

Public Health Care Facilities Need Public Security

Saskatoon – SEIU-West announces the release of *Our House Needs In-House*, SEIU-West’s response to the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s (SHA’s) ongoing provincial security services review.

“The evidence is clear,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “The best way to keep patients, staff, and visitors safe in Saskatchewan’s health care facilities is for the SHA to hire and train its own in-house security teams.”

On July 13th SEIU-West submitted *Our House Needs In-House* to SHA CEO Scott Livingstone, Health Minister Jim Reiter, and several other health system leaders.

In recent years, Saskatchewan’s health authorities have reviewed health system services like laundry, information technology, and food services, in order to assess their potential for privatization.

“Our members are concerned that yet another vital piece of our public health care system is about to be privatized,” said Cape.

The SHA launched its security review this spring. The consultant hired to conduct the review was previously in charge of security for Alberta’s provincial health authority. While he was in charge, in-house officer numbers were cut, and services were contracted out to a large private security firm.

“Healthcare security is uniquely challenging,” Cape continued. “It’s different than mall security. It’s much too important to the SHA’s mission to just be contracted out to the lowest bidder.”

SEIU-West represents the 100 SHA-employed Security Officers who work at the three Saskatoon hospitals and Parkridge Centre.

As reported in *Our House Needs In-House*, SEIU-West surveyed SHA employees and members of the public in the Saskatoon region about the state of security at the three Saskatoon hospitals and Parkridge Centre. More than 90% of respondents felt that these facilities have greater security needs than others in the province, and that those needs have risen in the past five years.

“We heard from nurses, care assistants, housekeeping staff, members of the public,” Cape added. “They told us loud and clear: when an incident happens, they trust our in-house teams more than any outside contractor to provide a quick and professional response.”

SEIU-West represents more than 13,000 working people in the province of Saskatchewan. They include members 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. Purple works in our communities! Visit www.PurpleWorks.ca to find out more about the members of SEIU-West.

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