

## Deer Lodge Centre scabies outbreak upsets families, staff

By: Carol Sanders | Posted: 05/21/2019 7:00 AM



*'Staff are already overworked because of cutbacks and funding losses...How are they expected to bring the scabies to an end without impacting other portions of care for the clientele?'*

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- Virginia Vaillancourt, national president of the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees

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bad itching and a rash. She said she and others should've been notified as soon as the first case was confirmed to prevent its spread.

"Other people could be carrying it and walking around," said the woman whose relative was treated with a cream from head to toe before bed that was washed off in the morning. "They wrap up all their clothes and put them in bags and clean the room. Anyone who goes in the room has to wear gloves and a gown," she said.

There's no activities or physiotherapy for the 36 residents during the outbreak to try and prevent its

layer of the skin where it lives and so it lays its eggs. The most common symptoms of scabies are intense itching and a pimple-like skin rash. The scabies mite usually is spread through direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies.

Scabies is found worldwide and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies can spread rapidly under crowded conditions where there is close body and skin contact that is frequent. Institutions such as nursing homes, extended-care facilities, prisons are often sites of scabies outbreaks. Child-care facilities are a common site of scabies infestations.





Deer Lodge Centre transferred from a veterans Affairs Canada hospital to a provincial facility in 1983. Since changing from an acute general hospital to a facility caring for adult patients with complex needs, it became the largest rehabilitation and long term care facility in Manitoba, with a bed capacity of 429.

There are now 60 veterans staying at Deer Lodge Centre and one veteran is on the waiting list to get in, said Vaillancourt. Since January, the centre lost four dietary aide positions, nine messengers, two ward clerks, a volunteer co-ordinator and saw a reduction in health care aides, and rehab workers, said Vaillancourt, who has also been trying to get a meeting with the federal Veterans' Affairs Minister to raise concerns about their care at Deer Lodge Centre.

"We've seen this facility go down at an alarming rate," said Vaillancourt.

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