



Premier of Manitoba

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
R3C 0V8

October 19, 2023

Dear Minister Asagwara,

I am honoured that you have agreed to serve Manitobans as Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

Our government is a listening government. As a Minister, I expect you to respect the excellence and expert advice of the public service and to work with them on our shared mission to serve the people of Manitoba.

Manitobans told us it was time for change. We have promised to deliver a government that builds a shared future for our province. Our platform offered an ambitious and responsible plan to make health care better, lower costs, and grow the economy with good jobs and a balanced budget. Manitobans expect us to fulfill our commitments, and it is my expectation that you deliver on the commitments that pertain to your Ministry. Delivering on our core election commitments within a balanced budget is critical to fulfilling the mandate Manitobans have given us.

As the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, your task starts with retaining and recruiting health care staff by changing the culture in health care so frontline workers know their voices are heard and their work is valued. But your mandate goes further. We committed to Manitobans that we would build a roadmap for the future to inspire the next generation of health care workers with centres of excellence that provide world-class care to Manitobans. I ask you to remember that at the heart of all our health care pledges lies a commitment to take better care of people – the health care workers that care for us and the patients they serve.

Your goal is to make it easier for every Manitoban to access health care at every level no matter where they live.

In particular, I ask that you work with your Cabinet colleagues and through legislative, regulatory and department processes to deliver on these immediate priorities:

- Send an open letter signed by you, the Minister of Health, and myself, to Manitoba's frontline health care staff to let them know that help is on the way.
- Implement our health human resource strategy to fix the staffing crisis in health care by hiring 400 doctors over 5 years; 300 nurses in Winnipeg with a corresponding commitment to rural and Northern Manitoba; 200 paramedics and 100 homecare workers.

- Reduce wait times at ERs starting with reopening the Emergency Department at the Victoria hospital and by increasing bed capacity at all major hospitals with ERs across the province.
- Reduce wait times in ERs by opening 4 new Neighborhood Illness and Injury clinics in Winnipeg and 1 in Brandon.

Additionally I ask that you work with your Cabinet colleagues and through legislative, regulatory and department processes to deliver on our other key commitments:

- Train more doctors and nurses by expanding the University of Manitoba's Bannatyne campus, creating ten new doctor training seats for Brandon and creating a pathway for LPNs to become RNs.
- Build a new CancerCare facility so cancer patients and their families can get the best care on their cancer journeys and more Manitobans can hear the words "*you are cancer free.*"
- Work with the departments of Advanced Education and Training to implement our five-step plan to help Internationally Educated Health Professionals join the frontlines.
- Fix rural and northern health care by doubling the rural doctor recruitment fund, offering incentives for rural health care workers, returning birthing services to Northern communities, reversing the cut to Northern patient transportation, installing a new MRI in Thompson and utilizing the best health technology to connect rural and northern doctors with health care specialists.
- Bring a doctor to Carberry to staff the emergency department and provide health care close to home for families in the surrounding area.
- Build a new ER in Eriksdale and reopen the ERs at the Concordia and Seven Oaks hospital when we have the space to safely do so.
- Improve care for seniors by creating an independent Senior's advocate and increasing the number of Personal Care Home beds in Manitoba and working towards more direct hours of care for seniors.
- Create centres of excellence in Mature Women's health, surgery, heart health, dialysis and kidney disease.
- Improve primary care by opening 4 new health centres in Winnipeg and 1 in Brandon staffed by primary care teams.
- Improve health care for women by making prescription birth control free, doubling the fertility tax credit, expanding coverage of menopause drugs, and funding the critical renovations at the Women's Health Clinic.
- Provide responsive and compassionate care to survivors of sexual assault by hiring 7 more full-time positions in the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program and creating a provincial SANE strategy to improve access to care in rural and northern communities.
- Work with health care workers and the department of Housing, Addiction and Homelessness to reduce child mortality over two terms by doubling the Manitoba prenatal benefit and implementing a province-wide suicide prevention strategy which will include a focus on 2SLGBTQ+ youth.
- Collaborate with local leadership and communities to support new and innovative ways to deliver Indigenous health.
- Call a forward-facing independent inquiry into the pandemic to learn from our experience and build a more resilient health care system for the future.

- Move Manitoba toward consistent and accessible electronic medical records and away from paper charts and fax machines.

In addition to these priorities, I also expect that you uphold your role with integrity, professionalism and a commitment to accountability. That includes working closely with your Deputy Minister and your senior officials to ensure all decisions are made in the public interest. Just like any high-performing organization, our government will set metrics and measurable goals, listen to evidence and frontline workers, regularly assess our work and report on our progress in order to deliver on the results Manitobans deserve.

The road ahead will have challenges. Change does not come easily. But we owe it to the people of this great province to deliver on our commitments. I know you are as committed as I am to working hard every day to deliver for the people of Manitoba. Our Cabinet will reflect the values all Manitobans share of honesty, hard work, pragmatism and kindness.

Manitobans can accomplish amazing things when we stand together as one province. I firmly believe there is no challenge that we cannot meet when we are united as one Manitoba.

I know I can count on you to fulfill these important responsibilities. As Premier I promise to support you as a Minister, consult with you as a Manitoban and lean on you as a friend. Together, we will work to honour the trust Manitobans have given us.

Miigwech, Merci, Thank you,

Premier of Manitoba

Original signed by:

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