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**JOINT OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS,
CANADIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE & AUDIOLOGY CANADA**

Canadian Health Associations Express Serious Concerns Regarding Cuts to Outpatient Services in Winnipeg.

Consultation needed regarding recent cuts by Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) and Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC), have serious concerns regarding the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's recent decision to eliminate adult outpatient occupational therapy, physiotherapy and audiology services. As national associations, we have seen the consequences of these types of cuts in other jurisdictions and urge the health authority to immediately consult with occupational therapists, physiotherapists and audiologists in the public and private sector regarding the potential negative impacts of this decision on the health and well-being of Manitobans.

Research has shown that occupational therapy, physiotherapy and audiology are low-cost, high-impact healthcare services that assist in lowering overall healthcare costs. 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.

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