

memo

To: **All Licensed Practical Nurses in the
Hospital Employees' Union**

From: **Jacqueline Zilkie**
LPN and member of the HEU Provincial Executive

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Committee 2010*



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We're LPNs.

We're not signing BCNU cards.

Here's why.

You're probably aware that the BCNU is embarking on yet another attempt to "raid" LPN members of the HEU and absorb them into their own RN-dominated union.

This is an unwelcome move by the BCNU, not just because it ignores the fact that LPNs have their own independent profession, but because it shows disrespect for the decision made by LPNs two years ago when we decisively rejected BCNU's attempt to raid us.

That's why it's important for us to say "no" to BCNU – and refuse to sign a card. **We need to send a clear message that LPNs are an independent health profession in their own right.**

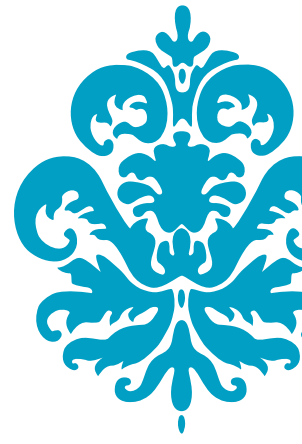
In 2009, we withstood a lot of pressure from BCNU. We stayed united and focused on our professional goals.

That's how we achieved increment steps – a top priority for LPNs – along with wage adjustments and other improvements at the bargaining table in 2010.

We were supported by our union then, and we are now.

HEU continues to provide us with the independent advocacy and representation that is so important to making sure LPNs are heard at every decision-making level.

And our voice must continue to be strong and clear as LPNs face changes to our profession.



Government is moving from a regulatory model – where some professions have authority over others (such as RNs over LPNs) – to a “restricted activities” model for LPNs such as in Alberta.

This won't change your scope of practice, but it will set out what activities LPNs can perform, including those that can be performed independently (without an RN assessment, for example).

So **the outcome of regulatory changes will have a big impact on the autonomy of our profession.** And when so many nursing policy decision-makers are RNs, it's important to protect our independent LPN perspective.

On issues like this, we need a clear and united voice to government, the College of LPNs of B.C. and health care decision-makers. **That won't happen if the BCNU absorbs LPNs into their union.**

This new raid attempt is a serious distraction from our professional practice goals and our upcoming round of bargaining.

It undermines the collaborative relationships we have built with our RN colleagues, who are also being pressured to take part in this raid.

That's why we must refuse, politely but firmly, to sign a BCNU card and ask our LPN colleagues to do the same. It's the only way to end this raid quickly, so that through the fall and beyond, we can move on with our priorities as LPNs.

Over the last few years, we've noticed a trend. When the BCNU wants LPNs to sign a card, they talk about “nurses” and “one profession.”

But when they're dealing with the thorny issue of skill mix changes, it's all about protecting their own turf.

A BCNU bargaining survey distributed this spring asked their RN members if they “would be in a better position or a worse position to influence skill mix changes in the interest of quality nursing care, if LPNs were members of BCNU?”

We all know the answer: **BCNU would be in a better position to control us and our utilization within the nursing team, if they absorbed LPNs into their union.** We would lose our strong and independent voice.

This is a critical time for LPNs. We've increased our numbers and influence in health care. We have independent



access to decision-makers, and we've secured substantial education and training funds over the last few years.

To those LPNs who stood united in HEU in 2009, we urge you to talk to your LPN colleagues about why it's important to reject BCNU's raid now.

If you are a colleague who considered BCNU membership in the past, **we hope that you will recognize the power we have as independent nursing professionals and the ability we have to build on our strong record of achievement.**

And to our LPN colleagues who may not have been around in 2009, we encourage you to learn about the issues that are at stake – and don't be misled by BCNU's slick but shallow campaign.

Because our future as an independent profession holds more promise than ever before.

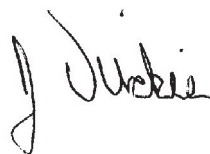
Yours sincerely,



Jacqueline Zilkie, LPN



Debera Willis, LPN



Joanne Dickie, LPN

*p.s. If you haven't done so already, **we invite you to check out HEU's publication on changes to the LPN regulation and participate in our online survey at <www.heu.org/jointheconversation>**. Add your voice to those who are looking toward a positive future for our profession.*

LPN



www.heu.org
www.bclpnsunited.ca