

## ***Safe Care Needs In-House Security***

**Saskatoon** – The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) released the results of its review of security services in the province’s publicly-owned health care facilities today. The final report by Big Leap Consulting includes 27 recommendations with the stated goal of ensuring a safe and secure environment for patients, visitors, and staff. SEIU-West shares this goal, but is concerned that the report sets the table for large-scale privatization of health care security.

“There are some good ideas in the report,” said Neil Colmin, Vice-President of SEIU-West. “But it’s troubling that one of the few that the SHA highlighted in the letter going to our members today is their intention to do a “business case review” of the security “service model”. We believe they think they can cut costs by contracting out to private security firms.

In recent years, Saskatchewan’s health regions and 3sHealth have reviewed health system services like laundry, information technology, and food services, in order to assess their potential for privatization. The SHA launched its security review in the spring of 2018. The consultant hired to conduct the review was previously in charge of security for Alberta’s provincial health authority and worked previously with Andrew Will. While he was in charge, in-house Security Officer numbers were cut, and services were contracted out to a large private security firm in Alberta’s health care system.

“Health care security is unique,” Colmin continued. “Our Security Officers work on the front lines in the largest, busiest, most complex care facilities in the province. They are trained, skilled professionals who are part of the health care team. If you’re truly serious about safety you can’t replace them with security people who have no background in health care, and who are not intimately knowledgeable of the facilities and the people in them.”

SEIU-West members and others in the health care team have been extremely vocal about their support for in-house Security officers and hope that the SHA is committed to including their union in the process going forward.

“We welcome their plan to assess the security needs of every one of the 200+ SHA facilities across the province,” added Colmin. “We expect they will find that many of these are underserved. In our view, the only way to meet these needs and keep folks safe is to hire and train more in-house Security Officers who work for SHA and fully understand the values and needs of our public health care system.”

SEIU-West represents 100 SHA-employed Security Officers who work at the three Saskatoon hospitals and Parkridge Centre and over 13,000 members across 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](http://www.PurpleWorks.ca) to find out more about the members of SEIU-West.

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