

MNU responds to 2018 Speech from the Throne

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The Pallister government has once again decided to mislead Manitobans instead of addressing the impacts of their cuts on front-line health care. Nurses are deeply concerned about the impacts cuts and changes are having on the quality of patient care across the province, but the government is insisting on ignoring reality and forging ahead with their misguided closure of emergency departments and 'service consolidation' strategy. It's clear they are treating nurses as pawns in a chess game, rather than the front-line experts that they are. It has created a serious human resource problem that threatens to further jeopardize quality patient care and make the nursing shortage worse.

We know wait times have been higher ever since October 2017, yet this government claims wait times are down. Overtime and workloads have increased significantly at most Winnipeg hospitals over the past year, but the Health Minister says overtime is down. The community of Flin Flon is reeling following the closure of the hospital's obstetrics unit, but this government says the program closure is not a cut. They claim they are continuing to work on their promise of building 1,200 new personal care home beds, when in fact they have built zero beds since coming into power, and pushed back the deadline they set for themselves, from 2024 to 2025. They have failed to invest in the future of our health system after canceling \$1 billion in health infrastructure projects in 2017, including a much needed CancerCare facility.

The Pallister government claims they are making record investments in health care, when in fact their budgeted increase is below inflation, making it a de-facto cut. We also know this government underspent in health care by \$138 million in 2017-18, meanwhile we continue to hear frequent reports of chronically unfilled shifts and short-staffed units across the province.

This government cannot continue to balance its books on the backs of patients and nurses. Unfortunately, they have once again ignored pleas from frontline experts, and put their political agenda ahead of the needs of Manitobans.

- Darlene Jackson, President of the Manitoba Nurses Union