

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Occupational Therapist**

**October 16, 2005**

## 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 (MSRC) reviewed updated documentation submitted in the annual review process regarding the market supplement for the Occupational Therapist classification. The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee August 6, 2002 and implemented on October 16, 2002. The first annual review was conducted by the MSRC in October 2003. In October 2004, the MSRC recommended to maintain the existing market supplement as part of its annual review. 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 SAHO/HSAS Letters of Understanding pertaining to the Market Supplement Program. This is the third annual review for the Occupational Therapist classification.

There were ten health regions that reported to this analysis on Occupational Therapists. Occupational Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS). HSAS was invited to submit any relevant information to this review.

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 (August 2005)**

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of August, 2005)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of August, 2005)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Cypress	1	3	0	0	0	0
Five Hills	3	0	0	0	0	0
Heartland	1	2	0	1	0	0
Kelsey Trail	3	1	0	0	0	0
*Prairie North	4	1	1	0	25%	0
**Prince Albert Parkland	7	0	0	0	0	0
Regina Qu'Appelle	30	13	0	0	0	0
Saskatoon	41	18	0	1	0	5.5%
**Sun Country	2	1	1	0	50%	0
Sunrise	5	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

\*Note: As of the date of this report the full time vacancy at Prairie North has been filled.

\*\*PA Parkland and Sun Country have one temporary vacancy.

## 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).*

Health regions have reported that service delivery related to Occupational Therapists continues to improve. Two regions reported no service delivery issues and eight regions reported minor issues such as short waiting times and increase to workloads.

Service issues reported by health regions are related to an insufficient number of budgeted FTE's rather than an inability to recruit or retain Occupational Therapists.

**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 2003, vacancy rates have remained consistently low. Employers have reported little or no difficulty in recruiting to full time positions. Health regions have reported difficulty filling part time or relief positions at times.



**Table 2 – Occupational Therapist – Budgeted and vacant position comparison (2002 – 2005)**

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
<b>2002 Totals</b>	111	32	20	2	18%	6%
<b>2003 Totals</b>	104	39	3	3	2.8%	7.6%
<b>2004 Totals</b>	101	37	0	1	0	2.7%
<b>2005 Totals</b>	97	39	2	2	2%	5.1%

\*Disclaimer: Data reported in Table 1 and/or Table 2 may be as a result of different employers reporting year to year.

**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 turnover, the following data is reported:

- 2005 (Year to date) – 5
- 2004 – 8
- 2003 – 3

Turnover reported above includes reasons such as family and domestic, retirements, wages, private clinics, volunteer work overseas, and other reasons. Discrepancies in turnover data from previous reports may be as a result of different employers reporting year to year.

**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).*

Of the regions that reported vacancies in the past, the following recruitment and retention initiatives were utilized:

- utilizing other classifications i.e. Occupational Therapist Assistants (three regions),
- advertising (five regions),
- attending career fairs (four regions),
- recruitment allowances (four regions),
- relocation assistance (four regions),
- bursaries (two regions),
- offering a higher initial rate of pay (five regions) and,
- offering student practicums (five 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).*

The MSRC reports the following market conditions for Occupational Therapists:

- Saskatchewan health regions – Minimum \$23.096/hour, maximum \$28.10/hour (including the current market supplement rate), 6 steps.
- Alberta health regions – Minimum \$26.71/hour, maximum \$35.54/hour, 9 steps. Effective April 1, 2005.

- British Columbia health regions – Minimum \$26.44/hour, maximum \$32.97/hour, 6 steps. Effective April 1, 2004 – March 31, 2006 (no wage increase during the course of this agreement).
- Manitoba health regions – Minimum \$25.50/hour, maximum \$29.56/hour, 7 steps. Effective April 1, 2005.

SAHO and HSAS have tentatively agreed to a new collective agreement that stipulates an economic increase on top of the current market supplement pay rate. This economic increase would place the Occupational Therapist pay rate at \$24.017/hour (minimum) and \$29.221/hour (maximum) effective April, 2005.

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- Health regions reported that service delivery has continued to improve.
- Health regions reported two vacancies out of 98 full time positions (one of these was filled at the time of this report).
- Regions continue to report that the market supplement has had a positive impact on recruitment and retention initiatives.

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. SAHO and HSAS have tentatively agreed to a new collective agreement that stipulates an economic increase to the current market supplement pay rates.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Market Supplement Consideration Request – Occupational Therapists**

#### **Respondents**

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