

# CUPE204

Health Care Workers Union  
Canadian Union of Public Employees

**SENT VIA EMAIL: minhsal@leg.gov.mb.ca**

May 16, 2019

Hon. Minister Cameron Friesen  
Minister of Health, Seniors, and Active Living  
302 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway, Winnipeg MB, R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Friesen:

**RE: CONCORDIA HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM, CONSOLIDATION PLAN**

On behalf of 7,000 health care workers in Winnipeg represented by CUPE Local 204, we would like to express our deep concern with the way in which the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) has implemented Phase I and Phase II of the “*Healing Our Health Care System*” program. We have repeatedly expressed concern about the provincial government’s decision to close Emergency Rooms at Concordia Hospital, Seven Oaks General Hospital, and the Victoria Hospital, as well as other programs and departments throughout the government’s consolidation plan.

We are incredibly frustrated with the way in which this government has conducted itself since announcing the consolidation plan in 2017, and we continue to have grave concerns with the plan to close the Emergency Room at Seven Oaks Hospital.

We have heard for two years from patients, staff, and the community that these closures would negatively affect health care services in Winnipeg, and that the closures would not improve wait times. In fact, wait times are getting worse, and staff are already overburdened at these hospitals, as well as at receiving hospitals such as the Grace, Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface.

We would like to express our members’ deep frustration with the extremely disruptive, demoralizing, and chaotic way in which the WRHA has implemented staff restructuring throughout the system, which continues to this day. Since the consolidation plan was announced, health care facilities across Winnipeg have deleted, re-posted, and reorganized hundreds of positions to facilitate the closure of the Emergency Rooms. Health care workers have been uprooted from the jobs they know and forced to bump into new ones with little additional training. In some cases, staff have made the difficult choice to retire early, and some have quit altogether to apply for work elsewhere. This has all created incredible disruption in the system, and a serious degradation of morale.

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Health care workers have also reported that many of our facilities have been flooded with increased patient volumes since Phase I and Phase II have been implemented without – any additional support to help deal with the increased patient flow.

Our CUPE 204 representatives have been there with each and every staff member as they went through this bumping process, and we have done our best to help them navigate an increasingly frustrating and confusing system. But we've also been there with, and for our members as they experience the deep, hurtful, emotional impact of this process on their careers, aspirations and lives.

CUPE 204 members are on the front line and behind the scenes of our health care system, and we know the impact these decisions have had on patient care as well as on staff morale.

Health care workers in Manitoba are deeply proud of the work we do to serve patients. Those who work in health care know the value they provide to the public, and we are rewarded every day knowing that we have had a positive impact on peoples' health and well-being. However, this government has treated us as if we have no value, and even less respect.

Minister Friesen, your government's plan to consolidate Emergency Rooms and other health care programs has been nothing short of chaotic. It becomes more apparent each day that your government's priority for health care is about saving money and not delivering quality care Manitobans can count on.

Keeping the Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks Emergency Rooms open is a priority. CUPE 204 expects that you will be meeting with our representatives to hear our concerns about the deletion and bumping processes that have taken place over the past two years, as well as with the consolidation plan and any future discussion on Emergency Room closures.

Our members have the experience and day-to-day knowledge to assess how the government's consolidation plan has affected front line health care and health care workers.

It is critical that you meet with representatives from CUPE Local 204 as soon as possible so we can provide our frank and constructive feedback. Please do not continue to ignore the voices of front-line health care workers and their representatives.

Sincerely,



Debbie Boissonneault  
CUPE 204 President

cc: Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition  
Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Second Opposition