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**Delivered via Email**

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Hon. Paul Merriman  
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Members of the SEIU-West Worker Safety Committee (WSC) are writing you in order to get answers and action on a number of concerns in both health care and the community-based organization (CBO) sectors.

Understaffing has become the norm for many health care providers and the patients, residents, and clients (PRCs) we care for. PRCs constantly see us rushing to meet the needs of those we care for, and many have also written to you about this crisis in health care (often receiving a canned response, which we specifically ask you not to do with our letter). It is in these unsafe conditions that frontline providers are going above and beyond to try to get everything done that we need to, but at a cost: with low staffing comes declining morale, increased risk of both physical and psychological injury, and high turnover.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been asked to go above and beyond, yet again. The pandemic has resulted in daily screening, increased personal protective equipment (PPE), and we must come to work and change before and after our shift—at our expense. These steps add approximately 20 minutes of unpaid time to each and every shift in order to follow Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) guidelines. To add to this, many frontline health providers have allergies that are exacerbated by wearing a mask for extended periods of time; some of us must take allergy pills daily because of this. We believe the guidelines are designed to keep us safe, and so we

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oblige. But if we are willing to do all of this to follow guidelines, why won't the government realize that our dedication to providing safe care has worth? The fact that three years of bargaining and a health crisis hasn't moved the bargaining process along, appears as a tongue in cheek when we're called "heroes" and "vital" by politicians and decision-makers.

We, as workers for the SHA, have had to tolerate many years of understaffing, PPE shortages, and a lack of resources all in the name of cost savings. Where have all these cost savings gone? Why are we, hardworking people, expected to carry the load of poor business decisions? All we want is a fair wage and to be treated with respect. We have not had a raise in four years, meanwhile, you have received a raise each year while making double the salaries of most health care providers. Our workload has doubled with no sign of relief, has yours? To our knowledge, the government actually added MLAs due to workload—why won't you recognize the same hardships in our line of work? When is our value as frontline health care providers going to be recognized? We know you hold the purse strings for SAHO, so let's see your words of "vital" and "heroes" put into action. Show us we are valuable. Show us we are not disposable.

In the CBO sector, we too face short-staffing most days, which is a challenge for the staff. As in health care, rushing around leads to injuries. There have been a lot of injuries in our shoulders, elbows, and backs due to lifting and transferring on our own. It is time for this government to treat this sector with the respect it should—people with disabilities deserve quality care, and that means ensuring stable funding for these organizations to thrive. Will this government commit to stable, reliable, multi-year funding for CBOs that provide vital services to our province's most vulnerable?

The WSC included the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and all our MLAs on this letter as well as the Ministers responsible for health care and social services. We ask that you each respond to our questions in this letter, and do your job acting on behalf of your constituents.

Signed,

The SEIU-West Worker Safety Committee, comprised of:

Kevin Fallis, St. Paul's Hospital, Constituent of Bronwyn Eyre  
Denise McConnell, Variety Place, Constituent of Greg Brkich  
Marj Markwart, St. Paul's Hospital, Constituent of Danielle Chartier  
Maureen Colmin, Pioneer Lodge, Constituent of Greg Lawrence  
Bev Sopczak, Brief and Social Detox, Constituent of Vicki Mowat

CG/tj USW 5917

cc: Barbara Cape, President, SEIU-West  
Catherine Gendron, Education Coordinator, SEIU-West  
Marilyn Irwin, Benefits Officer, SEIU-West  
SEIU-West Worker Safety Committee