

## **BACKLOG PLAN LACKS DETAILS, IGNORES ALLIED HEALTH STAFFING CRISIS**

*Critical Shortages in Imaging Technologists, Rehabilitation Staff,  
and Other Key Disciplines Left Unaddressed*

**December 8, 2021 Winnipeg MB** – The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP) is concerned about a lack of commitment to address critical staffing shortages in the Manitoba Government’s plan to tackle the growing surgical and diagnostics backlog, which now includes over 80,000 diagnostic imaging tests such as CT scans, ultrasound, and other critical procedures.

“Staffing is at a critical level, and the current staff don’t have any more to give. We’re still seeing no acknowledgment from government that we need more allied health professionals to do the job,” said Bob Moroz, MAHCP President.

“We need allied health staffing to be prioritized or else any plans to address the backlog will not be effective and put Manitobans at risk.”

Average wait times for diagnostic imaging tests remain alarmingly high: MRI (18 weeks), CT scans (18 weeks), Ultrasound (18 weeks), and bone density tests (33 weeks). Wait times in some rural and northern Manitoba areas are much worse, with ultrasound wait times currently reaching a full year in Thompson, and nearly as long in The Pas.

According to Doctors Manitoba’s June report, which first identified the backlog, 83% of Radiologists identified lack of allied health staff as a “significant barrier to addressing the backlog for diagnostic imaging.”

In addition to diagnostics, any increase in surgical capacity will require a significant capacity increase in post-operative rehabilitation performed by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other key disciplines. These services are considered essential to successful rehabilitation after major surgery, particularly with hip, knee and other orthopedic surgeries. However, outpatient rehabilitation services were cut in 2017 and have not been restored. Recent media reports have identified significant shortages in inpatient rehabilitation staff as well, which echoes what MAHCP is hearing from the frontlines.

“Physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other allied health disciplines are essential to get post-operative patients back on their feet and return home safely,” said Moroz.

“We’re hearing about patients sent home from hospital and unable to get up their front steps because the rehab staff at hospital didn’t have enough time with them, despite the best efforts of staff. There just aren’t enough of these skilled professionals to do the job. It’s not only distressing, but it’s dangerous.”

MAHCP wrote to then Health Minister Stefanson in July regarding the backlog, and again to Premier Stefanson in early November. No response to either letter has been received to date.

“We were hoping for a strong commitment to address the critical staffing shortages in allied health that are keeping Manitobans waiting for essential health care. We need solutions to recruit and retain the health care professionals we need, and we’re not being consulted or considered. That needs to change.”

*The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals is a union representing over 6500 allied health professionals working in more than 190 disciplines across Manitoba. For more information on MAHCP visit [www.mahcp.ca](http://www.mahcp.ca).*