

SERVICE OUTAGES SPIKE TO FIVE YEAR HIGH AS RURAL PARAMEDIC STAFFING CRISIS WORSENS

*Copy of internal report points to rural ambulances out of service
for a combined 17,000 hours in one month.*

January 6, 2022 Winnipeg MB – As COVID-19 cases reach record levels, there is still no action from the Manitoba Government or Shared Health on the rural paramedic staffing crisis. The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals, the union that represents over 800 rural paramedics, received a copy of the October 2021 Medical Transportation Coordination Centre Ground Report. This internal report points to a staggering combined total of over 17,000 hours where ambulances were out of service and unavailable to assist Manitobans in an emergency.

This troubling statistic has now reached a five-year high with no signs of slowing due to increasing demand for ambulances and paramedic staffing shortages. According to the report, “Out of Service-Staffing” or “OOS-S” statistics are “based on reports from EMS crews when unit that is expected to be staffed, does not have the legislated requirement to be an ambulance (i.e., a two person crew is not available). In these situations, the unit is marked as OOS-S and is not available for call assignment,” (p. 34 of MTCC report).

“During the pandemic, rural paramedics have worked unprecedented levels of overtime and continue to do so, but they can’t keep up,” said Bob Moroz, MAHCP President. “The Manitoba Government refuses to address the staffing crisis that is overwhelming rural paramedics.”

Despite MAHCP [sounding the alarm repeatedly since last summer](#), which included a meeting with Health Minister Audrey Gordon, there has been no official response to or acknowledgment of this growing crisis. Recently, MAHCP has learned of instances where paramedics are willing to increase to full-time and subsequently denied.

“Government needs to act now to ensure the rural paramedic workforce doesn’t collapse from acute understaffing,” said Moroz. “It is Manitobans that will pay the price for the government’s inaction.”

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.

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