

Dear members,

I am honoured to write you today as the new President of the Manitoba Nurses Union.

After 10 years of incredible service, Sandi Mowat officially retired from the role on July 1. On behalf of MNU's 12,000+ members, I want to first extend my sincere gratitude and thanks for her dedication to Manitoba's nurses and patients.

There is a long list of accomplishments that Sandi will be remembered by for many years to come. My goal is to uphold Sandi's achievements, and follow her example by providing quality representation for MNU members in every region.

That's why it's my mission to visit every local and worksite in our province. I want to provide an opportunity for you to share your concerns in-person, including ideas for improving working conditions for our members and health care delivery for our patients.

As part of this effort, I will continue MNU's Wear White Wednesday campaign to raise awareness about issues impacting patient care. Wearing white on Wednesday is a simple and effective way to express solidarity with nurses across our province and use our collective position as the most trusted spokespeople in health care. I hope to see as many nurses as possible wearing white as I visit facilities across Manitoba beginning this summer.

Since I decided to run for President earlier this year, I've been meeting members from across the province to gain better understanding of the issues facing each region, and how I can better advocate for nurses like you.

As President, I will use my decades of experience as a nursing activist to stand up for your interests every day. I have been a practicing RN for over 30 years and have been an active MNU member since 1981. I've served as President of my worksite in The Pas for over two decades and have served on MNU's Provincial Collective Bargaining Committee (PCBC) in 9 rounds of bargaining, including as Vice-Chairperson. I've also served as a board member for the Northern Region from 2012 to 2016 and served as Secretary-Treasurer from 2016 to 2018. All of these experiences have helped prepare me for this role as President, and I'm ready to get to work on your behalf.

Having spent most of my career in The Pas, I also have an intimate understanding of the difficulties facing rural facilities in our province. Although many of the major changes and cuts implemented by the provincial government have taken place in the WRHA, there is no shortage of issues facing our rural worksites that I am paying close attention to, and eager to work with members to help address.

I believe in the collective power of nurses, and that through political action we can improve working conditions for all our members and patients. I was there in the 1990s, when nurses confronted some of the most extreme health care cuts our province has ever been faced with. I've also been active at the local and worksite level and seen how strong involvement from our grassroots members can make meaningful changes in their facilities, which in turn help nurses provide better patient care.

Through strong teamwork and representation, I want to ensure every nurse practices in a safe and supportive environment, and that MNU will continue to advocate for safe, quality health care for all Manitobans.

I sincerely appreciate the important work all of you do for Manitobans. I look forward to serving you and meeting you at your workplace soon. Thank you for your placing your trust in me as your President.

In solidarity,

Darlene Jackson

President

Manitoba Nurses Union