

December 3, 2013

To: Dr. Juliet Soper, Ms. Sharon Garratt

Re: Pediatric Services Amalgamation in Regina

I would like to express my support for the current proposal to amalgamate pediatric services at the Regina General Hospital.

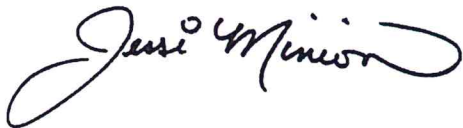
I have been involved in the planning process of the proposed amalgamation, and your team's ongoing concern and attention to issues relating to the best practices of infection control have pre-emptively addressed concerns and mitigated risks that could potentially arise from having a mixed general pediatrics ward that includes oncology patients.

I believe that it is possible to provide equivalently safe care from an infection control perspective in the setting of a mixed general ward, compared to a separated oncology ward. The key to ensuring the safety of our patients lies in the vigilant and rigorous application of universal precautions for every patient and rapid identification and institution of additional precautions for potentially infectious patients. These principles are not different on an oncology ward compared to a general pediatric ward. Indeed, separated oncology wards do not exclude infectious patients and general pediatric wards do not exclude immunocompromised patients. The idea that oncology wards are 'clean' compared to general wards is a dangerous misconception that can lead to a false sense of security and do a serious disservice to those vulnerable patients.

The current planning for the pediatric ward at RGH includes strategies to enhance infection control practices, including having a high proportion of private rooms and cohorting staff to work with different groups of children. Importantly, there also exists medical, nursing, and administrative leadership who are committed to working closely with infection control and to the creation of a culture of safety in every day practices.

I look forward to continuing our work together in our mutual goal of providing safe quality care to all our patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessie Minion". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the end.

Dr. Jessica Minion, MD MSc FRCPC D(ABMM)

Medical Microbiologist and Medical Head of Infection Control

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region