

## ***Rural Access to Urban Hospitals Smoke Screen for Real ER Congestion issue: Understaffing***

**Saskatoon** – SEIU-West members were caught off guard by the Saskatchewan Health Authority's (SHA's) release of conclusions from a private sector report on our hospitals.

"The number of people coming in from rural centres for treatment at the hospital is not the biggest issue facing our hospitals," said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. "This report is a smoke screen for the larger systemic issues that face our health care system."

In the past decade, the former health regions and the government have wasted millions of dollars on American consultants and reports that have not yielded the results the public should expect.

"Our members have made efforts to work with the employer, to improve efficiencies and patient, client, resident care experiences for years. They are invested in making the system work better but this employer and government continue to ignore our fundamental calls for higher staffing levels and fair compensation for professional skills we provide to the public," continued Cape.

In media reports, Scott Livingstone, the CEO of the SHA, tiptoes around the issue of growing hard to recruit lists with promises of 'leveling out of staffing levels in smaller communities' through 'the utilization of health networks.'

Cape added: "The fact remains, there are not enough providers in the system, and over the last decade, health care has seen short staffing issues grow across the province and in all classifications. Last week the Minister of Health responded to one of our members touting the addition of Doctors and Registered Nurses. He cannot make the same claim when it comes to the rest of the health care team."

"More troubling is that the specific reports are not being released publicly, despite public funds being used to pay for them," Cape said. "We are further concerned about whether information relating to staffing levels or safety incidents has been edited by the Saskatchewan Health Authority before being released."

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

Service Employees International Union West (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. Visit [PurpleWorks.ca](http://PurpleWorks.ca) to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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