

Working to Further Protections in Health Care

Saskatoon – SEIU-West and the other health care unions [Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Sask Government & General Employees Union (SGEU), Sask Union of Nurses (SUN) and Health Sciences Assoc of Sask (HSAS)] have reached an agreement with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) to create a staff redeployment strategy for COVID-19.

“The health care unions have been calling on the SHA and the Ministry of Health for safety mechanisms to be put in place for staff and residents and to enhance access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies over the past four weeks, with some success,” says President of SEIU-West, Barbara Cape. “This week we have focused on how to best build a human resource strategy that will allow our members to meet the care needs of Saskatchewan people safely during a forecasted COVID surge. At this time, it is imperative that our members have all of the resources they need to do this invaluable work within all facilities, agencies and services including the new assessment centres and test sites that have been set up across the province.”

The SHA and government of Saskatchewan released modeling data on April 8 which outlined the plan to increase testing and provide added capacity to provide care. The discussions concluded this week with the health care unions and SHA. The agreement reached provides for cohorting of staff (who are currently working at more than one workplace within the SHA) as well as the establishment of a labour pool to ensure adequate staff coverage at new centres.

“Our members should not be expected to sacrifice their own health during this pandemic. SEIU-West is adamant we need to plan for both cohorting and deployment needs during this crisis,” continues Cape. “SEIU-West is in agreement that our members are essential to the health care team not only through this pandemic, but every day of the year.

“We are confident that providers will remain dedicated to providing quality care to the citizens of the province. It is up to the rest of us, through all means possible, to ensure that those same health care providers that we recognize as front line heroes are not expected to bear personal health and financial costs as a result of their dedication.”

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

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