
Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Meeting with Minister Uzoma Asagwara

April 9, 2025



Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Summary of Municipal Priorities

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Uzoma Asagwara and representatives of Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care. The AMM encourages the provincial government to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process. This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to Minister Asagwara's portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

1. Medical First Response

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Continue to collaborate with our organization to provide municipalities with all the essential tools and resources to effectively implement a Community-Based First Response program, if they so desire.*

2. Strengthening Healthcare

Recommendations:

- ✓ *Release a comprehensive provincial strategy to recruit and retain healthcare professionals across all regions; and*
- ✓ *Ensure that the mandate of the new Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office (HCRRO) aligns with the recommendations from the Immigration Advisory Council to accelerate credential recognition.*

3. Community Capital Contributions

Recommendations:

- ✓ *Clarify the community capital contributions formula, including in-kind contributions for health facilities; and*
- ✓ *Move toward funding all health facilities provincially.*

Medical First Response

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Continue to collaborate with our organization to provide municipalities with all the essential tools and resources to effectively implement a Community-Based First Response program, if they so desire.***

For nearly five years, our organization and municipalities raised concerns about the framework established by the College of Paramedics of Manitoba, which took effect in December 2020.

In response to these concerns, the Province established a Working Group with our organization, representatives of existing MFR services, Shared Health Emergency Response Services, College of Paramedics of Manitoba (CPMB), and Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC). This initiative resulted in the holding of the Medical First Response Planning Workshop in April 2023, marking a significant step forward in addressing the risks and gaps in the Medical First Response program.

Following these cumulative efforts, we wish to thank Minister Asagwara for approving a new model for community-based medical first response in January 2025, intended to supplement ambulance response in rural and remote areas of the province. Regulatory amendments enable trained individuals (first responders), who are not paramedics or emergency medical responders, to perform specified reserved acts in providing advanced first aid. The primary changes also include:

- Community-Based First Response does not require registration with CPMB.
- This model requires 70 hours of training, compared to the 312 hours required for Emergency Medical Response.
- The proposed First Response pathway can be utilized by any municipality, should Council wish to implement this approach.

In addition to developing the *Medical First Response: Guide to Service Levels*, we are also pleased that the department has committed to delivering a presentation at our upcoming Spring Convention focused on outlining these changes to our members. Ensuring municipalities have access to the necessary information and resources is critical so local Councils can make informed decisions.

We look forward to working closely with the department to ensure municipalities have the information and support they need to determine if this option is the right fit for their communities.

Strengthening Healthcare

Recommendations:

- ✓ ***Release a comprehensive provincial strategy to recruit and retain healthcare professionals across all regions; and***
- ✓ ***Ensure that the mandate of the new Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office (HCRRO) aligns with the recommendations from the Immigration Advisory Council to accelerate credential recognition.***

Despite healthcare being a provincial responsibility, more than **90%** of Manitoba municipalities are facing doctor shortages, and nearly **95%** are using local tax dollars to recruit and retain healthcare practitioners. During our municipal tours, we consistently hear concerns about this growing financial burden, a challenge further highlighted by recent media headlines.

The AMM continues to caution municipalities against assuming this responsibility, as it risks creating competition between communities, particularly when Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) have dedicated recruitment budgets. While we welcome the hiring of 1,255 new healthcare professionals, significant gaps remain across the province. To address these challenges, we urge the Province to implement a comprehensive, coordinated strategy that aligns with increased healthcare investments, as outlined in Budget 2025.

The newly established Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Office presents an opportunity to address ongoing workforce shortages. To ensure its success, we urge Manitoba to expedite the Immigration Advisory Council's (IAC) recommendations, particularly to fast-track credential recognition and enhance regional settlement incentives for foreign-trained healthcare professionals. The AMM also acknowledges the ongoing provincial and federal collaboration to streamline the process for internationally educated nurses (IENs) and would appreciate an update on this partnership, as well as how it can be aligned with the IAC recommendations to further support healthcare recruitment and retention.

Finally, ensuring the safety of healthcare professionals is essential for a sustainable healthcare system. While we welcome the commitment to fund 126 Institutional Safety Officer (ISO) positions, municipalities continue to raise concerns about security gaps in healthcare facilities. These positions should be available in all Manitoba hospitals to ensure equitable access to safety resources.

Additionally, we acknowledge the pilot project with Long Plain First Nation to employ First Nation Safety Officers at Portage District General Hospital. As municipalities work to enhance public safety, the AMM encourages the Province to expand this initiative province-wide if it proves effective in improving security for residents, staff, and first responders.

Community Capital Contributions for Health Facilities

Recommendations:

- ✓ **Clarify the community capital contributions formula, including in-kind contributions for health facilities; and**
- ✓ **Move toward funding all health facilities provincially.**

Despite raising this concern last year, municipalities continue to face challenges in funding health capital projects, even though **healthcare is a provincial responsibility**. While the Province has shown some flexibility, this has created confusion and uncertainty among municipalities, as funding practices vary across Manitoba.

As part of our priority to meet one-on-one with municipalities across the province, local Councils have consistently expressed concerns about the lack of a clear and consistent funding formula for health facilities. Municipalities are dealing with inconsistent contribution requirements, unclear payment schedules, and communication issues.

Given the focus in the recent provincial budget on building new healthcare facilities, investing in existing ones, and enhancing recruitment and retention efforts, the AMM believes now is the time to implement a fully provincially funded model for health capital projects. This approach would bring fairness, consistency, and predictability to all municipalities, aligning funding responsibilities with the provincial government's mandate.

Active AMM 2024 Resolutions

AMM Resolution #12-2024: Establish Institutional Safety Officers in all Manitoba Hospitals

Sponsor(s)

Portage la Prairie, City (Central)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to fund, train, and implement Institutional Safety Officers within all hospitals across the province, and mitigate the financial impact of the security of provincial facilities currently being borne by municipalities.

AMM Resolution #13-2024: Healthcare Access

Sponsor(s)

Stuartburn, RM (Eastern)
Emerson-Franklin, Municipality (Eastern)
Lac du Bonnet, RM (Eastern)
Reynolds, RM (Eastern)
Whitemouth, RM (Eastern)
St Clements, RM (Eastern)
Beausejour, Town (Eastern)
Brokenhead, RM (Eastern)
Village of St-Pierre-Jolys (Eastern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM to lobby the Province of Manitoba and FCM to lobby the federal government in restoring equal access to healthcare in all rural municipalities working in partnership with Councils and local communities.

AMM Resolution #14-2024: Sharps Collection

Sponsor(s)

The Pas, Town (Northern)
Swan River, Town (Parkland)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Shared Health to enhance their efforts in managing the distribution and disposal of needles in communities by:

1. Providing adequate resources and support for the establishment of community collection points for the safe disposal of sharps/needles;
2. Implementing educational programs to raise awareness about safe needle disposal practices among residents, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders;
3. Reviewing the regional health authorities' current distribution practices of needles to ensure responsible and safe distribution, including monitoring and tracking of distributed needles;
4. Complete collaboration processes with local authorities and community organizations prior to implementing harm reduction strategies within the community, prioritizing prevention and recovery; and

5. Promoting the use of single-use retractable needles and implementing a needle exchange program across the Province of Manitoba to improve safety; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to conduct a study and provide measurable data on the effectiveness of harm reduction programs, confirming the total funds allocated and the relative success of these programs in relation to their costs.
