

## **SEIU-West demands “back to normal” SHA plan include supports for health care workers**

**(Regina, Sask)** – After reviewing Wednesday morning’s release of the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s (SHA’s) “recovery plan”, SEIU-West president Barb Cape expressed the Union’s dismay that the plan is full of ambiguities and ignores the opportunity to proactively address critical staffing issues within the health care system.

“This is not a plan, it’s a prayer,” says Cape. “It begs SHA staff to once again accept uncertainty and confusion as the SHA pivots, once again, to a different way of providing health care.”

“The word “recovery” would suggest to most people that the problem has been identified and a clear path back to “normal” carved out to follow, but that is not what this is. Their first mistake is not acknowledging that normal should not be ignoring the staffing crisis that was present before and during the pandemic or the mental health crisis that will be our next challenge,” she adds.

SEIU-West is demanding, an actual plan. A plan that will provide health care workers with the confidence, faith and will to carry on working in an environment that today remains dangerous to their very lives.

“Health care providers across the province have all committed the same extraordinary effort in battling the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members, who are on the front line of this fight and have been in the direct line of fire, deserve at the very least a clear plan to support their mental health needs, as they emerge from this unprecedented health care crisis,” continues Cape.

What this “plan” tells us, and what SEIU-West members already know, is that the health care system, which was broken before, is going to embark on another grand health care experiment, very similar to “LEAN”, rather than getting back to normal. Instead of details, the Saskatchewan public got nothing more than the same tired lines and lip service we’ve heard over and over again, not just for the past fifteen months, but the past ten years or more.

“Frankly, I feel like we’ve all read this plan a dozen times already over the last year, because whether it was another weak attempt at preserving the Saskatchewan economy or its health care system, this government has lurched from reopening to reopening since a few weeks after the pandemic was declared,” said Cape. “It seems what certain aspects of this plan suggest, in fact, is not getting back to normal; but instead reductions in health care services to rural Saskatchewan.”

Cape pointed to the “Health Networks” detailed in the plan as one example.

“That’s not about reopening the health care system, it’s about restricting services in rural Saskatchewan,” she explains. “Now, instead of having reasonable access to a doctor and health care options where you live, rural Saskatchewan residents will have to wait until it’s their turn for the “Network” to show up in town. Just because there is no brick and mortar building to close doesn’t mean the Sask Party government won’t find a way to cut rural health care even more.”

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](http://PurpleWorks.ca) to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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***For more information, contact:***

**Christine Miller, Communications**  
**306-477-8733**

