



News Release

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WRHA Restructuring Will Result in Significant Cuts to Front-Line Care, CUPE

WINNIPEG – The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) received details on the extent of the government’s plans to restructure and reorganise front-line care at Health Sciences Centre (HSC) and Grace Hospital.

“The changes proposed today will negatively impact patient care, there is no doubt about that,” said Shannon McAteer, CUPE Health Care Coordinator. “The government’s overhaul of health care in Manitoba is nothing short of reckless and it must stop.”

The changes at HSC and Grace Hospital include the reduction of many health care aide positions from full-time to part-time, resulting in the loss of over 100 full-time jobs. At least 111 positions will be cut altogether at HSC alone, leaving entire hospital wards with major reductions in staff.

These numbers are still only preliminary as CUPE continues to comb through the stacks of rotation changes provided by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA).

“Reducing full-time health care aides to part-time is completely incomprehensible to us,” said McAteer. “Health care aide positions must be full-time so care to patients is consistent, any health care provider can tell you that, not to mention the impact on recruitment and retention of qualified health care aides.”

CUPE received a vague “Employment Security” notice in August, and met with the employer once to try to discuss the proposed changes. The employer insisted it could not provide any details until the new shift rotations changes were finalized.

“Throughout this entire process the government and the WRHA have been incredibly secretive on their health care plans for our province,” said McAteer. “Manitoba’s health care workers and Manitoba’s patients deserve to be part of this process but we are being left out.”

The WRHA’s release today outlined the process in health care collective agreements that allow for changes to take place, including the ‘bumping’ process. “The issue today is not whether or not the WRHA is following the collective agreement, the issue is whether or not these cuts should even be made in the first place,” said McAteer. “Health care support workers need more support, not less, and these cuts are going to hurt Manitoba’s health care system.”

During the 2016 provincial election Premier Pallister promised that he would protect front line workers. “That election promise has been broken,” said McAteer.

CUPE represents support workers at the majority of acute care facilities in Winnipeg, including HSC, Grace Hospital, Seven Oaks General Hospital, Concordia Hospital as well as long-term care facilities and community clinics.

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