

Joint Statement for Health & Safety Protection for Health Care Workers

Saskatoon – SEIU-West leaders are pleased that the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) have extended their agreement with the five health care unions to a set of shared health and safety principles in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Since the outset, each of the health care unions have emphasized the need to ensure the safety of all health care workers – this translates into safe care for patients, clients and residents,” says President of SEIU-West, Barbara Cape. “We absolutely take safety on the job seriously.

SEIU-West, Saskatchewan Government & General Employees Union (SGEU), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) and Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) achieved a joint statement on principles early in April. Since that time, Saskatchewan’s health care unions have been working with the MoH and SHA to build consensus on shared principles.

“We saw the introduction of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines by the SHA for health care workers on April 14 and we have been working through the application of these as members report concerns over availability.” adds Cape. “We know that there are PPE access issues in health care including hospitals, home care, long-term care; community-based organizations (CBOs) like group homes, child care facilities; as well as personal care homes, and retirement homes.

“Proper PPE protocols are critical so that our members don’t contract the virus and inadvertently spread it to others they come in contact with,” continues Cape. “That would put us all at risk.”

The Joint Statement on Principles is intended to cover all aspects of care provision within the health sector and establishes the need for a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA), access to appropriate PPE, and minimum precautions. It also provides for Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP).

“Our members need to work in a safe care environment,” states Cape. “To achieve that, they require access to proper PPE,” adds Cape.

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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For more information, contact:

Christine Miller, Communications Coordinator
Phone: 306-477-8733

