

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

**Occupational Therapist
(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 Occupational Therapists. 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 Occupational Therapist classification.

Role of an Occupational Therapist:

Occupational Therapists work collaboratively to enhance clients/patients abilities within environments and communities in which they live and work. Using a holistic and client centered approach, they facilitate improved functional outcomes in areas of self care, productivity and leisure for persons with physical, mental, social or developmental impairments. They may also participate in research, education, evaluation and consultation.

Qualifications:

Occupational Therapists require a four year university degree in Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy (B.Sc.O.T.). In the future, this profession will be going to a Masters program. Some colleges have already started their Masters programs.

There are twelve universities in Canada that offer Occupational Therapy programs. In western Canada, there are Occupational Therapy programs at the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, and the University of Manitoba. There is no program in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Health has included Occupational Therapy students as eligible for its bursary program.

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

Table 1 – Occupational Therapist – 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	Senior – 2	2	-	1	-	50%
Five Hills	3	-	-	-	-	-
Heartland	1	3	-	-	-	-
Kelsey Trail	3	1	-	-	-	-
Prairie North	5	2	-	-	-	-
Prince Albert Parkland	8	-	2	-	25%	-
Regina Qu'Appelle	Senior – 11 Staff – 19	Senior – 12	Senior – 1	Senior – 2	Senior: 9.0%	Senior: 16.6%
*Saskatoon	Senior – 17 Staff – 28	Senior – 3 Staff – 15	-	-	-	-
Sun Country	Senior-1	Senior-1	-	-	-	-
Sunrise	6	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL:	Senior – 31 Staff – 73	Senior – 16 Staff – 23	Senior - 1 Staff – 2	Senior – 2 Staff - 1	Senior: 3.2% Staff: 2.7%	Senior: 12.5% Staff: 4.3%
	TOTAL:104	TOTAL: 39	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 2.8%	TOTAL: 7.6%

*Saskatoon has 1 temporary vacancy.

Table 2 – Occupational Therapist – Budgeted and vacant position comparison (2002/2003)

Occupational Therapist Classification	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	32	20	2	18%	6%
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)	-7	+7	-17	+1	-15.2%	+1.6%

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).

Service delivery has improved since the MSRC Report of August 6, 2002. Six regions reported little or no service delivery issues, three regions reported minor service delivery issues i.e. waiting lists of up to 12 weeks, and, one region reported moderate service issues i.e. inconsistent service due to long term staff shortages.

Health regions have utilized other classifications such as Occupational Therapy Assistants to assist with workload. Ongoing issues were reported (such as recruiting to rural areas and ensuring adequate budget resources) that continue to make service delivery challenging to employers.

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).*

Since the last review, recruiting to vacant Occupational Therapist positions has improved. Regions reported filling vacancies that have been vacant in some cases, for years. Some regions have hired Occupational Therapists because there has been a greater supply of OT's due to a one-time only, double graduating class this past year at the University of Alberta. Successful recruitment is typically dependent on the hiring of new graduates each year.

Some regions also stated that the overall shortage of Occupational Therapists has not disappeared.

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 data is reported:

2002 – 12 terminations

2001 – 14 terminations

These terminations include all reasons which may include retirements, spousal transfer, wages, private clinics and other reasons. Historical turnover data 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).*

The following recruitment and retention initiatives for Occupational Therapists have been reported:

- utilizing other classifications i.e. Occupational Therapist Assistants (three regions);
- reclassifying to Senior level positions and better utilize the scope of practice (three regions);
- advertising (seven regions);
- attending career fairs (five regions);
- signing allowances i.e. \$2,500 to \$5,000 (four regions);
- relocation assistance i.e. \$2,000 to \$5,000 (three regions);
- educational assistance (six regions);
- offering a higher initial rate of pay (four regions), and,
- offering student practicums (three regions).

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's health regions have improved their competitive position for Occupational Therapists over the past year with the implementation of a market supplement. Comparisons are still made by the regions to health care employers in Alberta and private practice within Saskatchewan. In Alberta, bargaining for the Occupational Therapist position is still in progress at the time of this report while confirmed data from private practices is unavailable.

Prior to October 16, 2002, the wage rate for Occupational Therapists was \$24.346 per hour (top step Diploma) and \$25.274 per hour (top step Degree). As of October 16, 2002, the wage rate for Occupational Therapists (top step Degree) was increased to \$28.10 per hour (top rate— including market supplement). This represents a \$2.826 per hour (or 11.1%) increase (Degree level).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- Health regions have reported an improvement in service delivery related to Occupational Therapists since the last market supplement review.
- Vacancy rates have improved by 15.2% (full time positions) since the last Occupational Therapist report by the Market Supplement Review Committee dated August 6, 2002.
- Health regions have hired Occupational Therapists in cases where they were unable to fill Physical Therapists vacancies. The ability to hire these Therapists was due to the increase in the number of graduates from the University of Alberta this past year (one time only double graduating class).
- Regions report that the market supplement has had a positive impact on recruitment and retention although there has been less than one year to measure the effect.

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

- To maintain the current market supplement for the Occupational Therapist classification.

APPENDIX A

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Occupational Therapists

Employer Respondents

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