

## ***Health and Safety Week: Personal Protective Equipment***

**Saskatoon** – Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Week has significant meaning for the members and leaders of SEIU-West in 2020.

“Our members take safety on the job seriously,” states President of SEIU-West, Barbara Cape. “And while we have marked this week in different ways over the years, OH&S week in 2020 should be more important to everyone this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and as businesses are starting to re-open under the Saskatchewan government’s plan.”

With recent outbreaks in Saskatchewan and heightened daily cases being reported, health care providers and community-based organization workers are concerned that the *‘Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan’* plan could put them at even higher risk if individuals don’t continue social distancing practices.

“It wasn’t until April 14 that personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines for health care workers were put in place by the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and these guidelines do not apply to Community-Based Organizations,” says Cape. “We know that there are access issues within the health care sector where members have reported concerns over availability of PPE.”

Supply of PPE for health care and CBO sector workers continues to be an issue.

“Our priority needs to be focused on everyone returning to work has access to PPE and are following proper protocols so they don’t contract the virus and don’t inadvertently spread it to others they come in contact with,” continues Cape. “That would put us all at risk.”

“We have been asking for weeks to have new admissions in long-term care isolated and/or tested upon admission. This has finally been put in place this week,” adds Cape. “Our genuine effort is to ensure our members continue to work in a safe care environment.”

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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