

United Nurses of Alberta

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May 12, 2010

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Mr. W. John Brennan
Board Chair
Covenant Health Board
3033 66 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6K 4B2

Dear Mr. Brennan:

I am writing on behalf of the Registered Nurses now working at Youville Home in St. Albert. As Registered Nurses it is our professional and ethical responsibility to draw your attention to the staffing changes that will result in Youville providing less skilled care to patients.

The almost complete elimination of Registered Nurses from direct care of patients at the facility directly compromises the care and the safety of the patients.

We are concerned Covenant is reducing the qualification mix of skilled care providers to reduce costs in the care of patients. This is unacceptable.

Youville Home is approved as an auxiliary hospital, and as such it does not fall under the regulations of Alberta's Nursing Home Act. But the acuity of the patients at Youville, as in most auxiliary hospitals, at least matches and often exceeds that in a nursing home. It would be reasonable to expect Youville to at least meet the standard of the Nursing Home Act Operations Regulation.

14 (5) An operator shall cause his nursing and personal services staff to provide an average of at least 1.90 paid hours of combined nursing and personal services per resident per resident day in his nursing home.

(6) An operator shall ensure that at least 22% of the total number of paid hours of combined nursing and personal services required to be provided by this Regulations is provided by nurses.

The acuity and complexity of the needs of the patients demands a balanced staffing mix that at least matches the levels required in a nursing home.

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Now Youville is proposing to decimate the team of experienced care providers.

Youville's plan is to remove most of the experienced RNs and rely on the far less experienced, recently recruited, LPN group. This is an inappropriate staff mix which will without doubt have a negative effect on the residents of the facility.

We ask you to reconsider your staffing changes, and maintain a high level of best-qualified nurses on staff to maintain the high standards of care at Youville.

This is a most urgent matter as these changes are already being initiated. The staff of Youville Nursing Home are hopeful you will respond as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'H'.

Heather Smith, RN
President, United Nurses of Alberta

cc: Hon. Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Minister Mary Anne Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community
Supports