

Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals Meeting with the Honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration, Jennifer Howard

August 12, 2011

Wendy Despina, President of MAHCP and Executive Director Lee Manning met with Jennifer Howard, Honourable Minister of Labour and the Deputy Minister Jeff Parr on August 12, 2011. Also in attendance were three MAHCP members: 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 who gave presentations on each of their respective professions. They highlighted issues that they face in their occupations and identified some solutions.

The agenda items were:

1. Education issues facing Professional Health Care Employees
2. Shortages of Health Care Professionals
3. Essential Services Act
4. Labour Relationship Issues

During the course of the meeting MAHCP also followed up with items from the previous meeting held in March 2011.

MAHCP's purpose was to continue 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 the membership are unrecognized and under-utilized. President Despina stressed the point that decisions made without MAHCP members input in the long run may cost the health care system time and money.

President Despina raised concerns regarding the transition of the new essential services legislation and the difficulties that MAHCP is facing at the bargaining table.

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 to needed care to Manitobans. Physiotherapy is a discipline well equipped to take on a greater role in Primary Health Care within Manitoba."

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.

President Despina addressed the shortages within the technical professional sector as a whole, and the impact of those shortages on health care.

Executive Director Manning discussed our desire to work collaboratively with the employers and government. Mr Manning identified several issues and roadblocks that continued to obstruct good working relationships.

In addition to raising concerns and identifying issues, the representatives from MAHCP were able to propose a number of recommendations and possible solutions for the Minister to consider.

The meeting went very well with all the presenters doing an excellent job. The Minister and her staff took detailed notes and asked several questions. Both the Minister and the Deputy Minister had firsthand experience with our members in the health care system. They also related too many of the examples that were presented, either personally or because of a family member.

Supporting Materials:

- 1) Physiotherapy Report July 2011 Jo-Anne Peltz
- 2) Audiologist Shortage Report- July 2011 Leanne Gardiner
- 3) Orthopaedic Technologist Report – July 2011 Mike Templeton

Documents Referenced:

- 1) New Essential Services Legislation