

May 3, 2019

Dr. David Peachey
Health Intelligence Inc. and Associates
21 Shipping Lane
Halibut Bay, Nova Scotia B3V 1P6

Delivered by email

Dear Dr. Peachey,

On behalf of Manitoba's 12,000 nurses and particularly the nurses in WHRA hospitals, I write to implore you to hold meaningful consultation with frontline nurses as part of your Quality Assurance Assessment of Phase II.

Since the implementation of Phase I, I've heard from countless nurses who are deeply concerned about the effects of the Pallister government's consolidation plan. Patient volumes at absorbing facilities have spiked considerably without adequate staff or resources to meet the increased demand. The use of overtime and mandatory overtime has worsened since these changes were made. Staffing shortages and vacancies have become serious problems in many programs. The remaining emergency departments have become overcrowded and have seen wait times rise since October 2017.

Nurses are telling management, the health authority and government to stop the cuts, and reconsider this plan. Many nurses believe the situation has become dangerous, and fear the effects of further closures or consolidation will put safe patient care at greater risk. Overtime at Concordia Hospital has increased by 51.56% in the 2018 calendar year compared to 2017, including a staggering 82.56% in Family Medicine, 57.45% in the ER, and 35.80% increase in Critical Care, which also saw the closure of two ICU beds in recent months. This reflects a workload situation that has worsened for many nurses in the WRHA ever since Phase I was implemented.

The government has noted that you are consulting with "clinical leaders" as part of your assessment. In order to ensure you understand our concerns, I urge you to meet directly with nurses on the frontline, who know firsthand the effects these changes are having on patients, and their own ability to provide care. I believe this is necessary information for you to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the situation, and is an ethical requirement for ensuring that Manitobans can trust the conclusions of your report.

I would be more than willing to assist you in arranging meetings with nurses. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Darlene Jackson
President
Manitoba Nurses Union

Cc:

Hon. Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living

Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition

Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Second Opposition