

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara, Deputy Premier, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
302 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

November 13, 2024

Dear Minister Asagwara,

As you may know, the Provincial Health Labour Relations Services (PHLRS) has served notice to the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP) that they are discontinuing the memorandum of agreement (MOA) that provides premiums and allowances to our frontline members working in critical areas including adult and pediatric ICUs, as well as personal care homes and hospital wards experiencing COVID outbreaks. This means that any MAHCP member currently receiving the \$6/hour premium or other premiums and allowances under the MOA will no longer receive them, effective November 23, 2024.

MAHCP strongly disagrees with the employer's unilateral decision. The employer's rationale is that the "pandemic is over" and "the healthcare system has stabilized". Yet COVID-19 outbreaks are still being declared, respiratory virus season is ramping up, and the ongoing staffing crisis continues to put significant strain on allied health professionals in areas covered by the MOA.

As I have raised with you before, this MOA was never fairly applied. For example, the employer repeatedly refused to include MAHCP members working in emergency departments, emergency response services and other areas, despite the fact that many nurses working alongside them received the premium. Furthermore, other health-care sectors had the opportunity to negotiate the value of this work at their respective bargaining tables before related premiums were revoked.

I raise these points again to point out that discontinuing the existing premiums now for MAHCP members, while we are still in negotiations toward a collective agreement, only continues the unfair and unequal treatment our members have already experienced. Furthermore, this unilateral move runs the risk of further exacerbating well-documented staff retention issues in critically important areas, including adult and pediatric ICUs, just as Manitoba enters respiratory virus season. The employer's decision puts these vital services at risk at the worst possible time.

MAHCP is calling for this decision to be reversed. I would like to discuss this urgent matter with you at the earliest opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Jason Linklater, MAHCP President
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