

President's Report By Wendy Despins

The Executive Director and I have been traveling, holding informational meetings with our membership throughout the province. We have been reviewing the activities of this past year, highlighting current initiatives and looking at future plans, as well as inviting feedback and discussion from members. To date we have been throughout the NorMan, Burntwood, and Brandon Regions and have begun the urban sites and South Eastman Region. Our intention is to complete meetings at the five urban hospitals, Deer Lodge Centre and Misericordia Health Centre, by mid to late June, completing meetings for our sites that are part of the central table negotiations.

With many other initiatives under way the Executive Council and I have been very active during this first half of the year. Having completed another strategic planning retreat, we came away with much accomplished.

We developed cleaner more defined roles for many of the MAHCP positions, such as the President, the Executive Director, and the Executive Council members. Through this process we also had an opportunity to devote time to board education and to develop a greater understanding of our role in governance, and the Executive Director's role in operations. It was the Executive Council's first opportunity to work with our new Executive Director, Mr. Lee Manning and his first opportunity to be immersed with and in MAHCP.

The most recent initiative from the board is the creation of an Oversight Committee. The mandate of this committee is to develop performance appraisal tools, terms of reference, and scope of committee. Ultimately it will sit in oversight of the Executive Director, and any volunteer member, or committee within MAHCP.

The Communications Committee had been working towards the selection of



a new look for MAHCP, beginning with a new logo, researching promotional items, and updating of the Staff Representative Role description, which is now completed.

The Governance Committee has been researching and reviewing materials for Constitutional Reform and also working on general Association policies.

To raise the profile of our membership within the public sector, Lee Manning (Executive Director) and I have been working on the selection of a marketing company to develop a strategy to market the image of MAHCP and our membership of 160 different Health Care Professionals who make up the largest component in Health Care.

In Canada of 1 million health care workers:

- 60,000 are physicians
- 300,000 are nurses
- 640,000 are other health care workers

As our professions have not had the public recognition they so richly deserve, in the course of our day to day business many of our members are often mistaken as nurses or physicians. Beginning with my presentation at our last AGM, "Who We Are and What We Do", I have been working towards raising our profile within the membership and in the public. My mandate is to provide MAHCP membership with a recognizable identity within the health care sector, with heightened public recognition. As I have traveled throughout the province meeting with members I have obtained permission to photograph our mem-

bers in the workplace doing what we do in health care. We are slowly building a comprehensive photo library of our membership. That library will provide us with images for use in presentations, for use on pamphlets, posters, reports and newsletters. I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who have participated in the photographs. I look forward to the many of you I have yet to photograph.

In the fall Lee, Karen Noga (LRO) and I will do the circuit of the province once again with a pre-negotiations tour.

In the meantime we have had a meeting with Arlene Wilgosh, the Deputy Minister of Health and are scheduled to meet with Tim Sale, the Minister of Health to discuss shortage issues, recruitment and retention issues and to establish the government/union committee outlined in our collective agreements in the Memorandum of Understanding #5.

I have also participated in two national meetings of Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat, of which we are an affiliate. We meet to discuss our provincial issues, track national trends and to develop coordinated campaigns.

During the spring meeting we participated at the Canadian Labour Congress National Day of Mourning at Vincent Massey Park, in Ottawa. I laid a rose at the memorial in memory of a friend, colleague and fellow board member Monique Wally, and on behalf of our members injured or killed in this past year. Since the National Day of Mourning was established in 1984 over 17,000 Canadian workers have been killed in the workplace and 18,000,000 injured. Every day in Canada 3 people die in the workplace. These numbers are staggering and speak to our need for better and stronger workplace health and safety legislation. We also need to ensure that compliance is maintained. As workers we need to improve our knowledge of the legislation, and our awareness of good workplace health and safety practices. We need to get involved. We need to have our voices heard. We need safe working conditions.