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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

Workers recoil as WRHA hails anniversary of 'disaster' 'Insulting' celebration of home-care debacle: staff

SCOTT BILLECK

HOME-CARE workers are riled up by events to "celebrate" the anniversary of a centralized scheduling system that has been heavily criticized and caused hundreds of missed appointments when it was introduced one year ago.

Staff at the scheduling office, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, told the *Free Press* that time spent planning the celebration and organizing silent auctions should have been used to work on the system that they say is still rife with problems.

"It's insulting to expect people to celebrate a milestone that is nothing but a reminder of the level of trauma we have endured this past year," one employee said, adding the switch from regional scheduling "has proven to be a disaster."

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority centralized the scheduling system in March 2025 with the goal of improving communication, workload and client support. Staff who had worked in offices in quadrants of the city relocated to 80 Sutherland Ave. The revamp followed a review into the 2023 death of Katherine Ellis, a cancer patient who died after being misclassified and denied timely home care. Centralized scheduling was one of 21 recommendations stemming from that review.

The overhaul drew heavy criticism from workers after thousands of client visits were missed during the switchover.

On March 27, workers' names were drawn hourly for prizes as part of the anniversary festivities.

"Thank you everyone for your continued great work and your commitment to keep making improvements," said the email that announced the celebration. "We are all one team and I am very proud to be part of this team."

Staff said the items ranged from tomato plant seeds to Kleenex boxes, and bags of chips.

"It was like they went to Dollarama, up and down each aisle and just chose whatever and wrapped it," the employee said.

Two workers said the celebration felt like a slap in the face amid their work challenges.

● HOME CARE, CONTINUED ON A2

Nygaard sues over failed charges

Former fashion mogul names raft of defendants, from city and police chief to ex-attorney general

ERIK PINDERA

CONVICTED sex offender and former fashion mogul Peter Nygaard has filed a lawsuit over a failed prosecution in Manitoba's provincial court last fall, claiming he's suffered as a result of officials abusing the process of the justice system.

Nygaard had been set to stand trial on allegations he sexually assaulted and forcibly confined a woman, who was then 20, at his former corporate headquarters in Winnipeg in 1993, but

the charges against him were stayed in October.

The judge on the case ruled his right to a fair trial had been breached because of lost evidence.

The 84-year-old Nygaard filed a statement of claim in Court of King's Bench late last week, alleging the criminal charges were filed only amid "immense pressure" from advocates and extensive media reporting on his case, and accusing officials of abuse of process and negligence.

"As a result of this negligent conduct, the plaintiff has incurred general damages in the form of pain and suffering and mental anguish," Nygaard's lawsuit claims.

Nygaard's court filing names as defendants the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Service and its chief, the provincial governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, former Progressive Conservative provincial attorney general Kelvin Goertzen, the Saskatchewan Crown attorney who reviewed the case, the complainant in the Manitoba criminal case and a victim's advocate.

Earlier last fall, Nygaard's lawyer had tried to have the Manitoba criminal case tossed, arguing Goertzen's order for an out-of-province review after Manitoba prosecutors declined to lay

sex charges was an abuse of process. The judge agreed, but allowed the case to continue.

The lawsuit expands on those claims, alleging Goertzen and the Manitoba government abused the process of the justice system by asking the Saskatchewan government for a review, while that province's government and prosecutor abused the process by participating in it.

The court filing accuses the complainant, April Telek, and Shannon Moroney — a therapist and social worker who has spoken extensively to the media about Nygaard — of participating in the abuse of process by making faulty claims to officials.

● NYGARD, CONTINUED ON A2



APARTMENT BLOCK HIT BY FIRE

Members of the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service battle a smoky blaze at a three-storey apartment complex in the 400 block of Sherbrooke Street near Ellice Avenue Monday night. One person was transported to hospital in unstable condition, while everyone else was safely evacuated.

MIKE SUDOMA / FREE PRESS

War's end near, Hormuz is your problem: Trump to allies

JON GAMBRELL, MIKE CORDER AND DARLENE SUPERVILLE

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — U.S. President Donald Trump expressed frustration Tuesday with allies who have been unwilling to do more to support the U.S. war effort, telling them to "go get your own oil" as the conflict with Iran and its closure of the Strait of Hormuz sent average U.S. gas prices soaring past US\$4 a gallon.

Hours later, Trump said securing the strait is "not for us" and estimated that the U.S. will be done attacking Iran in two to three weeks. Trump said the U.S. "will not have anything

to do with" what happens in the strait, instead telling reporters that the responsibility for keeping the vital waterway open will rest with countries that rely on it.

The president said there's "no reason for us to do this."

"That's not for us. That'll be for France. That'll be for whoever's using the strait," Trump said after signing an executive order that seeks to restrict mail-in voting.

In other developments, U.S. strikes hit the central city of Isfahan, sending a massive fireball into the sky, and Tehran attacked a fully loaded Kuwaiti oil tanker in the Persian Gulf.

The attacks showed the intensity of the war more than a month after the U.S. and Israel launched it. The conflict has left more than 3,000 dead and caused major disruptions to the world's supply of oil and natural gas, roiling global markets and pushing up the cost of many basic goods.

Trump, who has vacillated between insisting there is progress in diplomatic talks with Iran and threatening to widen the war, had earlier shared footage of the attack on Isfahan.

Iran's stranglehold on the strait, the waterway leading out of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world's oil is transported during peace-

time, has driven up global oil prices, as have Tehran's attacks on regional energy infrastructure.

Spot prices of Brent crude, the international standard, hovered around US\$107 a barrel Tuesday, up more than 45 per cent since the war started Feb. 28.

In a social media post, Trump directed blame at U.S. allies like the United Kingdom and France that have refused to enter a war with no clear endgame that they were not consulted on.

"You'll have to start learning how to fight for yourself, the U.S.A. won't be there to help you anymore, just like you weren't there for us. Iran has been,

essentially, decimated. The hard part is done. Go get your own oil!" Trump wrote.

He singled out France for not letting planes fly over French territory while taking military supplies to Israel.

France has allowed the U.S. Air Force to use the Istres base in southern France because it had guarantees that planes landing there would not be involved in carrying out strikes.

Spain, which has emerged as Europe's loudest critic of the war, said Monday that it had closed its airspace

● WAR, CONTINUED ON A3



WEATHER MAINLY CLOUDY. HIGH 0 — LOW -4



ARTS AI CONTROVERSY DOGS CONCERT HALL PERFORMANCE / C2