

Blood: It's In You to Give***(Unless You Live in Rural Saskatchewan, Apparently.)***

Saskatoon – Despite issuing ongoing urgent pleas for blood donations from Saskatchewan residents, Canadian Blood Services (CBS) is proceeding with its plan to slash mobile blood-collecting clinics across rural Saskatchewan.

“CBS was begging for blood donations in Saskatchewan before Christmas,” says Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “Specifically, they were asking for more than 1,400 people in the province to fill open appointments within just a few weeks. Apparently now they’re only looking for blood from city-dwellers and are no longer interested in providing our rural friends, family and neighbours with the opportunity to donate in the safety and comfort of their own communities.”

CBS has not provided a satisfactory or logical reason for discontinuing many of its rural mobile collection clinics, including the ones in Meadow Lake, Nipawin, Biggar and Unity in the last few years and most recently Swift Current and Estevan.

“We know it’s not about resources, because they’ve got plenty” adds Cape. “According to CBS’s 2020 annual report, they concluded that fiscal year with net assets, including cash on hand, of a quarter of a billion dollars.”

“We know CBS has the staff ready, willing and able to work the rural mobile clinics because these are our members,” Cape continues. “So if they have the cash, the equipment and the workers to run the clinics, what exactly is the real reason for denying Saskatchewan people in these small cities and towns this service?”

SEIU-West members employed with CBS in Saskatchewan staff the mobile clinic operations, as well as, the day-to-day operations in Regina and Saskatoon donor clinics in respect to phlebotomy, transport, scheduling of appointments, and data entry, among other duties.

“As these cuts are announced our members have been experiencing a steady decrease in their hours of work and income; our members are facing a real lack of stability as a result of these changes,” states Cape. “We really do need strong advocacy from all donors to vocalize the concerns of those who live in these rural communities or access to these cherished opportunities to give will be lost.”

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 to find out more about SEIU-West members.

-30-

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