

As the provincial government continues its program of health care cuts and changes throughout Manitoba, MNU is providing updates as new information is made available. Subscribe to The Pulse – MNU’s weekly newsletter – to get all the latest news by contacting MNU’s membership department at membership@manitobanurses.ca.

Rural Update

The provincial government appears to be planning significant consolidation of health care services in rural regions. However, the details largely remain secret, as no official announcement has been made outlining which facilities may be affected.

Shared Health – a newly created provincial organization – is currently reviewing regional proposals for health care consolidation. Already, Prairie Mountain Health has overseen the closure of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) stations which has caused public backlash. However, it’s unclear what further changes will be implemented, or what impact they may have.

In June, the provincial government released its “Health Care Transformation” blueprint, which outlined in broad policy terms what goals and objectives it hopes to achieve province wide. However, specific consolidation plans were not disclosed; the announcement appeared to serve as a stop-gap for delaying the revelation of new information to potentially impacted communities and stakeholders.

WRHA Update

After several months of delay, the provincial government and WRHA finally released its timeline for Phase II of its health care transformation plan on May 31, 2018. Unfortunately, the plan still calls for major cuts and changes, including the closure of the Concordia and Seven Oaks Emergency Rooms. Some changes including mental health consolidation are scheduled to go ahead in the fall of 2018 but most major changes have been pushed to spring and fall of 2019 respectively. A list of changes as provided by the WRHA is provided at the end of this article.

Two weeks after revealing its Phase II timelines, the WRHA and provincial government announced that the Concordia Emergency Department will be converted into a “connected care” walk-in clinic, which will open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm daily. As a result, the WRHA anticipates the facility will serve “up to half” as many patients as the facility currently does. This is by definition a half-measure that will dramatically reduce care options for the facility’s catchment area and the surrounding communities.

Changes to staffing levels at affected facilities have not yet been announced. The employer is required to provide notice of 90 days in advance of initiating an employment security process.[WP2] As soon as notice is provided, MNU will communicate to affected members.

If Phase II continues as planned, it would follow the closure of the Mature Women’s Health Centre, four Quick Care Clinics, the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre, and the Corydon Primary Care Centre. In addition, Victoria Hospital has lost vital services including their Emergency Room and ICU, while HSC nursing positions including Clinical Nurse Specialists in the Trauma and Burn units, IV specialists, and lactation consultants have been cut.

MNU will continue to oppose these cuts and changes publicly by lobbying the government and the region to reconsider this initiative and will continue to ensure that nurses’ rights are protected and the provisions of the collective agreement are respected.

Phase II changes as provided by WRHA:

Concordia Hospital

- Will continue its role with orthopedic surgery.
- ED closes June 2019.
- Inpatient care will focus on community hospital medicine and rehabilitation. (sub-acute).
- Post Acute Neurosurgical Unit moves to Concordia.

Grace Hospital

- The new emergency department opened May 29 is triple the size and will accommodate nearly double the number of patients as the old department each year.
- Mental Health: will move from Grace and Seven Oaks Hospitals into HSC, St. Boniface and Victoria late fall/early winter.
- Increase in surgical activity including orthopedic trauma in January 2019.

Health Sciences Centre

- HSC will continue to focus on providing trauma burns and neurosurgery specialty care to the most seriously ill and injured patients in our province.
- Intensive care (ICU): HSC will expand to accommodate services previously at Concordia and Seven Oaks August, 2019.
- Mental Health: will be concentrated at HSC, St. Boniface and Victoria hospitals fall/winter 2018/19.
- Surgery program activity will increase.

Seven Oaks Hospital

- Emergency: Seven Oaks converts to Urgent Care in September 2019.
- ICU: services shift out of Seven Oaks to HSC.
- Medicine: Seven Oaks converts to community hospital medicine and transitional care. (sub-acute).
- Rehabilitation and Geriatric services continue.
- Surgery: shifts from Seven Oaks to other sites in January 2019.
- Mental Health: consolidates Seven Oaks into HSC, St. Boniface and Victoria.
- Continues to play an important role in Renal Care
- Endoscopy: exploring options to expand.

St. Boniface Hospital

- Emergency: St. Boniface emergency department requires a number of upgrades to keep its design and function in line with the other acute sites. Majority of improvements completed June 2019 with final completion by October 2019.
- ICU: intensive care expansion (ICMS)
- Mental Health: consolidates from Grace and Seven Oaks into St. Boniface, HSC and Victoria in fall/winter 2018.
- Cardiac bed expansion summer 2019.

Victoria Hospital

- Mental Health: consolidates from Grace and Seven Oaks into Victoria, HSC and St. Boniface fall/early winter.
- In order for Victoria to welcome its new role in the mental health program, renovations are underway within the facility with an anticipated occupancy and move-in this fall/early winter.
- Continue with Day Surgery program.
- Shift to Urgent Care has been successful.
- Transitional Care will be converted to community hospital care (sub-acute)