

Vaccination Plan Misses the Mark

Saskatoon – SEIU-West members are shocked to discover that, once again, the SaskParty government has diminished the value of our front line health care providers as the vaccine roll out plan places them on the back burner in Saskatchewan.

“Our members are facing the daily burdens presented by the ongoing surge of COVID in this province yet so many have been missed in phase 1 of the vaccination plan. It’s obvious, given recent public statements from Premier Scott Moe, that our provincial government has no intention of reducing the risk to these front line health care providers by the introduction and enforcement of more stringent regulations. Now we see they will not be afforded a priority vaccine either. This is a huge mistake,” says Barb Cape, President of SEIU-West.

Cape adds, “Our provincial government needs to understand the devastating effects of COVID on the front line. We should be focusing on what we can control rather than what we cannot if we truly want to manage the spread of COVID-19. Pinning our success solely on fighting this disease with a vaccine is a foolish strategy given that we have no control over access; our question is whether this is simply another way to shirk responsibility when it comes to fighting this pandemic? It is alarming that there is so little respect for the protection of our front line heroes – when they face the brunt of provincial decision-making on a daily basis. Why would we not see them placed in phase 1 of the vaccination plan? These priorities need to be realigned immediately.”

For weeks now, Scott Moe and our SaskParty government have been blaming the Canadian Federal government for the lack of supply of vaccine – the apparent silver bullet in the fight against the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

“This is not a one-solution kind of situation,” continues Cape. “The vaccine is a very important part of the puzzle in this fight but we also need stronger restrictions that are actually enforced.”

The provincial government has been maintaining for weeks that their current public health order and restrictions are sufficient and that tightening them won’t help. Recently Moe has been rallying behind the idea that the vaccine is the only way out of this pandemic.

“The one thing that I think has been keeping people safe during this pandemic is doing what they can to reduce risk,” adds Cape. “Staying physically distant, wearing a mask, washing your hands; those are things people can control. What people don’t have control over and what this government doesn’t have control over is how fast vaccines can be manufactured and delivered so, in the meantime, we must do what we can to lessen the risk and if that requires tighter restrictions, then we need to do that.”

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 united by one colour – purple – and one union – SEIU-West. Visit PurpleWorks.ca to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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