Statement from the Board of Directors, White Rapids Manor

White Rapids Manor is an independent, non-profit nursing home in Fredericton Junction, operated by a volunteer Board of Directors which is tasked with ensuring residents are served in a professional, safe and caring manner. While we do take into consideration other factors when making decisions, our paramount concern is for the best interests of all residents.

The Board of Directors signs contracts routinely with various service providers. It would not be appropriate to release specific details as to why a previous contractor may or may not have been successful in being awarded a future contract. We adhere to confidentiality and privacy requirements. However, in light of misinformation that is circulating about our Medical Advisor contract, the Board feels compelled to release the following limited information to clarify certain facts.

In accordance with Nursing Home Services Regulations, each nursing home in New Brunswick is mandated by the Government to establish an annual contract with a qualified physician to act as the Medical Advisor for nursing home residents. The Government provides a template physician services contract to all nursing homes on which to obtain signatures. The physician engaged as Medical Advisor has a number of responsibilities, including regular weekly visits, patient/family/administration meetings and 24-hour on-call availability.

The Board of Directors used the Government’s template contract, as outlined in the Standard and Policy manual, to make an offer to the prior physician in February to continue as Medical Advisor. The contract was not accepted by the physician, even with extended timelines. To be very clear, Dr. Richardson’s contract was never terminated, it simply expired due to his lack of signature on the 2016 contract. The Board of Directors was at risk for non-compliance with the government requirement to secure a Medical Advisor by March 31, 2016.

In order to ensure the health and safety of residents and meet our licensing obligations, the Board executed a contract with a new physician to act as Medical Advisor. We wish to make clear that appropriate medical service to our residents is in place and will continue. The current Medical Advisor contract was legally executed and is legally binding for White Rapids Manor and the new physician who signed it until March 31, 2017.
The Board of White Rapids Manor wishes to emphasize that although a physician may not have a service contract with the nursing home, this does not affect a physician’s provision of medical services in other settings; such as after-hours clinics, hospitals and the physician’s direct medical practice. The Board’s research indicates that there are 1,680 physicians licensed to practice in New Brunswick, but only 65 doctors are further contracted as Medical Advisors to nursing homes. Many physicians clearly operate successful private medical practices in the Province without service contracts to nursing homes.

The Board is dismayed that ‘fear-mongering’ is occurring in the Community, by which patients are falsely being led to believe that the White Rapids Manor’s Medical Advisor contract will somehow affect general patient care in Fredericton Junction.

The current campaign that is being led by MLA Jeff Carr and Dr. John Richardson has cast a negative light on our Community and is creating a great deal of stress for many people, including our nursing home residents. We note that Mr. Carr has never spoken to the Board of Directors to obtain the factual context for this matter and his statements reflect only “one side” of the issue. A number of untruths are being told. In particular, we note that less than 30% of our nursing home residents were patients of Dr. Richardson’s when they lived in the Community. Of that number, 90% of these patients were in hospital for a length of time prior to entering White Rapids Manor, where they were treated by physicians other than Dr. Richardson, since it is the Board’s understanding that Dr. Richardson does not have hospital privileges.

The public harassment and bullying targeted against White Rapids Manor employees is very unfortunate and unwarranted. The Board of Directors fully supports the diligent work of our staff in ensuring compliance with the Government requirement to secure a Medical Advisor.

The Board of Directors felt it was very important to respond directly to the false declarations being made against White Rapids Manor. The Board is hopeful that this statement, clarifying key facts around this issue, will allow the focus to shift from divisive and negative confrontations to permit the Community to encourage each other and work together. On this note, the Board of Directors invites the community to join us in welcoming the services of a new physician to White Rapids Manor.

Sincerely,

WHITE RAPIDS MANOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 13, 2016