture where incidents were dismissed because the violent person was a patient. Incidents of violence are not accepted by the police or members of the public, yet society has failed when it comes to protecting nurses. With the BCNU violence-prevention campaign and increased awareness, nurses are feeling that they can stand up and advocate for themselves.

“Members are also beginning to share more stories at our regional meetings and when we do our walkabouts. They’re discussing the unfair policies on employee safety in health care and how practices that are unacceptable in other professions are normalized in nursing. We have a voice and deserve to be heard, and if we stay united and strong we can make change. We have a ways to go, but we are headed in the right direction.”



RON POLAND
Chair, West Kootenay

“The West Kootenay region has embraced BCNU’s

new strategic plan. We’ve used it to create the framework for our regional goals, applied it to current concerns and campaigns in our region and made our own living document. It’s now laminated and we’ve taken it to every regional and executive meeting we attend. We put it up on the wall and ask members to evaluate our progress on issues and determine where we need more resources. We also plan to bring the plan to the local steward teams for their review. I want it to become a living, breathing document in their worksites as well.

“Promoting the union’s violence-prevention campaign and bringing the idea of psychologically healthy workplaces to the forefront have been my top priorities as regional chair. Members are really unified behind the position that nurses deserve to be safe at work. These issues are all part of our evolving strategic campaign, and we will continue to focus on them over the next three years.”



TERI FORSTER
Chair, North West

“A lack of staff or resources is one of the major challenges we face in rural communities. Patients sometimes wait days to be flown out, but we believe your address shouldn’t dictate the type of care you receive. Our nurses always provide high quality care, but without proper resources patients don’t have the same outcomes and advantages as people in larger cities like Vancouver. Further, community nurse teams have moved to primary care teams, and while they are supposed to be cross-trained to broaden their scope of practice – this still hasn’t happened and it’s been frustrating for our nurses.

“We organized a big rally in Smithers to address both of these major issues. It was amazing. We also secured our very first signed violence-prevention pledge from our MLA that day. We’ve also seen positive outcomes from our last collective agreement regarding rural recruitment and retention money. Our nurses are slowly breaking down the barriers that exist to create positive change.”



TRACEY GREENBERG
Chair, Fraser Valley

“I am new to the role of regional chair, having started last September. The learning process has been quite intense, but I’ve been loving the position. So far it has been a great adventure and I’m proud to serve the members.

“I always want positive results, but we experienced some tragic events in the Fraser Valley last year. A nine-year-old girl was struck by a city bus and died in the emergency department at Abbotsford Regional Hospital, and a police officer was shot and died in the ER as well. There have been many incidents like that, and as a result we’re working as a community to build resiliency and support each other. For example, the Abbotsford police department asked all the nurses working the day the officer passed away to attend his funeral as flag bearers during the ceremony. It was very emotional, and it really brought our community together. We have to look after ourselves, and we have to look after each other, every single day.”



TRACY QUEWEZANCE
Chair, Thompson
North Okanagan

“The BC wildfires had such a significant impact on our region in 2017. Many of our members were either evacuated or on alert, and their surroundings were in turmoil. It also impacted other nurses who had patients from the wildfire zones coming into their facilities, sometimes accompanied by staff but sometimes not. It was difficult and tumultuous experience for everyone.

“Through everything, we united across all levels to help people through this challenging time. Our members and communities welcomed the evacuated patients, residents, and staff with open arms, and I was so proud of them. These selfless members put aside their own families and issues to care for their patients, and that was amazing to see. Our union’s response was also great. BCNU made a donation to the Red Cross and a donation to the United Way recovery efforts after the fires. Everyone really came together.”



WALTER LUMAMBA
Co-Chair, South
Fraser Valley

“Recruiting and mentoring stewards and developing a program to support their success has been one of my main goals. Although we have almost 5,300 members in our region, we have just 15 to 18 active stewards. When I speak with stewards in our region, I find they are looking for more support in order to embrace their role and really assist the membership. I want to train them to do their best, and to provide opportunities for growth.

“Stewards are the ones at the front lines, advocating for the members. They are really the face of the union, and their contributions are vital to our success. Our focus on stewards could have a big impact both in our region and for BCNU within the next few years. Working together on this collaboratively, we can propel ourselves forward and make a difference.”

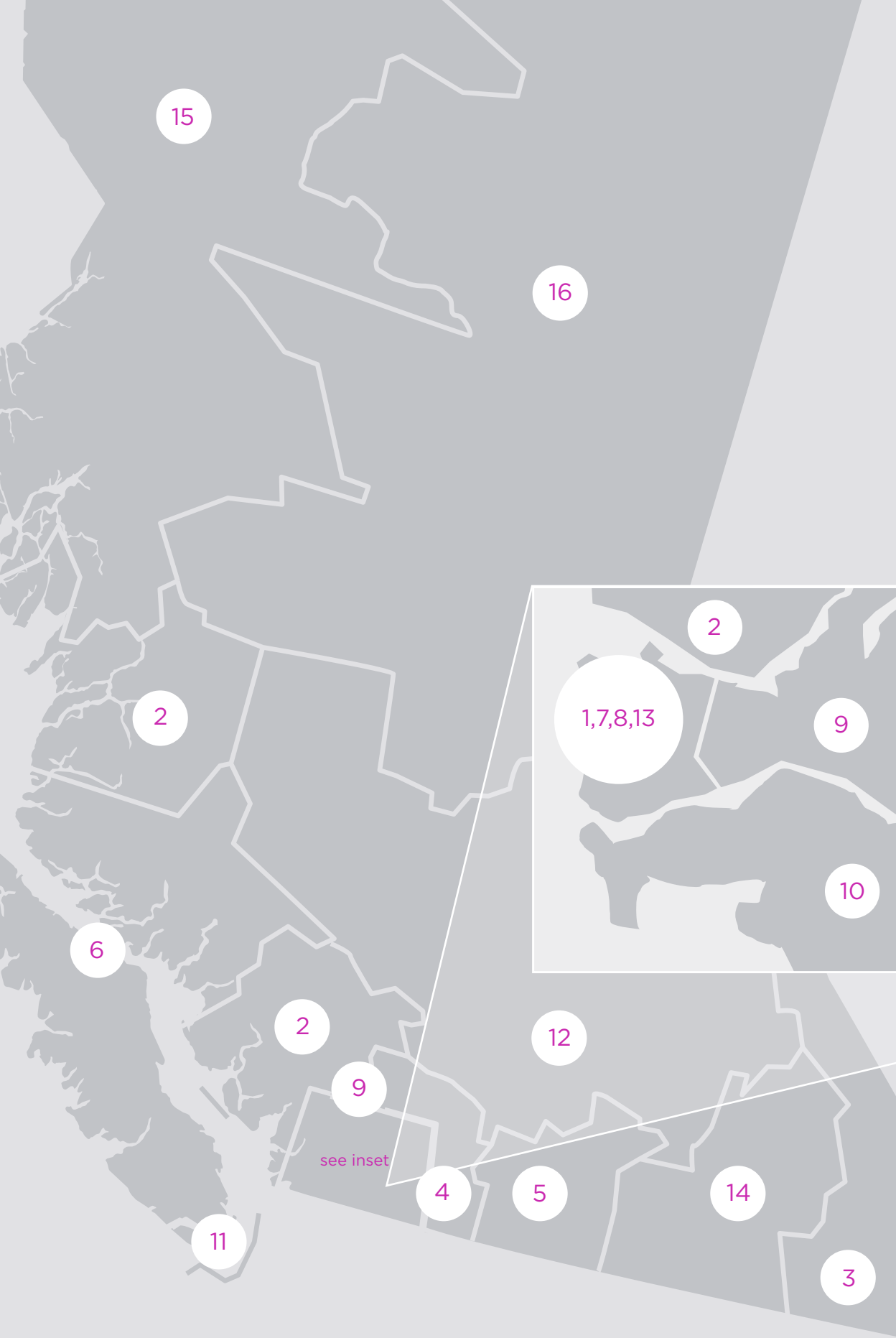


WENDY GIBBS
Co-Chair, Simon Fraser

“Workload challenges are one of the most common issues

I hear about from members. While it's a key problem, it's one I can't directly fix. When nurses come to me with this issue, the first thing I ask is if they've started the professional responsibility process, or grieved if they think it violates the collective agreement. More members are submitting professional responsibility forms, and it's working. I've seen results, and direct positive outcomes. Yes, it takes time—but if you do nothing, nothing will change. Members seem to understand this and they've stepped up, which has been great to see.

“The latest contract language has also improved the professional responsibility process by increasing the submission rate to the Nursing Review Committee or advancing to the new Nurse Staffing Secretariat. It's a work in progress, but there are results including increased staff, and there's a collective commitment to make the workplace its best.”



- 1 Central Vancouver
- 2 Coastal Mountain
- 3 East Kootenay
- 4 Fraser Valley
- 5 Okanagan-Similkameen
- 6 Pacific Rim
- 7 Richmond Vancouver (RIVA)
- 8 Shaughnessy Heights
- 9 Simon Fraser
- 10 South Fraser Valley
- 11 South Islands
- 12 Thompson North Okanagan
- 13 Vancouver Metro
- 14 West Kootenay
- 15 North West
- 16 North East

see inset

1,7,8,13



**“BCNU IS A
STRONG, HIGHLY
DEMOCRATIC
UNION”**

DEMOCRACY
IN THE UNION

In 2011, when Michelle Nelson was faced with staffing and workload issues as an ER nurse, she knew she could get angry, or get informed. She decided to attend a BCNU meeting to voice her concerns and learn more about how the union planned to help. It was her first experience participating in BCNU's democratic process, but it wouldn't be her last.

"We all are involved in the democratic process, because that's how BCNU works. It starts with members' issues that get brought to the elected representatives in the union, which is how we create policies to meet nurses' needs."

Later that year, Nelson was elected to attend her first convention. There, a colleague recommended she run for a position on the newly-formed Provincial Nominations Committee.

Nelson, who has been practising for 11 years, felt it was time play a larger role in an organization that has been central to ensuring nurses' rights are protected on the job.

"I put my name in, and I was elected to the committee when it was first established," she says. "You could say I've been pretty involved with the union ever since — I've attended every single regional meeting, as well as conventions and bargaining conferences."

The BCNU Provincial Nominations Committee is an independent body made up of five members who are elected by the

delegates to the annual convention of the union. The committee is responsible for conducting BCNU elections and assumes responsibility for all aspects of a fair and transparent election process.

As a member of the committee for the past three elections, Nelson has played a key role in upholding the union's democratic values. She balances the responsibilities of her job as a community care coordinator and steward-at-large while representing the interests of the membership through her committee work.

As committee chair, the responsibilities of the job are significant. Nelson spends about two hours a month on committee work, but her role becomes a full-time job during elections. She says her participation has helped her gain greater awareness of the issues and challenges

5,544

ballots cast



Michelle Nelson

facing nurses across BC and how the union works to protect its members.

“We all are involved in the democratic process, because that’s how BCNU works. It starts with members’ issues that get brought to the elected representatives in the union, which is how we create policies to meet nurses’ needs,” says Nelson. “We work as a member-driven union, so everything comes from the members in some way.”

Nelson’s years of experience led her to take on the role of committee chair in 2016. While she was hoping it would be “business as usual,” the 2017 election would prove to be one of the most challenging in BCNU history, and Nelson found herself right in the middle of things.

“I wouldn’t ever expect an election to be straightforward because it’s a competition

with people trying to win—but the 2017 election was very intense from the get-go,” says Nelson.

In November 2017, an arbitrator determined that the committee acted fairly when it removed three candidates from the ballot for repeated violations of campaign guidelines, which meant that new elections would not be required. Nelson says this decision shows the strength of the union, and the emphasis it places on upholding its democratic values.

“I think the elections are an integral part of BCNU’s democratic process, and the provincial nominations committee is responsible for ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process,” she says, noting her role comes with serious legal responsibility. “If democracy is being challenged, we have to decide how to best protect our democratic values.”

Nelson says BCNU’s support allowed her to juggle the demands and challenges of the 2017 elections process.

“BCNU stood by me during the arbitration process,” she says, noting she was given legal support and time off to prepare for the arbitration hearing on the election. “I really find it valuable to be a member of BCNU, and I think everybody should get involved.”

“I really enjoy being a BCNU member, and I’ve enjoyed my role as chair of the nominations committee. The BCNU is a strong, highly democratic union, and this year we really stood strong together.”



**“AS A MEMBER,
THE UNION
IS THERE
FOR YOU.”**

A BCNU
SUCCESS STORY

Sandra Bourrie-Wilson recalls the night she was working on her acute adult psychiatry unit when several unstable and unpredictable patients were admitted under the supervision of just two nurses. It was at that moment she knew something needed to be done about the insufficient staffing that was leading to serious professional practice concerns.

“We were getting discouraged — working on our unit felt unsafe and against our standards. But we continued filing PRFs — every single nurse in the unit, including casuals, had banded together and filled out at least one PRF.”

“When an incident happens where one nurse cannot go alone, the other nurse has to go too. It’s an open unit, which means the door is not locked, and unsupervised patients could just walk right out,” recalls Bourrie-Wilson. “It was very unsafe.”

Concerned for the well-being of patients and staff, Bourrie-Wilson and her co-workers at Chilliwack General Hospital talked with their manager and recommended a third nurse be added to the unit. However they were told no funding was available for such a move.

Undaunted, the team turned to the Nurses’ Bargaining Association (NBA) professional responsibility (PR) process, which helps nurses resolve professional practice concerns that may be raised in response to patient safety and care conditions. Determined to see positive change, the

nurses began filling out Professional Responsibility Forms (PRFs) that formally identified several practice concerns. These included: high acuity leading to nurses unable to provide appropriate nursing care; decreased ability for appropriate observations of patients required by level of observation policy; nurses being unable to chart on time; high volumes of patients and safety concerns related to care that was needed; and nurses being unable to take breaks.

The team’s efforts initially resulted in some short-lived success: A third nurse was brought in, but the position only lasted for six months due to lack of funding. “We were getting discouraged — working on our unit felt unsafe and against our standards,” recalls Bourrie-Wilson. “But we continued filing PRFs — every single nurse in the unit, including casuals, had banded together and filled out at least one PRF.”

1,540

PRFs filed province-wide

Two years passed, and the number of patients on the unit kept growing. Sometimes more than 20 patients with serious psychiatric challenges would be under the supervision of just two nurses during a 12-hour shift. Going to work became a daunting task, and many of the nurses contemplated quitting. But with BCNU support, Bourrie-Wilson and her co-workers continued to pursue the PR process and redoubled their efforts for a third nurse.

Respectful and genuine dialogue between nurses and managers is the foundation of the PR process. The goal is to foster solution-based teamwork. This approach saw the nurses collaborating with their unit manager and their regional executive's PR advocate to help find a solution that ultimately saw them taking their concerns to the Nurse Relations Committee



Sandra Bourrie-Wilson

(NRC), which reviews unresolved staffing PRFs that impact practice. And it was at an NRC meeting in May 2017 that Bourrie-Wilson was told her unit would finally get its third nurse.

“It was so amazing,” recalls Bourrie-Wilson. “I was expecting we would have to negotiate more, and keep advocating. All of our nurses were happy, but also felt that it was about time—it shouldn’t have taken two years. We went through a lot, but the teamwork at Chilliwack General was amazing.”

Without the support of the union, Bourrie-Wilson says her team’s fight for a third nurse would have been even more difficult. She encourages anyone facing challenges in the workplace to reach out for support, even if the process seems overwhelming.

“If it seems hopeless or you get discouraged, reach out to the BCNU office to get you back on track,” she says, noting the nurses at Chilliwack General are now advocating for a fourth nurse to keep up with the constantly rising number of patients. “Just totally be honest with the support that you need, and try not to get discouraged with timelines. As a member, the union is there for you.”



**“EVERYBODY CAME
TOGETHER DURING
THE CHAOS”**

NURSES STAND
STRONG DURING THE
BC WILDFIRES

Debera Willis was returning to her home in Ashcroft on a beautiful summer day in July 2017 when she was stopped by a police barricade. The whole town was being evacuated because of the wildfires, an RCMP officer told her, and she was not permitted to return home.

“We were constantly wondering if there was going to be anything to go home to. But I knew I had to be there helping, because people needed me. We wanted to create a semblance of home for our patients — at the end of the day, that’s what nurses do.”

“I said, ‘I’m a nurse, I have a dog in my house, I’ll come right back out.’ And the officer told me no, I couldn’t go home,” Willis recalls. “That’s when I realized I only had the clothes on my back.”

Willis, who currently works in acute care at East Kootenay Regional Hospital, was working at Ashcroft’s long-term care facility Jackson House at the time of the fires. Pulling over to the side of the road she called her manager, who told her patients were being relocated to two long-term care homes (Gillis House and The Florentine) in the nearby town of Merritt.

Willis immediately turned the car around and headed towards her patients, beginning a 12-hour night shift in Merritt just hours after learning of the fires. She and her

colleagues had no idea if their houses — or the town of Ashcroft — would still be standing when they returned home.

“We were constantly wondering if there was going to be anything to go home to,” she said. “But I knew I had to be there helping, because people needed me. We wanted to create a semblance of home for our patients — at the end of the day, that’s what nurses do.”

Willis and her colleagues moved into the Ramada Inn and dove into their work. Many of their patients had families who were trapped behind the fire line and unable to visit, so the nurses did their best to reassure patients that everyone was safe.

\$20,000

donated by BCNU for wildfire
recovery efforts



Debera Willis

“There’s a caring trait that brings people into nursing, and that helped us move forward during the fires because there were so many people less fortunate than us,” she says. “It was about creating a safe haven, and trying to remain positive so patients could see the little bits of goodness every day.”

The support of her colleagues and the BCNU was extremely important during the summer of fires, Willis says, noting she was the professional responsibility advocate on her region’s executive at the time. When some of the nurses became exhausted and sick, their co-workers nursed them back to health. When someone was having a particularly tough day, the other nurses would do their best to support them, she reports.

“BCNU members — and all the nurses out there — stood strong together,” she says. “We shared food, we shared laughs, we shared tears. I learned a lot about strength and character, and I think we stood together because we all genuinely care.”

After two weeks the wildfire evacuation was lifted, and Ashcroft residents were permitted to return home. Many houses — and much of the pristine nature the town is known for — was destroyed, but soon the regeneration began.

“Watching the rebirth that happened after all the destruction was unbelievable: the grass and the trees started coming back, the birds flew home to re-build their nests,” Willis recalls. “Our residents also flourished once they got back and settled in — that was huge. Everybody came together during the chaos of the wildfires, and it was amazing to see that happen.”



**“BEING A UNION
MEMBER MEANS
I’M PART OF AN
IMPORTANT SOCIAL
MOVEMENT”**

ENGAGING STUDENT
NURSES FOR SUCCESS

When BCIT nursing student Linda Yang first became a student liaison for BCNU, she was surprised to learn how much the union was doing for members across the province.

“There’s a lack of awareness of how important our union is among students and all this work that’s done for us, which is why it’s really important to include students in BCNU activities,” Yang says. “We will be future members, and so we can create a positive cycle by engaging students.”

“I had no idea the union did so much for everyone,” says Yang, now in her second year as a student liaison. “Not to mention all the human rights and equity activities the union does for the community and for nurses as well—it was a big eye-opener!”

BCNU’s student liaison program matches an elected BCNU regional chair with nursing schools across the province. Each class elects one or more volunteer students to liaise with the chair. The student liaisons gain invaluable leadership and development opportunities while serving as a resource for their classmates.

Yang’s path to nursing school—and her involvement in the union—was a natural one. Before enrolling, she worked as support staff for the Canucks Autism Network and volunteered regularly for the Vancouver Crisis Centre, two experiences that brought out her passion for giving back.

“I knew nursing was the right career for me because I get to do what I love, which is helping others,” she says. “I especially love working with the younger generation and that’s why I choose neo-natal as my specialty.”

She first learned about BCNU when she stumbled upon the union’s website, and learned she was eligible to take the Building Union Strength (BUS) course. The class showed her just how many opportunities there are for students in the union, and she quickly became more involved.

“There’s a lack of awareness of how important our union is among students and all this work that’s done for us, which is why it’s really important to include students in BCNU activities,” Yang says. “We will be future members, and so we can create a positive cycle by engaging students.”

2,675

student nurses in BCNU



Linda Yang

In 2017 Yang worked as a summer student at BCNU and helped plan the annual Human Rights and Equity Conference. She also developed a comic book to teach nurses and communities how to become an ally to marginalized groups by standing up and amplifying their voices.

Another highlight of the summer was helping to facilitate a three-day BCNU communications course for internationally educated nurses. The course aims to help nurses who received schooling outside of Canada navigate complex issues such as language, culture, and racism in the workplace.

“That was such a great experience because I’m an immigrant myself,” Yang explains. “Everyone was so engaged and wanted to learn. By the end of the course the students who were originally shy had gained more

confidence in their speaking skills. It was so great to see.”

Her experiences with BCNU have helped with her studies as well. Yang regularly writes about her union activities in the BCIT nursing newspaper, sharing what she learns with her fellow students.

“I’ve learned so much from my work with the union, and I like to share that with the student body,” she says. “For example, I’ve learned a lot about the discrimination and marginalization experienced by First Nations communities, and why raising awareness about this topic is so important.”

Yang will be graduating this year, and dreams of working in a neo-natal intensive care unit. She plans to continue her involvement in the union as she launches her nursing career.

“Being a union member means that I’m part of an important social movement, and have a role in advocating for our community and for all types of nurses,” says Yang. “Aboriginal nurses, nurses of color, nurses with disabilities, male nurses, young nurses—I want to help give everyone a voice.”



**“NURSES’ STRONG
VOICES ARE GOING
TO BE REALLY
IMPORTANT MOVING
FORWARD”**

BCNU NURSES ON
THE FRONT LINE OF
THE OPIOID CRISIS

When BCNU member Reanne Sanford is looking for inspiration in her job as Northern Health’s regional nursing lead for harm reduction and sexual health, she thinks of clients who have lost their lives in the opioid crisis.

“Engagement with peers is something we’re really trying to work hard on in the north, because we know that so much of the services we try to deliver really depend on accessing people,” Sanford explains. “What I’ve found to be absolutely paramount in determining the needs of people that are essentially dying in our community is gaining trust and developing relationships.”

“As nurses, taking care of people is part of our ethics, and part of the fabric of who we are. I really love that more nurses are starting to say, ‘This isn’t okay. This is unacceptable.’”

“Most nurses that work directly with this population can say that they’ve lost some really amazing people—it’s been a challenge, and sad and overwhelming at times,” Sanford says. “Doing this type of work helps you feel like you’re not letting them die in vain, that you’re going to keep the conversation alive.”

Sanford, who previously worked as a street nurse in Quesnel, officially stepped into the newly created Northern Health position in April 2016. Just weeks later, the provincial government declared the opioid overdose epidemic a public health emergency.

Sanford quickly learned there were several major challenges when working to address the opioid crisis in the north. To start, her region is huge: everything north of Quesnel belongs to the Northern Health authority, right up to the Yukon border and across to Alberta. Further, strategies that work well in urban settings like Vancouver are often unsuccessful in rural areas.

“It’s harder to engage folks in rural settings where there’s still a lot of stigma that exists,” Sanford says. “They’re not really the same kind of street population you see in cities, they’re very hidden.”

Spurred on by the growing number of deaths—more than 1,400 people died of opioid overdoses in BC in 2017—Sanford dove into her new role, determined to see positive change. She began collaborating with health leaders across the different



Reanne Sanford

northern communities to develop policies, and working with regional public health teams to roll out naloxone programs and take-home training.

“Engagement with peers is something we’re really trying to work hard on in the north, because we know that so much of the services we try to deliver really depend on accessing people,” Sanford explains. “What I’ve found to be absolutely paramount in determining the needs of people that are essentially dying in our community is gaining trust and developing relationships.”

Helping teams stay resilient in the face of overdose deaths and compassion fatigue has also been important. Working on the frontline of the crisis can be traumatizing, but BCNU nurses have been going above and beyond to help the people who need it the most.

“Nurses’ strong voices are going to be really important moving forward as we continue to advocate,” says Sanford.

1,422

Deaths from drug overdoses
in 2017



**“KNOWLEDGE IS
STRENGTH”**

EDUCATION HELPS
BCNU STEWARDS
STAND STRONG

Dan Desmarais has always believed in the power of higher education: he completed his BA at the University of Ottawa, studying political science and history. During the school year he worked as an orderly at a French hospital in Ottawa — and quickly fell in love with the profession.

“Now that I’m a full-time steward, I’m working to empower and mentor people in the same way,” he says. “For example, we just got a full time nurse on the floor where I worked. It’s nice to see the hard work we put in is creating positive change for our members.”

Desmarais — an LPN and full-time steward who works at both Vancouver General Hospital and Lions Gate Hospital — has always been drawn to the empowering nature of unions. He first became a steward while working at Niagara Falls Hospital in Ontario, but when he moved to British Columbia’s Lower Mainland 12 years ago, LPNs were not yet a part of BCNU.

“I’d been advocating my entire nursing career to try and get into a union — and it was so wonderful when we were accepted into BCNU,” he says, noting he decided to become a steward immediately after. “I really see the difference in the amount of respect being in this union carries.”

The role of a steward is diverse: answering questions from members, informing them about the contract, monitoring breaches, being a good listener, providing a safe

space and explaining options to members. It’s not always an easy role, but Desmarais says he’s been lucky enough to have some remarkable BCNU mentors who have inspired him to lead others.

“Now that I’m a full-time steward, I’m working to empower and mentor people in the same way,” he says. “For example, we just got a full time nurse on the floor where I worked. It’s nice to see the hard work we put in is creating positive change for our members.”

Desmarais is dedicated to growing his leadership role in the union, and aspires to one day become a labour relations officer. BCNU is supporting his goal — and the dreams of other talented nurses like him — by providing education through the prestigious Industrial Relations (IRC) Certificate in Labour Relations from Queen’s University.

26

Full-time stewards throughout
the Province



Dan Desmarais

“The program has been great, and I’ve loved all the learning,” says Desmarais. “Knowledge is strength, and the more knowledge we have the stronger we will be as a union.”

One of his mentors encouraged Desmarais to take the Queen’s IRC Program, designed specifically for experienced BCNU stewards and labour relations professionals in BC’s health landscape. The goal: to empower future leaders with new capabilities and skills to strategically manage labour relations issues and develop more streamlined and efficient practices for handling workplace conflict.

“It’s been such a great opportunity to learn more, and Queen’s has hired some pretty dynamic people to teach,” he says.

“Everybody in the course wants to learn, wants the best for the union, and wants the best for our health-care systems.”

The course runs January to April, and focuses on topics such as conflict resolution, conducting proper interviews, investigations, and arbitrations. Desmarais believes taking the course will bring him closer to his career aspirations, giving him the tools to one day become a labour relations Officer and make an even bigger impact on the members in the union he loves.

“The more members who take this course, the more people will know how to do resolve conflicts, how to acknowledge what’s going on, and how to deal with it,” he says. “BCNU is standing strong together through education.”

HOW STAFF SUPPORT YOU

Our staff provide important services for more than 47,000 BCNU members, in accordance with the BC Labour Relations Code.

Our departments, and what they do:

SERVICING/LABOUR RELATIONS

- member support and assistance with resolving workplace concerns (grievances through to arbitrations)
- support members returning to work (duty to accommodate)
- monitor classifications issues
- negotiate independent contracts

COMMUNICATIONS & CAMPAIGNS

- communications support and management
- manage BCNU website and Facebook
- design services
- media monitoring and media relations training
- produce Update Magazine and eNews

INTERNAL DEPARTMENTS (PROVIDING SUPPORT TO ALL DEPARTMENTS)

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Technology
- Library Services and Records Management (including personal information requests)
- Administration
- Convention and Conference services
- Membership updates

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY (OH&S)

- support and mentor members, stewards and regional representatives to address health and safety concerns
- represent members in appeals of WCB 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

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & ADVOCACY

- assist members with licensing and practice issues
- guide and assist members with the Professional Responsibility process
- support BCNU Human Rights & Equity caucuses
- research and create health policy and position statements
- enhance the public's knowledge of the nursing profession

ORGANIZING

- growing our membership
- outreach to new members

EDUCATION

- educate our stewards and members

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

In 2017, BCNU created the Constitution and Bylaws Renewal Working Group (CBRWG) to conduct a governance review with the goal of presenting a modern, cohesive, revised governing document at the 2019 annual convention for approval.

In the fall, the CBRWG began attending BCNU regional meetings and provincial conferences with the goal of gathering as much input as possible about members' thoughts on the rules that govern the union and how they could be improved. While generating members' interest and participation in the revision of a legal document is not the easiest of tasks, the CBRWG has been working to stress the importance of the exercise.

As the fundamental governing rules and regulations of the union, BCNU's constitution and bylaws state how the union is to be governed, how the powers of the union are to be exercised, and by whom. Bylaws should be contained in a single, unified, and clear document, and they must be consistent with the union's overall principles and objectives.

The need for a bylaw review started to become apparent several years ago when council members and others began to notice that a growing number of rules—and the policies that flow from them—were dated or did not speak to the needs of current members.

The Constitution and Bylaws is a living document that was adopted by the membership at the first annual convention in 1981. It undergoes amendments each year at convention to reflect the union's evolution in size, composition, diversity and professional designations. Over the past 36 years, the annual amendment process has taken a toll, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent bylaws, as well as dated practices, language, regulations and references remain scattered throughout the document.

The outcome of the revision process may produce substantive bylaw changes or it may produce minor changes. Whatever the result, the revision process should consist of a widespread, thoughtful dialogue with the membership, legal review and a multijurisdictional review of best practices.

This spring the working group will continue to reach out to members at union events for input on a number of important bylaw articles, including membership (Article 2), election of officers (Article 4), collective bargaining (Articles 13 and 14) and discipline of members (Articles 24 and 25). A progress report will also be presented at this year's BCNU convention in May.

In the meantime, individuals can visit the BCNU website to provide direct input on the bylaw articles that are currently under review.

BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBERS

2,403

grievances opened

6,063

grievances closed

616

WCB cases closed
successfully

97%

success rate on members'
LTD appeals

FINANCIAL

31,120

salary reimbursement days
claimed by members

13,881

payments of 1%
Retiree Fund

27,648

expense
forms processed

\$160,000

saved using new printers
at BCNU offices

MEMBERS

540

members attended Personal
Resiliency Workshops

835

members received a
member education bursary

11,032

total number of members
attending BCNU events

37,947

registered users on the
BCNU Member Portal

EDUCATION

331

members attended
Steward Training

61

members attended
Communicating
Essential Skills

440

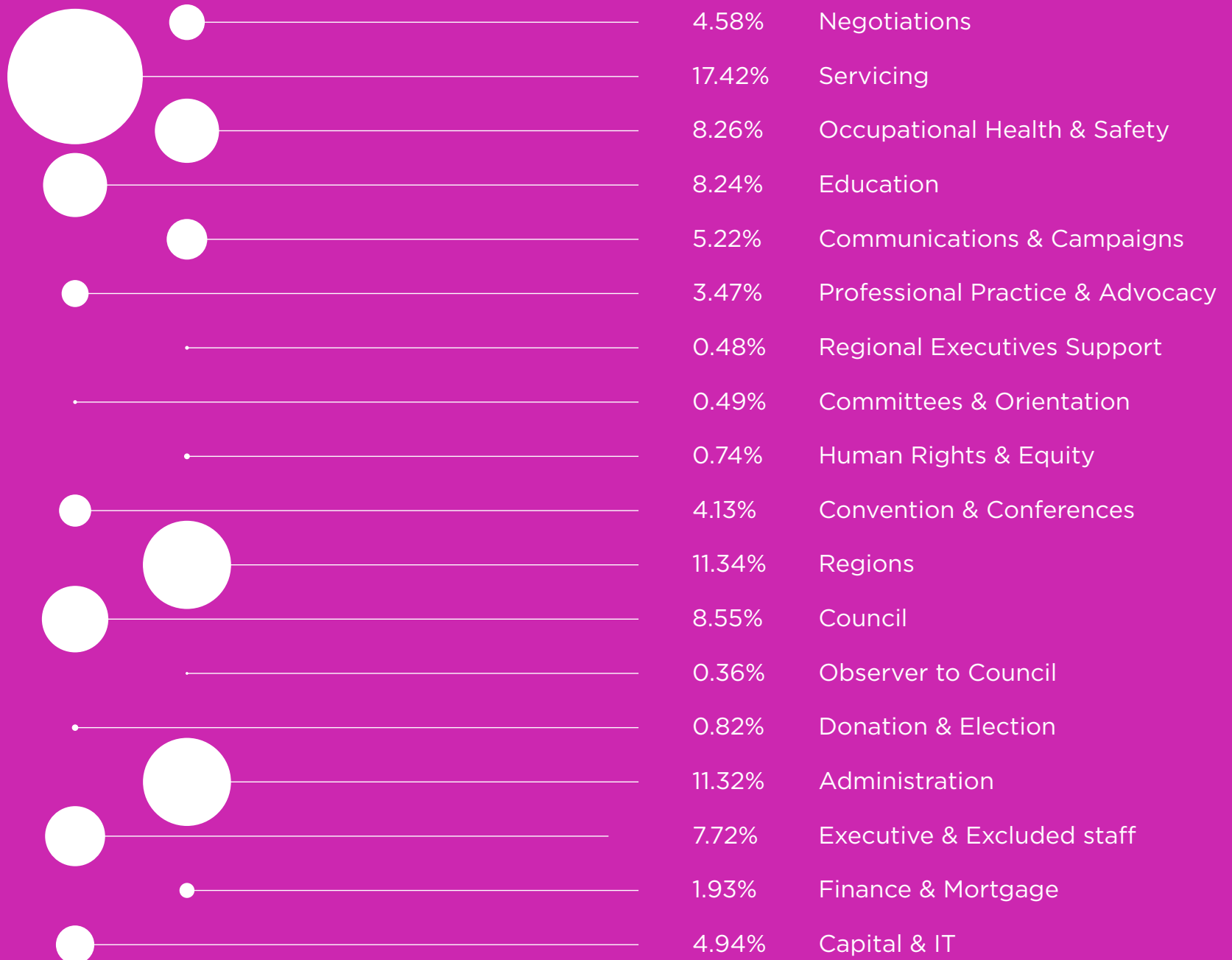
members attended Building
Union Solidarity (BUS)

1,623

total members
received education

BY THE NUMBERS

WHERE YOUR DUES GO



BCNU Committees and Working Groups

Bargaining
Nurses' Bargaining Association (PCA)

Bargaining
(Public Service)

BCNU Day & Change Day

Bursary

Bylaws

Charitable Giving

Complaints Investigation

Convention Planning

Constitution & Bylaws Renewal Working
Group (CBRWG)

Discipline Hearing Board

Essential Services

Finance

Green

Human Rights & Equity

In-Camera

Internationally Educated Nurses

Member Engagement, Steward
Recruitment & Retention (MESRR)

Nominations

OH&S

Pensions

Personnel

Policy Review

Professional Responsibility Review

Provincial Job Action

Resolutions

Retirement Benefit Program

Re-Training/Prevention &
Assistance Fund

Seniors' Strategy Working Group

Social Health & Wellness

As we look to 2018, we know there will always be new challenges and new opportunities ahead of us. Through our collective resilience, perseverance and dedication, we will rise to meet them. Together, we are people of the BC Nurses' Union — standing up for health care.
Standing Strong.



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UNION**

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