

**Report from the Pembroke Regional Hospital
to the
Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario / Meeting of the Members
May 2024
Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

We are pleased to submit this report from the Pembroke Regional Hospital to the Members of our Corporation and Sponsor, the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. As requested, this report deals with the themes below as identified on the Risk Identification Worksheet:

Identification of Risks and Mitigation

Health Human Resource Gaps

The Pembroke Regional Hospital has been making significant progress on nursing vacancies through our hospital driver on patient care teams. We have decreased the number of days when clinical units are working without their full staffing complement from over 20 shifts per month to an average of two shifts over the last eight months and are no longer utilizing staff from nursing agencies.

However, we are experiencing ongoing staffing challenges in other areas of the hospital such as allied health, pharmacy, medical radiation technologists and medical laboratory technologists. In addition, the physician shortages are significant and affect operations daily.

Due to our great success with the patient care team driver, we will continue with this process improvement strategy with specific focus on the above named professions. In addition, we have a very active and engaged physician recruitment committee that is meeting regularly to identify opportunities and upcoming challenges. We are currently experiencing a temporary shortage of Emergency Department physicians due to some leaves. We anticipate some improvements in the fall due to the return of some physicians from maternity and other leaves. These shortages will lead to potentially longer wait times in the ED and we have informed the public, Ontario Health and our Board and are working with our partners on other options for care for our community.

Year-to-Date Deficit or End of Year Deficit

The 2019 legislation, known as Bill 124, capped wage increases for nurses and other public sector workers at one percent a year for three years. It was ruled unconstitutional in November 2022 and the Ontario Nurses' Association, CUPE and other unions sought retroactive pay through an arbitrator. The awards were significant, in most cases nearing a 12% increase over 3 years.

The hospital received one-time funding for Bill 124 in Fiscal year 23/24. Since the effects of the salary increases are ongoing, the Ontario Hospital Association, together with the hospitals, are in ongoing discussion with the Ministry of Health on adjustments to base for those salary increases.

Currently the MOH has approved a 4% increase to hospital budgets for 2024-2025 without any details on how this will be distributed. We have been informed by Ontario Health that funding letters are to be received by end of May that will include the inflationary increases and adjustments for Bill 124.

With a budget assumption of a 3% increase we are currently in a significant deficit position. The hospital received instruction from the MOH and Ontario Health not to work on a performance improvement plan. The hospital has signed off on the HSAA and MSAA agreements for 2024-2025.

Digital Infrastructure

PRH is looking forward to joining The Ottawa Hospital on their instance of Epic, therefore adopting one of three possible Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) in the province of Ontario. This will significantly improve patient flow, communication between physicians and patients, as well as the adoption of all best practices in our organization. Our staff and physicians are excited about this development. We have built a project team and are working on an implementation timeline that sees our launch date in September 2024 with a Go-Live in November 2025. We will likely be joined by another hospital in Champlain on this implementation. This project will consume a large portion of all our resources and we will need to be cautious on taking on additional projects during this implementation. Every single process in the hospital will require analysis and change and staff/physician training and education will be significant.

Infrastructure Renewal

PRH is currently finalizing an 18-million-dollar renovation project for our surgical unit with the completion date of early 2025. In addition, we are renovating the ground floor of our Tower C building to build a new front entrance and improve the experience for patients coming into our building. The PRH Foundation is also funding a renovation project to our chemotherapy delivery area that has a completion date of December 2024.

Despite many ongoing projects, our need for further renovations is still significant. We have been in contact with the MOH Capital Branch to explore funding support for a master plan. Unfortunately, those large-scale projects are only funded after approval for a project is granted by the MOH. Due to our difficult financial position, we have decided to proceed with exploring smaller scale projects such as renovating the next clinical unit which is one of our inpatient medical units. We are currently working with an architect and consultant to develop a pre-capital submission.

Thank you for receiving this brief report. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our members and staff of CHSO for their support and guidance over the course of the past year. We value our relationship and look forward to our work together in the year ahead.