

TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA:

The background to this petition is as follows:

- 1) There has been a dramatic increase in COVID-19 infections in Manitoba during the second wave of the pandemic to the extent that Manitoba quickly rose from one of the lowest to having the highest number of active cases per capita of all provinces.
- 2) The resurgence in cases is worse because the Provincial Government was not prepared for the pandemic, resulting in very long wait times for COVID-19 tests and people waiting for up to seven days to get results.
- 3) The seven day delay for test results led to a further delay in contact tracing which in turn led to greater uncontrolled and undetected community spread of COVID-19.
- 4) Cases are spreading in personal care homes because the Provincial Government did not adequately prepare to prevent and address personal care homes COVID-19 infections.
- 5) The Provincial Government did not institute full testing of all staff and residents in a personal care home when the first COVID-19 case was detected in a home.
- 6) When, in May and June, Manitoba Liberals repeated calls for a rapid response team for seniors' homes to prepare for a second wave, the Provincial Government ignored the idea and brushed it aside.
- 7) In August, the Provincial Government ignored the calls for investment in infection control and better staffing to prepare seniors' homes for a second wave, putting the health and safety of residents and staff alike at risk.
- 8) The Provincial Government failed to act to address reports of poor care at the Parkview Place personal care home, including a March 2020 report detailing concerns with the state of repair of the facility. Its cleanliness and sanitation practices included issues with cockroaches, dirty toilets and grease laden dirt in the kitchen.
- 9) The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has been undermining public health fundamentals by downplaying the need for masks, which are known to prevent the spread of contagion.
- 10) The Provincial Government's wishful thinking and failure to get ready for the second wave of the pandemic has imposed tremendous costs and hardship across Manitoba, including schools and businesses. The Provincial Government's failure to take basic steps to control outbreaks has led to further shutdowns and businesses have had to close or reduce their capacity without receiving any financial government assistance.
- 11) The Provincial Government's own accounts show that support for business is among the worst in Canada. Businesses continue to face bankruptcy and operating risks because the Provincial Government refused to step up with financial support or PPE so that they could continue to safely operate. Businesses and workers alike have been forced to choose between getting sick or going broke.
- 12) The Provincial Government has been saying one thing and doing another: calling for fundamentals, while urging people to go back to work, shop and encouraging behaviour that increases the spread of Covid-19.
- 13) When the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living was asked about preventing deaths at personal care homes, he responded these deaths were unavoidable. Dr. Nathan Stall, who specializes in geriatrics and internal medicine at a Toronto Hospital, called the notion that deaths are unavoidable "ageist" and urged the Minister to reconsider. Outbreaks like the one in Winnipeg's Parkview Place are avoidable tragedies, as we have seen in other jurisdictions such as Singapore.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

- 1) To urge the Provincial Government to call a Public Inquiry into the mishandling of the second wave of the pandemic and into the outbreak at Parkview Place personal care home.
- 2) To urge the Provincial Government to replace the current Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living as a result of his failure to support personal care homes and his failure to adequately prepare the province for the second wave of the pandemic.

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