

CEO's Blog

May 2, 2022



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

Thunder Bay Regional
Health Research
Institute

Hello, Boozhou, Bonjour.

This month, with spring *finally* in the air, I would like to continue the conversation surrounding 'New Beginnings' here at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC).

And the way to rekindle that discussion is to ask everyone to join me in welcoming the many new staff and physicians who have joined our organization over the past several weeks. This includes:

- 76 new RNs
- 16 RPNs
- 4 internationally educated nurses

This, of course, is in addition to the more than 15 PSWs and hiring of 60 new Unit Care Aides and Externs.

As we begin to move toward COVID-19 recovery, having these new colleagues will help us focus on stabilization of the health sector overall and ensure we place our Hospital in position to transform, restore and then sustain a healthy future for TBRHSC. This is a core underpinning to our Board-approved Strategic Plan moving forward.

As you all know, Northwestern Ontario is not so new to the issue of chronic understaffing – it was a 'thing' long before the pandemic. That said, I am very proud of our recruitment folks who have done an incredible job under difficult circumstances to attract and hire people with the goal of managing in some way the immense pressure you have all been under. I know it's not perfect and won't solve all of our problems, but as you can see in the table below, we have managed to make progress addressing the staffing challenges that every single hospital in our system is facing at the moment.

January	2020	2022
FT Nurses	519	506
PT Nurses	294	300
Temp/Casual/Float Nurses	533	607
Total	1,346	1,413

It's important to note this staffing accomplishment happened as we added programs such as the COVID-19 Assessment Centre, responded to patient care acuity needs, and infection prevention and control requirements.

Moving forward, our health human resources is a major priority for TBRHSC. We know front line health care workers are exhausted. You have worked longer and harder and in more difficult conditions than ever. This combined with what's coming in terms of overall capacity and care pressures to address backlogs in care create a real vulnerability. We know globally that will mean more departures and retirements that will challenge our retention efforts. We're not alone here.

What we do have that makes us unique is a beautiful region that is affordable compared to most other parts of the province – while also being a teaching hospital with an award-winning research institute. Moving forward, communicating this will be a critical priority as set out in our Strategic Plan priorities.

The Senior Team has heard clearly from you about how we need to continue supporting our front line, support staff experience, and together with that, the overall patient experience. The wellbeing of our workforce is critical and foundational to everything we do and will do in this new beginning. It's not optional at this point as we all definitively know.

Together we will need to innovate new and better solutions, change our approach to care and approach to challenges and problems. We will need to be laser focused on our priorities here if we will clear the path forward. We are creating forums for engagement and input and ideas and sharing. You are the experts and I encourage you to join in and be part of the solution.

In the meantime, again, please join me in welcoming our new colleagues and helping them transition in as smoothly as possible.

As always, I welcome comments on this blog or any other matter. You can reach me at: crockereir@tbh.net



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