



June 4, 2020

Sent Electronically

Honourable Premier Scott Moe  
Honourable Minister of Labour Relations & Workplace Safety, Don Morgan  
Honourable Minister of Health, Jim Reiter  
Honourable Minister of Rural & Remote Health, Warren Kaeding  
Saskatchewan Legislative Building  
2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Honourable Premier Moe & Ministers Morgan, Reiter & Kaeding,

I write to you today on behalf of the over 12,000 members who work as health care providers in the former Saskatoon, Five Hills, Heartland, and Cypress Health Regions, along with their families, friends, and supporters.

As you are aware, the most recent set of dates for collective bargaining on behalf of these members ended rather abruptly on May 22 by reason of the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) unilaterally terminating the session. We have communicated this unfortunate turn of events to our (now) very disappointed members via a regular update, a mass email, and we have held virtual townhall meetings. In addition, we have written to SAHO to confirm it is indeed their intention to cease bargaining completely.

We await their reply which will dictate our next steps.

There is no good time for a labour dispute, particularly in the health care sector, but given our members are currently playing one of the most significant roles in holding down the front line for Saskatchewan against the COVID-19 pandemic, this may be the worst possible time for SAHO to have abandoned the table. We are struggling to believe SAHO would not recognize the risk that these actions pose to everyone, including (but not limited to) our beloved Saskatchewan seniors and their extended families...but here we are.

In response to SAHO shutting down collective bargaining, what we've heard from our members is crystal clear – they've had enough. They want action.

Their sheer frustration is valid and palpable, borne from multiple factors, including the following:

1. **Twelve long months have passed** without any kind of substantive, acceptable proposal presented by your government through SAHO, one that would improve upon the original inadequate Tentative Agreement which SEIU-West members resoundingly rejected in April 2019;
2. The knowledge of the **many steps** that have yet to be taken under Part VII of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (steps which your government created and are largely viewed by our members as obstacles intended to delay labour negotiations);

BARBARA CAPE  
President

NEIL COLMIN  
Vice-President

JANICE PLATZKE  
Treasurer

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3. The many personal sacrifices our over 12,000 members and their families have made in their daily lives as a result of working in ***inadequately resourced healthcare and long-term care environments***, conditions now grossly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and
4. The total disrespect displayed by your government for our members, made obvious and manifest by your complete disinterest in resolving understaffing (much less acknowledging its existence), your lack of attention to best practises for retention & recruitment, and the derisory and at times, dangerous working conditions in care facilities across the province.

Our members have repeatedly tried to voice these and other concerns to their Sask Party MLAs. This has proven a futile effort. The government response is demonstrated through reports from members, who are also constituents, as they cannot get a meeting with their MLA in Rosetown-Elrose. The Minister of Health will not meet to hear them out. Demonstrably, this is not quality representation for those constituents.

Other SEIU-West members recently took the time to write personal, heartfelt letters to Premier Scott Moe, detailing their circumstances and desire for change. The Premier's office didn't even acknowledge those Saskatchewan residents, their stories or concerns, instead handed them off to the Minister of Finance who responded to each with a dismissive form letter.

How is it acceptable that Saskatchewan people, never mind busy health care providers dealing with enormous vocational stress, exacerbated by additional life-saving responsibilities during this pandemic, can take the time to write a letter sharing their personal feelings and concerns with the Premier, and then be dismissed so entirely as a result?

The Saskatchewan government's claim that their guidelines (or suggestions) for our province's Special Care Homes are as meaningful as legally-binding regulations for staffing hours per resident is absurd. Perhaps the Minister of Health should have taken SEIU-West leadership up on our offer to participate in our Walk A Day program. Even a few minutes spent in a workplace would be sufficient for the Minister to recognize the understaffing crisis in long-term care (and healthcare) in Saskatchewan. Quite simply, there are too many opportunities that your government has ignored to engage with frontline healthcare workers.

The combined impact of these factors has resulted in the following message being received by our over 12,000 members and everyone around them: ***you and your job aren't important enough to Scott Moe or the Sask Party, meaning the health, safety and comfort of Saskatchewan patients, seniors and long-term care home residents aren't a priority for your government.***

This has to change.

Unless your government immediately empowers and enforces SAHO and the Saskatchewan Health Authority's mandate to bargain in good faith and provide a greatly improved, genuine

offer for our members, SEIU-West is prepared to do all in our legislated power to allow our members to exercise their constitutional right to take job action.

Further, if you have any desire for labour stability in the future, there must be accountability for those who have made the decisions that have brought us to this bleak place. We are not the ones who abandoned the bargaining process; SAHO and the Saskatchewan Health Authority refuse to bargain because your government will not give them the ability to bargain in good faith and provide an improved monetary offer so as to stimulate a timely resolve. Now is the time to do your job and provide some much-needed direction and resources to ensure this black mark on Saskatchewan's health and long-term care history is overcome, so we can move forward to a fair and reasonable outcome for SEIU-West health care providers and others within their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Cape', written in a cursive style.

Barbara Cape  
President  
SEIU-West

cc: SEIU-West Executive Board  
SEIU-West Bargaining Committee  
Scott Livingstone, CEO - SHA  
Mike Northcott, Chief Human Resources Officer - SHA  
Blake McMullen, Director of Strategic Initiatives & Employee Relations - SHA  
Ingrid Reid, Director of Labour & Employee Relations – SHA  
Tyler Kannenberg, Director of Labour Relations – SHA  
Max Hendricks, Deputy Minister of Health  
Mark Wyatt, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health  
Donna Johnson, Deputy Minister of Labour  
Donna Harpauer, Minister of Finance  
Ryan Meili, Leader of Opposition  
Vicki Mowat, Opposition Critic – Health  
Danielle Chartier, Opposition Critic – Long-Term Care & Mental Health  
David Forbes, Opposition Critic – Labour  
Kevin Zimmerman, Executive Director of Labour Relations - SHA  
Jennifer Green, Director of Labour Relations, Ministry of Health