

Réal Cloutier
Interim President and CEO,
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
4th Floor, 650 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1E2

August 2, 2017

Dear Mr. Cloutier:

The recent announcement of cuts to adult outpatient services at the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) is distressing to patients, local health professionals, as well as to us, as the national associations representing occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech-language pathology and audiology.

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) and Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC), have serious concerns regarding the WRHA's recent decision to eliminate adult outpatient occupational therapy, physiotherapy and audiology services. As national associations, we are aware of the impact these types of cuts have had in other jurisdictions. We urge you to immediately consult with occupational therapists, physiotherapists and audiologists in the public and private sector regarding the potential negative impacts of this decision on access to care.

As an experienced health system executive, we understand you have a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the nuances involved in health care delivery, which is why we urge you to consider the down-stream impacts of this decision. The absence of these outpatient services – which are not adequately covered by extended health benefits – will lead to additional long-term costs and an increased burden on Manitoba's healthcare system.

CAOT, CPA and SAC are calling on the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the province of Manitoba to maintain access to these vital services. Investment in community-based approaches to occupational therapy, physiotherapy and audiology services ensures a cost-effective healthcare system for the people of Manitoba.

Please find attached our Official Statement on this issue.

Yours Sincerely,



Joanne Charlebois
Chief Executive Officer
Speech-Language & Audiology Canada



Janet Craik
Executive Director
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists



Brad Brookman
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Physiotherapy Association

Enclosure

c.c. The Honourable Brian Palliser, M.L.A., Premier of Manitoba
The Honourable Kelvin Goertzen, M.L.A., Minister of Health