

MEMO

Date: June 10, 2021
To: All Health Care Workers
From: **Lanette Siragusa**
Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health
Re: **Update on Status of MNU Bargaining**

Each and every day, health care workers across Manitoba are meeting the challenges of delivering quality health care to our patients, residents and clients. As leaders, we are so grateful for your ongoing efforts as well as your commitment to patients, families and one another.

For the past 15 months, you have been the foundation for our health system's response to the pandemic. It is your efforts that have allowed us to maintain as many important non-COVID services as possible for Manitobans.

We know this has not been easy, particularly during periods of high COVID-19 activity but you have stepped forward to support everything asked of you. We know that your lives have been disrupted – not only by the many changes at work but also by changes to the public health orders that affect your life at home, your children's lives at school and your ability to see family and loved ones.

More recently, you have likely had questions or concerns related to talk of possible labour disruption amongst our nursing workforce. Whether you are a nurse – or work alongside our dedicated nursing colleagues – it's important that you have an understanding and some reassurance of what this means to you, your work, your team and your patients.

We all want nurses to have the security of a new, fair and long-term contract. That's in everyone's interest and everyone agrees this must be the goal.

Despite the nature of bargaining, especially when it becomes a public discussion or occurs during a time of high demand on health services, there is always much shared ground. That's the case in the current discussions as well. **We all want the same thing.**

The possibility of job action is a reality during bargaining. This possibility creates uncertainty and stress for both health care workers and members of the public, especially during a pandemic.

The strike vote does not necessarily mean strike action. But it's important for all staff to understand that much planning has gone into the creation of new Essential Service Agreements.

These agreements are in place to ensure staff coverage, continuation of service, and minimal impact to operations and patient care. With COVID-19 still requiring our focus and effort, these agreements have taken into consideration the ongoing staffing needs of the pandemic.

In the meantime, active bargaining continues and proposals are being exchanged and reviewed.

Proposals have been made and remain on the table in a number of areas that both the employers and the unions can agree are important, particularly in relation to the recruitment and retention of nurses.

These proposals include:

- General compensation increases with immediate retroactive pay which make Manitoba an attractive place to work and live;
- Special shift premiums for Emergency Department nurses at our busiest facilities;
- Special incentives to recruit and retain nurses to our Intensive Care Units;
- General evening and night premiums;
- Travel and temporary transfer premiums;
- Enhanced education allowances;
- Specific proposals to support training, recruitment and retention; and
- Specific proposals to improve the work and life balance for Manitoba nurses.

Our commitment – shared by all of us – remains caring for Manitobans.

Our goal remains finalizing a new, fair and long-term collective agreement with Manitoba nurses. We are working hard toward this goal and are fully committed to ongoing bargaining.

This includes a commitment to achieving the operational improvements we all recognize are needed – for better patient care and better balance between work and life. These are details that will be extremely difficult to properly address in arbitration, but that will make a difference in our care of patients and are support for nurses.

Significant progress is being made in bargaining, and we will continue working toward an agreement. Manitoba nurses continue to play a vital role across our health system – both today and well into the future.

At the end of the day, we all want nurses to have the comfort and security of fair compensation and a reasonable balance between work and life.