

Worst April Fool's Joke Ever?

Saskatoon – SEIU-West leaders and members know that our Saskatchewan Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) will be receiving a 1.8% salary increase today.

“Our members in health care feel the systemic unfairness of this situation every day. It’s been too many years with consistent calls to our provincial government to address understaffing in the sector,” says Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “Rather than taking into account the daily reality of health care workers, the government continues to rely upon political announcements of the past.

“Now our members face the risk of their personal health and safety and that of their family as they face the COVID-19 pandemic with inadequate and/or rationed safety supplies to manage their day to day responsibilities at work. This, coupled with continued understaffing creates significant challenges in health care delivery.”

SEIU-West health care providers remain without a renewed collective agreement since March 1, 2017, as a result of rejecting an offer from the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) last year.

“It’s like a bad April fool’s joke,” adds Cape. “The fact is our members are needed now more than ever to provide critical services during these extraordinary circumstances.”

Today our MLAs justify taking a salary increase on the basis of the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan, yet we all have to manage inflationary costs.

It is worth noting that Canadian Members of Parliament (MPs) are also scheduled to receive a 2% salary increase; implementation has been halted in at least one province, and a number of MPs have announced they will donate the added funds in view of COVID-19.

“When will our provincial government recognize what the public already knows: health care workers are the front line of the pandemic battle and are essential 365 days of the year,” continues Cape. “If decision-makers can ensure that their own personal household budgets expand with inflation – why can they not do so for our members on the front line of this pandemic?”

SEIU-West has set up a page dedicated to information about the coronavirus for their members (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 to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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