

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

**Pharmacist
(Annual Review)
Final Report**

October 15, 2003

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Saskatchewan Market Supplement Program is to ensure that Saskatchewan health care employers can attract and retain the employees required to provide appropriate health care services to the people of Saskatchewan.

This program is designed to address specific skill shortages by use of a temporary market supplement to attract and/or retain qualified employees. The program is designed to ensure that temporary market supplements respond to valid labour market criteria to address recruitment and/or retention pressures.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed updated documentation submitted in the annual review process regarding the market supplement for Pharmacists. The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee August 6, 2002 and implemented on October 16, 2002. This latest report is to be considered as part of the on-going review of the market supplement process for this classification as described in the HSAS Letters of Understanding. This is the first such review for the Pharmacist classification.

There are eleven health regions that reported to this analysis on Pharmacists. Pharmacists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

Role of a Pharmacist:

Pharmacists are employed in hospitals and related health institutions. Their role is critical to ensuring that patients in hospitals, frequently on complicated and potentially toxic medications, receive safe and effective therapy. This practice area offers opportunities to interact with other health professionals, the potential for significant intervention in patient care and the chance to be involved in research and education. Pharmacists who work in hospitals are effective members of the health care team and are actively involved in upgrading their education and knowledge base. Many of them specialise in fields such as oncology, infectious disease, psychiatry, etc.

Qualifications:

In order to be licensed as a Pharmacist in Canada, candidates must be obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from a Canadian University and to complete a national board examination through the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada. One year pre-pharmacy is required prior to the Degree program. Pharmacy students must also have obtained practical experience through an apprenticeship/internship program.

According to the Canadian Pharmacists Association there are nine universities in Canada that offer a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy including the University of Saskatchewan.

The Pharmacy College at the University of Saskatchewan accepts eighty first year students to the program each year. The average number of graduates per year is between seventy and seventy-seven.

Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following table:

Table 1 – Pharmacists – Budgeted and vacant Positions

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of August, 2003)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of August, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full- Time	Part-Time
Cypress	1	-	-	-	-	-
Five Hills	3	1	-	-	-	-
Heartland	-	3	-	-	-	-
Keewatin Yatthe	1	1	1	1	100%	100%
Kelsey Trail	1	1	-	-	-	-
Prairie North	2	3	-	-	-	-
Prince Albert Parkland	4	2	1	-	25%	-
Regina Qu'Appelle	Pharm D - 1 Senior - 4 Staff - 30	Pharm D - 1 Senior - 3 Staff - 2	Pharm D - 0 Senior - 1 Staff - 4	Pharm D - 0 Senior - 0 Staff - 0	Senior - 25% Staff - 13.3%	-
*Saskatoon	Pharm D - 5 Senior - 2 Staff - 24	Senior - 1 Staff - 14	Pharm D - 0 Senior - 0 Staff - 0	Senior - 0 Staff - 0	Staff - 4.1%	-
Sun Country	1	1	-	1	-	100%
Sunrise	Senior - 1 Staff - 2	Staff - 2	Senior - 0 Staff - 1	Staff - 1	Staff - 50%	Staff - 50%
TOTAL:	Pharm D - 6 Senior - 7 Staff - 69	Pharm D - 1 Senior - 4 Staff - 30	Pharm D - 0 Senior - 1 Staff - 7	Senior - 0 Staff - 3	Senior - 14.2% Staff - 10.1%	Senior - 0% Staff - 10%
	TOTAL: 82	TOTAL: 35	TOTAL: 8	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 9.7%	TOTAL: 8.5%

*Saskatoon has 1 vacant full time temporary position

Table 2 – Pharmacists - Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002/2003)

Pharmacist Classification (all levels)	Number of Budgeted Positions		Number of Vacant Budgeted Positions		% Vacancy	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
2002 TOTALS: (All Regions)	84	39	12	2	14%	3%
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)	-2	-4	-4	+1	-4.3%	+1.5%

Note: The data in Table 1 and Table 2 may be incomplete as not all the same employers may have reported for both years.

ANALYSIS

The MSRC discussed the Labour Market Criteria as required by the Market Supplement Program framework.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS: *(Employers were asked to provide information that addresses current service delivery impacts resulting from staff shortages, potential staff short term service delivery impacts, potential long term service delivery impacts and options for alternative service delivery models).*

Although regions have reported improvements to service delivery, regions continue to report limited and/or reduced the level of service as initially described in the Market Supplement Review Committee report released March 26, 2002. The delivery of pharmacy services is very sensitive to staff shortages i.e. vacancies.

In the past year, five regions reported an increase in workload due to continued shortages, expanded role in clinical pharmacy, and an increase in medication orders.

Overall, three regions reported no service issues, five reported minor issues (such as utilizing other classifications such as Pharmacy Technicians to help alleviate workload), two reported moderate issues i.e. workload load issues because of past shortages, and, one reported significant issues including extremely high workload due to numerous current vacancies.

VACANCY RATE ANALYSIS: *(Employers were requested to provide information about the frequency and timing of vacancy occurrences {i.e., seasonal vacancies; do the vacancies always follow an event; etc.} and to identify trends that may affect recruitment/retention efforts).*

Vacancy rate analysis shows a vacancy reduction of 4.3% for full time positions as of August, 2003, as compared to the analysis of March, 2002. Part time positions indicate a 3.5% vacancy rate increase for the same period.

Saskatoon Health Region stated that two trained Pharmacy residents terminated in spite of being offered provincial bursaries. One resident moved to Ontario and one to Alberta. It was expected that these two Pharmacists would fill vacant positions at the Region.

TURNOVER RATES: *(Employers were asked to provide local analysis of reasons for leaving and trends that may be emerging. They were also asked to provide annual turnover {loss of employees to other competitor employers} ratio to the existing staff complement {budgeted positions} in the given occupation).*

Of the regions that track and report terminations, the following is reported:

2002 – 4 terminations

2001 – 2 terminations

Terminations reported above include reasons which may include retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, retail pharmacies and others. Historical turnover data may be incomplete and approximate.

Overall, four regions reported no turnover issues, five regions report minor turnover issues, and, one region reported moderate turnover issues i.e. filling temporary vacancies.

RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS: *(Employers were asked to provide information such as length of recruitment times, training investments, licensing issues, supply and demand issues, etc., as well as information that would identify trends that may affect recruitment and/or retention efforts).*

The following recruitment and retention initiatives have been utilized: Offering higher initial pay rates (five regions), changing job responsibilities (one region), using other classifications (five regions), advertising (eight regions), offering residencies (two regions) offering bursaries (one region), relocation assistance i.e. \$1,500 to \$5,000 (five regions), signing bonuses i.e. typically \$2,000, one region offers \$19,000 with 3 year service commitment (four regions), attending career fairs (three regions), training allowances i.e. \$750 to \$1,000 (two regions), and, an increase in FTE's (one region).

Regions reported that the retail sector remains as the main competitor for the health regions. One region has reported that some of their staff works on a part time basis in the retail sector.

SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS: *(Employers were asked to identify situations where their salary levels are lower than other employers that they would expect to recruit employees from or other employers that recruit their employees. This may be local, provincial, regional, national or international depending on the occupation group and traditional recruitment relationships. Cost of living considerations may or may not be appropriate to factor into market salary comparisons).*

Saskatchewan health regions have improved their competitive position for Pharmacists over the past year with the implementation of a market supplement. Comparisons are still made by the regions with health care employers in Alberta and the retail sector within Saskatchewan. Confirmed data from the retail sector is unavailable, while in Alberta, bargaining for this classification is still in progress at the time of this report.

Prior to October 16, 2002, Pharmacists (Degree level) earned \$27.692 (top rate). As of October 16, 2002, Pharmacists (Degree level) earned \$36.000 (top rate – including market supplement). This represents a \$8.308 per hour (or 30.0%) increase.

One region reported that the market supplement has been effective in recruitment and retention of staff. They report that more than 33% of their Pharmacists work in community pharmacy positions on a part time basis and as the internet pharmacy industry is currently expanding in Saskatchewan, it could be anticipated that vacancy rates would significantly rise if the market supplement was removed.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Considering the labour market criteria under the provincial framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee makes the following conclusions:

- There has been some improvement to service delivery issues, however eight regions still reported some service issues.
- Vacancy rates have improved by 4.3% (full time positions) since the last Pharmacists report by the Market Supplement Review Committee.
- Regions reported that the market supplement has had a positive impact on recruitment and retention although there has been less than one year to measure the effects and impacts.
- The market for Pharmacists remains competitive particularly with the retail sector. The current market supplement has enabled Saskatchewan health regions to be competitive with neighboring provinces and the retail sector.

Having reviewed the information as provided by employers and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends:

- To maintain the current temporary market supplement for the Pharmacist classification.

APPENDIX A

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Pharmacist

Employer Respondents

1. Cypress
2. Five Hills
3. Heartland
4. Keewatin Yatthe
5. Kelsey Trail
6. Prairie North
7. Prince Albert Parkland
8. Regina Qu'Appelle
9. Saskatoon
10. Sun Country
11. Sunrise