

March 20, 2020

Honourable Brian Pallister
Premier of Manitoba
Premier@leg.gov.mb.ca



Dear Premier Pallister,

The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP) has been hearing from more and more front-line health care professionals who are facing the need to self-isolate, self-quarantine or who are experiencing unavoidable child-care demands brought on by the COVID-19 crisis. These MAHCP members are feeling increasingly alarmed and torn between reporting to work and the need to follow clear public health guidelines or provide necessary care for dependent children at home.

The alarm regarding child care, in particular, has only increased with the announcement this week that licensed child-care centres are closing as of today, removing the last alternative for many health care professionals who are now out of options.

Today's high-level announcement of the government's plan to address the urgent child-care situation provides little comfort for our members who are already facing a crunch. Communication from their direct supervisors has been poor and inconsistent, the common thread being that no support is available, no special provisions have been made and that they must use any banked time they have earned or go unpaid. At the same time, they are being asked to report their immediate child-care needs to a government phone number and to hope for the best.

These front-line professionals need direct support now to address child-care concerns. They can't wait for government initiatives, announced just today, to translate into child-care spots in the coming days or weeks. In addition, front-line staff who are required to self-isolate or self-quarantine also need direct support now. Requiring health care professionals to deplete sick time and vacation to address extraordinary circumstances not of their own making is not only unfair, but it is certain to cause problems for a strained health care system down the road.

MAHCP is asking the provincial government to address this urgent and extraordinary situation by providing paid leave for health care professionals who are required to be off work to self-isolate, self-quarantine or to address unavoidable child care concerns where no other option exists.

MAHCP members and all health care workers are committed to providing the highest level of care to their patients and clients. Even under normal circumstances, they work under extraordinary pressures. They need support from government now. Thank you for your prompt attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Moroz, MAHCP President

CC: Honourable Scott Fielding, Minister of Finance; Honourable Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living; Honourable Heather Stefanson, Minister of Families; Mr. Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition; Mr. Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party