

Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals

Meets with the Honourable Minister of Health Theresa Oswald

July 27, 2011

MAHCP President Wendy Despins and Executive Director Lee Manning met with the Honourable Minister of Health and several representatives from Manitoba Health on July 27th. Three MAHCP members also attended. Jo-Anne Peltz, Physiotherapist from St. Boniface Hospital; Mike Templeton, Orthopaedic Technologist Supervisor from Health Sciences Centre; and Dr. Leanne Gardiner Senior Audiologist from Brandon RHA gave presentations on each of their respective professions. They highlighted issues and challenges in their individual occupations, and identified some solutions.

The two main agenda items were:

1. Education issues/recognition facing Health Care Professionals
2. Shortages of Health Care Professionals

Dr. Gardiner spoke about the importance of competitive, standardized salaries to address recruitment and retention issues and the extreme shortages in the province. Currently the average vacancy rate in the province overall is 25.8% and in the rural regions alone it is at 45.0%. Dr. Gardiner also reviewed the wait times and importance of diagnosing and treating children early.

Mike Templeton, Orthopaedic Technologist Supervisor stressed the difficulty of recruiting and retaining Orthopaedic Technologists. In the last 3 years of the 23 Registered Orthopaedic Technologists in Winnipeg 5 have left to better paying and less acute positions. "Orthopaedic Technologists are a small group of health care professionals who have an impact on a large number of patients, from the very young to the very old, from the acute to the chronic."

Physiotherapist Jo-Anne Peltz stated that in a profession where the entry to practice will soon require a Masters level it is imperative that salaries reflect the education and responsibilities of the employees. "Primary health care models of service delivery are an effective means of improving access of needed care to Manitobans. Physiotherapy is a discipline well equipped to take on a greater role in Primary Health Care within Manitoba."

MAHCP's purpose was to demonstrate the impacts of market driven bargaining on the technical/professional/paramedical sector of Health Care and how it plays out in several different ways. MAHCP also wanted to demonstrate that often the skills and training within our membership are unrecognized and under-utilized. President Despins stressed the point that decisions made without MAHCP members input in the long run cost the health care system time and money.

The meeting went very well with all the presenters doing an excellent job. The Minister and her staff took detailed notes and asked numerous questions. Several of the Minister's party could relate to different examples that were presented, either personally or because of a family member.

Overall it was a very good candid discussion.

President Despins presented the Minister with a copy of MAHCP's "Hidden Heroes of Health Care" poster, which is coordinated with our Radio Ad. http://www.mahcp.ca/htmlfiles/news/radio_ads.asp