

January 22, 2024

To the public and all our partners in healthcare across the Island.

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) is the largest union representative for healthcare workers in Prince Edward Island, representing over 1900 healthcare professionals and we concur with the assessment from the East Prince Medical Staff Association based on their letter dated January 18, 2024, specifically stating “that an emergency exists regarding critical and acute services at Prince County Hospital.” We also concur and stand in solidarity with the *International Union of Operating Engineers-Local 942 (IUOE)* and the *Prince Edward Island Nurses Union* which both state that “current staffing levels have resulted in staff being overwhelmed to the point that patient safety is being compromised.”

UPSE has advocated at multiple levels for the Employer to address the ongoing issue of staffing shortages across the healthcare system. From the Union’s observation, there appears to be a disconnect between Health PEI and the Government regarding the healthcare crisis, and whether all the relevant information is being clearly communicated to those in power who have the means to make a difference in solving this crisis.

UPSE does concur with IUOE’s statement dated January 18, 2024, stating “the immediate staffing crisis (PCH) is being met by wildly inconsistent messaging and a lack of accountability from Health PEI and PCH administration. Inconsistency that has resulted in mass confusion for everyone.” It appears decisions from Health PEI are reactive and with little foresight and/or planning. Health PEI and the Department of Health would benefit by consulting with their union partners and affected Associations. There are too many uninformed unilateral decisions being made by representatives from Health PEI and the department that are contributing to a deterioration of trust, fairness, transparency, ethics, morale, and culture which are exacerbating the staffing crisis.

The decisions being made by the senior officials within Health PEI and the Department of Health are not addressing the human resources issues that continue to erode the healthcare system and services to Islanders.

In closing, UPSE encourages the powers in both Health PEI and the department to have **meaningful consultation** and **transparent communication** with themselves, their union

partners, and any affected association in addressing the staffing crisis across the healthcare system. We agree and support the following statements from our union partners, “IUOE calls for all those with power and influence within Health PEI to act immediately in a transparent, consistent, and ethical manner to implement a concrete plan for both the short- and long-term solution of this crisis” and from PEINU “Nothing short of fundamental changes from our Government and Health PEI can be tolerated any longer.”

Karen Jackson,

UPSE President