

Village of Leask

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Date:

To Everett Hindley, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural & Remote Health
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Paul Merriman, Minister of Health he.minister@gov.sk.ca

We are writing this in support of the hardworking individuals that provide health care in Shellbrook. This includes the Administration, Managers, Nurses, Environmental workers, Maintenance, food service workers, clerical staff, lab technologists and Physicians. It is a big Team that pulls together to provide excellent service.

Our Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee held its Annual General Meeting earlier this year and among the various business items was a passionate presentation by two of our Physicians. The physicians really appreciate the team that provides support and are working together. The main concern that we would like to address is the existence of Human Resource gaps that exist and could get worse.

The day shift is generally well staffed unless there are illnesses or bad road conditions. There are currently evening cleaning staff as a result of Covid necessity for extra precautionary cleaning. This service is great help in that the team knows that unoccupied acute rooms and examination rooms are sanitized and ready. Also supplies are in place to set up the night shift of nurses and doctor for successful patient care. If this shift is removed post Covid there will be additional hardships for the Physicians and nursing staff resulting in diminished care and increased stress.

The system wide vacancies in the nursing department are another source of challenges with potential Emergency Department closures or temporary ambulance bypass. This will impact the workload in the Prince Albert emergency department. There is undue responsibility placed on junior nurses who have to work alone and lack the experience to cope with high stress life threatening situations. An increase of permanent experienced nurses is imperative.

An evening clerical worker has been requested to aid with paperwork and communication. This person would eliminate the necessity of the doctor or nurse to telephone the clerks in Prince Albert to admit patients a process that overloads the clerks in at the other site if they are not too busy to answer the phone.

Management positions remain unfilled for various reasons in spite of good incentive programs provided by the SHA and enhanced by our local initiatives. This is very stressful for all staff who have no one to report to or rely on for support. A suggestion of splitting the management into two positions, one for long term care and another for the acute and emergency department.

We heard that the health area comprising of 40 000 people does not have even one acute social worker! This is a bad situation given the broad diversity of the area population. We have been very fortunate recipients of several International Medical Graduates through the SIPPA program for this we are very grateful. The downside is that we are not retaining them for longer than the three-year commitment that they make to the province. The high stress and overload that occurs at the Emergency Department is perceived to be a root cause of the poor

retention. The human resource requests and suggestions identified in this letter would help. We also have wondered if a five-year return of service for the SIPPA candidates would be more appropriate?

The village of Leask and surrounding RM and First Nation Communities are also affected by the shortfalls experienced at the Shellbrook Health Care Center.

We have a clinic and pharmacy at Leask and have been advocating for a Dr. from Shellbrook to frequent this clinic on a regular basis for some time.

Because of the shortage of nursing staff and a need for more Drs. in Shellbrook, we have been unable to secure a Dr. Some of our ratepayers find it very difficult to travel to see a Dr., and therefore wait until there is a crisis and this puts unnecessary strain on the ER in Shellbrook. From the discussion with the Drs. at the AGM, it was noted that more Drs. and experienced nurses as well as support staff are crucial in order to properly serve all the patients in the Shellbrook and surrounding areas.

Please take our suggestions and observations into account when considering requests from our local managers.

Sincerely,

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