



Queensland
Government

Metro North Health

Ms Kara Thomas
President
Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland

Email: kara.thomas@npaaservices.org.au

Dear Ms Thomas

Thank you for your letter dated 21 August 2026, on behalf of nurses working in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH). The correspondence was addressed to Mr Nick Steele, Health Service Chief Executive, Metro North Health, and Adjunct Professor Alanna Geary, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Metro North Health. Mr Steele and Ms Geary have referred your correspondence to me as the Acting Executive Director, TPCH. I acknowledge your correspondence raises concerns about communication ICU nurses received regarding sick leave rates and possible cessation of 12-hour shifts.

Firstly, thank you for bringing to my attention the concerns reported by ICU nurses memorandum from Ms Tami Photinos, Executive Director TPCH dated 5 August 2026. The memorandum identified significant workforce pressure as a result of persistently high sick leave in the nursing workforce. I acknowledge within your correspondence you have raised that some nurses reported distress at the prospect of losing access to working 12-hour shifts and that this has impacted on morale within the workplace.

As your correspondence highlights, there are a broad range of factors that can impact on workplace attendance and sick leave which are being further explored. MNHHS recognise that employees have entitlements to access sick/personal leave, and support employees accessing these entitlements in accordance with their Award and relevant industrial instruments.

Ms Photinos' memorandum identified that reducing sick leave rates in ICU is a priority to ensure the service can support the clinical needs of patients and safe service delivery. Ms Photinos' memorandum also advised of an expectation for a sustained improvement in attendance and reduction in sick leave, and that consideration may be given to necessary options to be taken which will support adequate resourcing of the ICU, including the possible cessation of 12 hours shifts. Ms Photinos sought partnership in addressing this issue and encouraged staff to meet with their line manager to discuss any individual support requirements to assist with improving individual attendance while supporting health and wellbeing of staff.

The memorandum sought to ensure awareness of a significant workforce pressure for the ICU as a result of persistently high sick leave impacting on clinical needs of patients and safe service delivery. While Ms Photinos memorandum made reference to consideration of cessation of 12 hour shifts, I can confirm that no decision has been made to cease 12-hour shifts within the ICU at this time. I also acknowledge the obligations to consult over any such change in accordance with the *Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health and Department of Education) Certified Agreement (EB12) 2025 (EB12)*.

TPCH Nursing Leadership, including ICU Nurse Unit Managers are focusing on proactively and collaboratively addressing individual employee attendance concerns in consistent with relevant policies and procedures including the Department of Health Absence Management Policy, and applicable Guideline, while continuing to explore relevant workforce factors that contributing to workplace attendance in ICU.

I acknowledge that you have reported some staff have some experienced distress in relation to Ms Photinos communication and this is regrettable. MNHHS has a confidential and independent counselling service. This is a free service which can be accessed by staff by contacting TELUS Health on telephone 1800 604 640 or visit one of the following websites:

- <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/extranet/wellbeing/support-services>
- <https://www.telushealth.com/en-au>

We appreciate understanding and patience in relation to this matter, and we acknowledge and value the concerns you have raised. If you have any questions in relation to the matters raised in this please contact Ms Gillian Nasato, Director of Nursing, TPCH on 3139 4214.

Yours sincerely

Dr Julieanne Graham
A / Executive Director
The Prince Charles Hospital
Metro North Health
4 / 9 / 2026