

Critical Staffing Shortage on Patient Transport Team Putting Patients at Risk

May 21, 2021 Winnipeg MB– The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP) is sounding the alarm about the growing number of critical patient transports and the acute shortage of specialized Advanced Practice Respiratory Therapists (APRTs) who perform them. The emergent transports to Thunder Bay, Ontario this week have highlighted this longstanding and increasingly precarious issue.

The Inter-facility Transport Team consists of APRTs and Paramedics. The team, based at Health Sciences Centre, is responsible for a variety of patient transports within Manitoba and out of province, including everything from ground transportation to flights, and from non-emergent transports to critical COVID patients bound for the ICU. It has seen a marked increase in transports due to the pandemic and a surge in recent days due to the third wave.

“It’s some of the most critical work you can imagine, transporting patients to keep them alive,” said Bob Moroz, MAHCP President. “This small, dedicated team was running thin before the third wave. Now they’re being asked to do even more but with no plan to address growing staffing vacancies and with no change to their routine duties. They’re being put in an impossible situation and it’s a recipe for disaster.”

MAHCP has confirmed that increases to staffing for adult patient transport which were previously promised never materialized, and that vacancies on the already small team are growing. This week, APRTs on the team have been tasked with transporting critical ICU patients to Thunder Bay, with hospitals in Northwest Ontario reportedly preparing to accept more.

“Too few of these specialized Allied Health Care Professionals are being pulled in too many different directions right now, a direct result of there being no plan to deal with the growing third wave that everyone saw coming,” said Moroz. “We are hearing from our members that they are already burnt out and I’m not sure how much longer they can keep this pace up.”

MAHCP is calling on the Manitoba Government immediately to address the critical staffing shortage on the Patient Transport Team and ensure safe, sustainable patient transports throughout the third wave and beyond.

The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals is the union representing over 6500 members from all over Manitoba. MAHCP represents 85% of Allied Health Care Professionals in Manitoba, working in more than 190 disciplines in health care settings across the province.

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