

For Immediate Release  
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**PRESS RELEASE: Manitoba Government's silence on surgical awardees is alarming**

Winnipeg, MB - Today, the Manitoba government announced five facilities have been awarded contracts to provide elective surgeries. However, which facilities were awarded remains a mystery.

'The lack of transparency and accountability regarding actions to address surgical backlogs is deeply problematic,' said Brianne Goertzen, Provincial Director of the Manitoba Health Coalition, 'Manitobans have the right to know if our government is opening the door to private surgery.'

On July 2, the government announced an RFP to address surgical wait times. Both public and private health care providers were eligible to apply. The Government's press release provided no details as to who was awarded the contracts. Details of who was awarded the contract were also not made available at the Minister of Health's afternoon press conference.

To date the Government has not presented any evidence that public capacity has been exhausted. The Manitoba Health Coalition is worried that at a time when we need health care professionals to help catch up on delayed surgeries, that this decision will pull more of these professionals out of the public system and put even greater strain on our public health system as we recover from the pandemic.

Experience in other jurisdictions, such as Alberta, shows that care delivered in for-profit facilities costs more, quality of care worsens, and fails to alleviate wait times.

'The pandemic has made it abundantly clear the importance of a responsive public health system,' continued Goertzen, 'Instead of looking to fragment and privatize our public health system through private surgeries, we urge the government to invest in building greater capacity in our public health system.'

The MHC is governed by a board of directors representing a variety of stakeholder organizations across Manitoba. MHC's organizational model reflects our core values that health care is a public good and a fundamental right for all.

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Media Contact:

Brianne Goertzen, Provincial Director, MHC, cell: 204-955-6782