

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Emergency Medical Dispatcher  
(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 Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMD's). 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 annual review for the Emergency Medical Dispatcher classification.

There is one Health Region that employs EMD's in Saskatchewan. Emergency Medical Dispatchers are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

Role of an Emergency Medical Dispatcher:

*The Emergency Medical Dispatcher coordinates and manages resources and medical communications between hospital and pre-hospital personnel. The EMD is the first person that the public speaks to when accessing the EMS system. In addition, the EMD interrogates each caller, determines the most appropriate response, prioritizes, and provides pre-arrival instructions as necessary.*

Qualifications:

*Employees in this classification are typically trained on the job. There are two components to the training i.e. dispatch training which involves the use of the communications system and protocols, and the interrogation training which teaches the employee the proper techniques of questioning and providing advise to callers. To operate as a fully trained EMD typically requires twelve months of training.*

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

**Table 1 – Emergency Medical Dispatcher – Budgeted and vacant positions (August, 2003)**

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
*Regina Qu'Appelle	11	-	2	-	18.2%	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>-</b>

\*Regina Qu'Appelle also employs 2 temporary positions, and 4 casual positions (2 vacant)

**Table 2 – Emergency Medical Dispatcher – Budgeted and vacant position comparison (2002/2003)**

Emergency Medical Dispatcher	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)	11	1	3	-	27.2%	-
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)		-1	-1		-9%	

## 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).*

A large amount of overtime was incurred in the past year i.e. a total of 0.93 FTE at double time due to re-building the communication centre. Any "time in lieu" accumulated by staff is difficult to take. In order to provide service, shifts are frequently worked by managers. Over the past year, it is estimated that the call volume at the communications centre has increased by 10%.

Alternate service delivery methods include emergency service personnel working as EMD's, then typically backfill their positions on an overtime basis.

**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).*

The region reported that the communications centre has experienced staff shortages in the past several years largely due to uncompetitive wages. Wages for EMD's have become more competitive

because of the market supplement component of the last collective agreement therefore, the process of re-building the staff complement has begun in the last year.

This review has identified one less vacancy now as compared to the last review.

**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.)*

The region reported and tracked terminations as follows:

- 2002 – 5 (including 1 to RCMP, and 1 to the Regina City Police)
- 2001 – 3

Terminations reported above include reasons such as retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, and others. Historical turnover data is inconsistently tracked and may be incomplete and approximate.

**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).*

Recruitment and retention initiatives include: altering job responsibilities i.e. using administrative staff for data entry, etc., using other classifications to assist with duties, i.e. cross train EMD/EMT and EMD/Paramedics, advertising, and attending career fairs.

The region has reported a reduction in attrition for the first time in several years.

Regina Qu'Appelle has historically been the training ground for other dispatch functions in private and police/fire employers. Once trained they are often recruited by police and fire employers.

**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).*

EMD wages became more competitive with the competitors such as city police and fire departments because of the market supplement component bargained during last collective agreement. Specific data is not available at the time of this report.

Prior to October 16, 2002, EMD's earned: \$17.792/hr. (top rate): As of October 16, 2002, EMD's earned \$21.233 (top rate – including market supplement). This represents a \$3.441 per hour (or 19.3%) increase.

A private competitor in Saskatchewan currently pays \$21.01/hr. (top rate).

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region continues to experience service delivery issues with respect to the Emergency Medical Dispatcher mainly due to high turnover.
- The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region needs to maintain competitive rates because they have been the training ground for other employers.

- Orientation and training costs to Regina Qu'Appelle are significant and, there is risk of losing their staff to their competitors.
- The region reported that it is more competitive now in relation to wages paid by other employers for this position. No one has left the region since the market supplement has been implemented and long standing vacancies are slowly being filled.

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

- To maintain the current market supplement for the Emergency Medical Dispatcher classification.

**APPENDIX A**

**Market Supplement Consideration Request – Emergency Medical Dispatcher**

**Employer Respondents**

1. Regina Qu'Appelle