

To: All BC Women's Staff  
From: Dr. Jan Christilaw, President BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre

### **BC Women's cares for its patients and its staff**

I am writing to address the allegations that appeared in the BCNU paid ad which ran in the two daily newspapers over the weekend. First, I want to state that BC Women's Hospital provides extremely safe, high quality care for mothers and babies from all over B.C.

This fact was recently acknowledged when BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre received an "Exemplary" rating from Accreditation Canada, the highest level of accreditation granted to a healthcare organization. These results are due in large part to the dedication of the nurses across our hospital including those of you working in the Birthing Unit. I want to thank all of the nurses working at BC Women's for the important work you do every day and night.

That's not to say we do not face challenges, I understand we face a particular issue in regards to recruiting qualified nurses. We need to hire more experienced maternity nurses, and we have active recruitment going on. In the meantime, this has meant more overtime for many of you. At the moment, we have a 6.77 percent overtime rate in the Birthing Program which is higher than in the past. I am committed to reducing this rate. That's why I have asked that we redouble our recruitment initiatives and that I will personally oversee these efforts to ensure there is progress.

I have heard from many of you that we also need to improve our working environment to ensure that nurses stay after they have been recruited. I wholeheartedly agree with you. We must create a trustful, transparent and positive environment - this is not just my job but all of ours. After all, one person cannot create a positive culture alone.

We took the first step toward creating this new environment with the review of the Birthing Program which was completed late last year. The review had 41 recommendations, **70 percent** of those recommendations have already been implemented including:

- enhanced training and professional development through new courses, workshops and orientation procedures
- increased leadership support through regular staff meetings and walkabouts by the hospital President
- improved communication and workplace enhancements such as new debriefing procedures and lounge renovations for nurses
- new system measures like daily huddles, shift improvements, management board and visual controls

I have attached the most recent [scorecard](#) so you can see in detail what has been accomplished.

As a result of these measures, I believe we made good progress towards improving the work environment - but more needs to be done. That's why we are asking that Tamzeem Nathoo and Wendy Hill come back and provide an unbiased update on the status of the implementation of the review.

As part of this process, we will be reaching out to get your input on how the implementation has gone to date and how we can work together to ensure the remaining recommendations are successfully achieved.

BC Women's has traditionally worked collaboratively with staff and the BCNU regarding the nurses' concerns. I was personally disappointed to see the allegations contained in this past weekend's ad. However, we all share the same goal to provide high quality care for our patients. That's why I invite you to work with me to ensure we continue to put patients first.