



May 30, 2025

VIA EMAIL
minhsltc@manitoba.ca

The Honourable Uzoma Asagwara
Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Re: Ministerial Directive Removing Currency of Practice Requirements for Labour Mobility Applicants

Dear Minister Asagwara,

Following receipt of your letter dated April 30, 2025, directing the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba to remove the currency of practice requirement for labour mobility applicants, and your attendance at our special Council meeting on May 22nd, we sent you a letter on May 23rd on behalf of the College's Council requesting further clarification. Our letter requested a response by May 28, 2025.

We have not received any response.

Recognizing that there are legal provisions at your disposal within *The Regulated Health Professions Act* to force our compliance, the College has made the decision to comply with your directive. However, we must express our deep and ongoing concern with both the substance of and the process surrounding this directive.

Your directive prioritizes commitments made in *The Canada Free Trade Agreement* over the safety of Manitobans and does not accurately reflect the actual provisions of that agreement. Furthermore, the College believes that this directive significantly impedes our ability to fulfil our critical mandate of protecting the public.

We fully recognize the significant health human resource challenges facing Manitoba and the very real pressures created by RN vacancy rates across the province. These are urgent system needs that demand thoughtful, evidence-informed solutions. However, we are increasingly concerned that the current approach—focused on rapidly increasing RN numbers without adequate safeguards—is eroding the integrity of the RN registration process and leading to significant safety risks to the public, not just within Manitoba, but across jurisdictions.

Our recent analysis has shown that many individuals are seeking licensure in Manitoba after registering in provinces or territories with fewer requirements, often without ever practicing there. This trend has coincided with a substantial and troubling rise in complaints and patient safety incidents, many involving fundamental gaps in nursing competence.

The College is aware of at least two incidents involving patient deaths. These are not abstract concerns; they represent real risks to patient safety and public trust.

Despite the College's repeated efforts to highlight these issues with the department (see Appendix A), we are now being directed to remove a safeguard that we reinstated precisely to address known and identifiable risks.

We want to be clear: our intent is not to block or prevent individuals from becoming registered nurses. On the contrary, we fully support efforts to grow and strengthen the RN workforce in Manitoba. However, we believe that this growth must be grounded in adequate preparation and support. The current approach, which appears to prioritize getting individuals through the registration process as quickly as possible—often with the unrealistic assumption that gaps will be addressed on the job—falls short of that responsibility and places patients, the profession and the RN at risk.

We remain committed to protecting the public and upholding the standards of the registered nursing profession in Manitoba. We will comply with the directive as instructed and implement the change effective May 30, 2025. However, we do so under protest and with a strong caution that the consequences of this directive will be experienced most acutely by those we are all entrusted to protect: the patients.

Sincerely,



Deb Elias
CEO/Registrar
College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba



Ken Molloy
Council Chair
College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

cc: Scott Sinclair, Deputy Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Appendix A

The College has communicated its concerns regarding certain aspects of labour mobility to government as far back as 2021. The following list identifies the relevant College communications under the current government.

Fall 2023 forward - Several briefing reports, letters, and emails have been sent to departmental staff and/or the Deputy Minister and Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care regarding labour mobility issues

- Briefing reports sent:
 - November 16, 2023 - “Endorsements - Nurses becoming registered via labour mobility provisions”
 - January 15, 2024 - “Labour mobility under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement”
 - September 19, 2024 – “Labour mobility under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) – Follow-up”
 - November 5, 2024 – “CRNM endorsement data 2018-2024”
 - November 20, 2024 – “High risk RN endorsements”
 - December 10, 2024 – “Urgent request for amendment to College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba General Regulation”

Fall 2023 forward - Several discussions have occurred around labour mobility issues between College staff and department staff and between the CEO/Registrar and the Deputy Minister and/or Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care. The College has also discussed this issue with staff at the Fair Registration Practices Office and the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

November 14, 2024 – The CEO/Registrar reaches out to the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care to notify them about patient deaths that have occurred, involving recent endorsements.

December 11, 2024 – The College sends the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care a letter notifying them of the College’s decision to reinstitute the currency of practice requirement for labour mobility applicants.

February 12, 2025 – The Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care is sent a copy of “Current Trends in RN Regulation” prior to it being published on the College’s website. The Minister also discussed the report with the CEO/Registrar.

February 13, 2025 – The College publishes “[Current Trends in RN Regulation](#)” on its website.