

ONE WEEK LATER, STILL NO RELIEF FOR RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS IN ICU

Winnipeg MB, May 28, 2021 - One week after the Premier made a plea to the federal government for an additional 20 Respiratory Therapists, ICU's have not seen any additional federal help. MAHCP is asking the Manitoba Government what the plan is to address critical shortages of Respiratory Therapists.

"Respiratory Therapists, along with many health care professionals, continue to wait on a plan from the Provincial Government that addresses critical staffing shortages in ICUs. The announcement last week of potential help from the federal government, which came far too late, gave some hope but it's quickly fading," said Bob Moroz, MAHCP President.

Respiratory Therapists (RTs) are essential to keeping ICUs running and critically ill patients ventilated during the pandemic. Safe patient ratios for Respiratory Therapists are one RT for every five critical patients. Currently, RTs are caring for up to eight ventilated ICU patients at a time, with dozens of overtime shifts still needing to be filled.

Winnipeg ICUs were consolidated to three tertiary sites beginning in 2017, but baseline staffing of Respiratory Therapists was never increased, even in the face of a pandemic. Instead, Respiratory Therapists have mainly been pulled from other essential departments to ensure ICUs can continue to function, relying on existing staff to work unprecedented levels of overtime to meet the growing demand and leaving other essential departments short-staffed.

"Our members on the front line of this pandemic are stepping up to fill the gaps the best they can, but those gaps are widening by the day. They need more staffing and support, and they need to know there's a plan. They can't afford to wait any longer, and neither can Manitobans," said Moroz.

MAHCP is calling on the Manitoba government to release their plan for ICU staffing immediately to reassure Manitobans and frontline health care professionals.

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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