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Mandatory Overtime at St. Boniface Hospital Reaches Crisis Level

WINNIPEG, MB – Mandatory overtime has reached a crisis level at St. Boniface Hospital as reported incidences in 2018 have already surpassed 2017 levels, the Manitoba Nurses Union reported today.

“We’ve been hearing from nurses that mandatory overtime has been increasing dramatically since changes were implemented at St. Boniface,” said MNU President Sandi Mowat. “In fact, our numbers show mandatory OT has already exceeded 2017 incidences. This is simply unacceptable – we are demanding that the WRHA and the Minister of Health take immediate action to address this issue.”

MNU has received 328 incidence reports of mandatory overtime since January 1, 2018 – the equivalent of all reported mandatory overtime incidences in the 2017 calendar year. Incidences are voluntarily reported to MNU, which indicates that the actual number of mandatory overtime incidences may be substantially higher. Voluntary overtime is not reflected in the data either, meaning actual overtime worked is likely also much higher.

Many programs at the hospital are reporting issues with high rates of mandatory overtime, including Surgery, Medicine, Emergency, Palliative Care, and Woman & Child. Woman & Child—a program that has long suffered issues with excessive overtime—has experienced a dramatic increase in workload, particularly in the Labour, Delivery, Recovery and Post Partum Unit. Just last weekend 4 nurses were mandated to work double shifts (16 consecutive hours).

“We’ve been told repeatedly by the region and the provincial government that the changes they’re making would help reduce the overtime nurses were required to work, but we’re seeing the exact opposite,” added Mowat. “It’s further evidence that they didn’t have an appropriate plan in place to begin with. The process has been rushed, and now nurses are being pushed to the limit.”

Studies have shown that excessive overtime can result in increased sick leave and burnout, which exacerbates the ongoing nursing shortage and can jeopardize the delivery of safe patient care.

MNU represents 1,600 nurses at St. Boniface hospital, and over 12,000 nurses of all designations across the province.

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