

## ***End Understaffing: Be Fair to Those Who Care***

**Saskatoon** – A new campaign has been launched by SEIU-West to bring attention to the very real safety concerns resulting from ongoing understaffing in the health care sector. Purple billboards will be displayed across the province encouraging the Saskatchewan provincial government to *Put Care First: End Understaffing*.

“Put care first,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “It’s as simple as that. Not having enough people on a shift at a care home, or at the hospital, or to provide home care services puts residents, patients, and clients at risk. We also see this as a real and imminent threat in our education and community-based sectors.”

Workers Compensation Board data shows that health care is one of the most dangerous sectors to work in—at least as dangerous as working in construction. Injury rates in the education sector are also well above average. “But we can change that,” said Cape, “if we have more people working as part of the staff team. We hope the public will help magnify our calls for safety in the care and classroom environments.”

For years, front line SEIU-West members have been bringing their safety concerns to their MLAs, Ministers in charge of health care and education, and even the Premier. Despite this, recent provincial budgets have failed to address the chronic understaffing issues in these sectors.

“Between the higher workloads, more complex care, and fewer staff to work, our health care system, our education sector and our community based sectors are in crisis,” continued Cape. “Our members are working crushing amounts of overtime because employers have adopted ‘non-replacement’ policies as cost-cutting measures. We need to stop this cycle.”

“We’ve seen more than one budget where the government has put front line public sector worker compensation last while they give themselves raises,” added Cape. “It is simply not fair. MLAs gave themselves a 3.5% pay hike last year, and then a further 2.3% cost of living increase this year. Meanwhile, during these same years, the government has been offering zeroes to the people doing the heavy lifting in health care and education.”

SEIU-West welcomes the support from the many communities where our members work.

Visit [EndUnderstaffing.ca](http://EndUnderstaffing.ca) to find out more about this issue and to send a letter to decision makers.

SEIU-West represents over 13,000 people across Saskatchewan. They include people who work in health care, education, municipalities, community-based organizations, retirement homes and other sectors. They are joined by one colour – purple – and one union – SEIU-West. Purple works in our communities! Visit [PurpleWorks.ca](http://PurpleWorks.ca) to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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