

STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
THE WEENEEBAYKO AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY

To all our valued community members,

We feel it's important for us to address the recent social media posts of Dr. John Waddell, which make false and unfounded statements against the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA) and other highly valued members of our community.

Dr. Waddell came to our community in 2005 and served as a Family Physician at WAHA until August 2014 and provided Coastal Consultation Services from September 2014 – March 2015. More than two years ago he launched what has become an ongoing and escalating attack on WAHA and the people who are working on your behalf to bring quality health care to the communities of James Bay.

As it relates to Dr. Waddell, we have worked through process that determines whether a physician is permitted to practice medicine in our hospital. After four days of listening to Dr. Waddell and others who worked closely with him, considering detailed evidence and testimony, the WAHA Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of WAHA's Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) to deny Dr. Waddell's Application for Re-Appointment to the hospital's medical staff. In short, the Medical Advisory Committee and the Board determined that it is in the best interests of the patients and WAHA that Dr. Waddell no longer be allowed access to practice medicine at WAHA.

The decision to remove a doctor's privileges is something we take very seriously. We made this decision with careful consideration, following a very detailed review process outlined within the provincial Public Hospitals Act. Under that Act, Dr. Waddell has the right to appeal and he has done so. Until that appeal is heard and a decision is made, we must respect the process that is underway.

It is important to note that Dr. Waddell has not been in the communities providing direct physician services to WAHA's patients since August 2014. Based on that, you should know that his comments certainly do not reflect the reality of WAHA today, and the many steps that have been taken since 2014 to improve the delivery of health care in the James Bay Region.

The doctors and staff who have committed to delivering medical care to support our communities care deeply about the community's well-being. We appreciate their work and need them to understand they are valued and critical to building to a healthy community – today and in the years ahead.

Instead they find themselves subjected to a relentless negative campaign that is unwarranted and worse, distracting from the jobs they have committed to do. We ask you to please show them our respect and support.

We are at an important moment for our community. In March 2017, the WAHA Board, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care/the North East Local Health Integration Network and the Federal Ministry of Health came together to endorse a plan to work together towards the following goals:

- budget stability;
- reinforcing our Hospital Improvement Plan;
- enhancing communications with our stakeholders; and
- focusing on the ultimate goal of building a new hospital.

Our plans for continuing to improve health care for all of the communities served by WAHA will get unnecessarily delayed if we spend our limited time and resources responding to baseless attacks that focus on one individual's view of the past, rather than working collaboratively and with one unified voice to continue to improve WAHA and the services we provide.

We invite you to add your voice to our positive and forward-looking efforts and thank you for your support.