

## ***Provincial COVID-19 Plan Deficient***

**Saskatoon** – The front line health care providers of SEIU-West are not surprised with the recent media reports about the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and Ministry of Health ‘planning challenges’ in dealing with COVID-19.

“This government continues to display a lack of comprehension about the challenges faced by our members daily in the provision of health care services. While coined by the media as being disorganized and slow to react to this global pandemic, SEIU-West leaders are finally seeing some actual problem-solving opportunities,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “And we want the general public to understand that the only way to protect our health care providers, ourselves, and our families is to comply with the social distancing requirements mandated by the Government of Saskatchewan.”

In the document released on March 24, the plan for Saskatchewan from the SHA outlines a war-time strategy with the use of military terms such as ‘field hospitals’ and ‘casualty storage’ – all of which is terribly unsettling.

“We would like more emphasis on prevention and testing,” continued Cape. “Working together in support of our health care providers, we need everyone to meet their social responsibility of flattening the curve.”

While SEIU-West members are accustomed to challenging circumstances, now more than ever they require community support and the respect of our SHA and Ministry of Health decision-makers.

“We are keeping in touch with our unit leaders and front line members who are telling us what they are facing in their facilities,” added Cape. “They have revealed stark inconsistencies in how they are to manage their own personal health including whether or not to self-isolate and occupational health and safety concerns related to personal protective equipment like masks and gloves. They have identified a need for clear communication and robust safety protocols that provide a level of confidence to our members. Now more than ever, we need to listen to our front line workers.”

SEIU-West health care providers and community-based organization (CBO) workers are on the front line of this pandemic and are at a higher risk than most for exposure to the virus.

“Our members want to be healthy enough to continue to work and be there for the people of Saskatchewan. This government needs to commit to our members, listen to their concerns and act upon them quickly; we encourage all to show their appreciation and support for the commitment displayed by health care providers,” stated Cape.

SEIU-West has set up a page dedicated to information about the coronavirus for their members ([https://www.seiuwest.ca/covid\\_19\\_coronavirus](https://www.seiuwest.ca/covid_19_coronavirus)).

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](https://www.purpleworks.ca) to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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