

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Ph.D. Psychologist

**Final Report
December 19, 2002**

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the 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/retention pressures.

A market supplement will be an acceptable option only if:

- a) workplace initiatives have not addressed the skill shortage;
- b) labour market data supports a supplement; and,
- c) recruitment/retention is a problem, is affecting service delivery and is well documented.

This report deals with the Market Supplement Review Committee's analysis of the recruitment/retention pressures facing employers with respect to Ph.D. Psychologists.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed documentation included in the request for consideration of a market supplement for Psychologists Ph.D level. The request for a market supplement resulted from the collective bargaining process between SAHO and HSAS which concluded on October 16, 2002, with the agreement being ratified November 21, 2002.

Responses were received from 6 Regional Health Authorities who employ Psychologist Ph.D.'s. A written submission as well as a discussion with the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan also contributed to this report.

Role of Ph.D. Psychologists:

Psychologists work in clinics, correction facilities, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, schools and universities. They diagnose and provide therapy for psychological and emotional disorders, help clients manage physical illnesses and disorders, consult with other health care professionals, plan and implement research and apply theory relating to behavior and mental process.

The *Saskatchewan Registered Psychologists Act* was enacted in 1962. This stipulated that only those with a doctorate in psychology could call themselves psychologists and engage in private practice. In this *Act* however, there was an exemption from this provision for individuals who were less qualified i.e. Masters level, and who worked for the provincial government and school boards. In 1997, a new *Act* regulating psychologists was passed but not enacted. The intent of the *Act* was to permit the registration of persons with both the Doctorates and Masters level qualifications by the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists. The new legislation was enacted March, 2002.

There are 24 Doctoral Programs in Clinical Psychology at universities across Canada which are nationally recognized and accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association.

Approximately 110 people graduate each year with a PhD in Clinical Psychology from these institutions. In Saskatchewan, there have been 5 graduates per year from the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) in recent years. According to officials at the U of S, there are typically 50 interested applicants to the program each year. On a national basis, the overall number of applicants to the Psychologist PhD in Clinical Psychology has been declining.

The U of S stated that the current shortage of Psychologists PhD level, will only worsen in the future. There is a large number of retirements forecasted in the next 5 to 10 years within the profession. A growing number of Psychologists are choosing to work in private practice and/or consulting business because it is more lucrative, there are more professional choices, and, more flexibility in working arrangements.

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

Ph.D. Psychologist – Table 1

Regional Health Authorities	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of Nov 1, 2002)		Number of Vacant Budgeted Positions (As of Nov 1, 2002)		% Vacancy	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Regina Qu'Appelle #4	13		10		77%	
Saskatoon #6	22	6	6		27%	
Prairie North #10	6		1		16.6%	
Sun Country #1	1					
Sunrise #5	2		2		100%	
Prince Albert Parkland #9	5					
TOTAL	49	6	19		38.8%	0%

ANALYSIS

The MSRC discussed the Labour Market Criteria as guided by the Provincial 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).*

Three of the 6 reporting Regional Health Authorities (RHA), have indicated that they are currently experiencing significant delivery problems. In particular, the large urban centres are not able to provide specialized services such as forensic and neuropsychology. Backlogs, waiting lists and client frustration are common concerns directly attributed to the shortage of Ph.D.

Psychologists Referrals to the private sector will cost approximately 3 times the internal RHA rate. There are also increased costs because of the lost opportunity for early intervention.

Due to chronic staff shortages, services in some areas are no longer provided and wait lists are no longer being maintained. As a consequence, this employer has received letters of concern from Social Services and other institutions regarding these gaps in services.

Employers who are fully staffed state that when vacancies do exist, specialized caseloads go unserved and/or long wait lists are incurred.

Employers have stated that Masters level Psychologists cannot provide the full range of service required and in some cases if the Masters are utilized they must be supervised by Ph.D Psychologists.

Employers have tried a number of creative solutions to ensure that service is delivered as effectively as possible. These are described as follows:

- Several employers have hired Social Workers to alleviate some gaps in service to the extent of their scope of practice.
- A larger urban employer developed a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Psychologists. Some of their efforts include: gaining funding for Clinical Health Psychology Pre-Doctoral Internships; and, developing a Post-Doctoral Internship for Forensic Psychology as means to attract potential Psychologists.
- One employer provides a flexible arrangement where 2 Psychologists job share 1 position and leaves of absence are also granted to employees who wish to take specialty training.
- Other initiatives include considering requests for flex hours, and attempting to accommodate professional interests such as teaching.
- To assist with the workload, employers have hired Psychometricians.

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 provincial vacancy rate for Psychologists Ph.D level is 38.8% for permanent full-time positions and 0% for part-time vacancies.

One large urban employer has had 8 full time Psychologists Ph.D. leave in the past 3 years. Of the 8, 3 have been retirements, 1 long-term disability, 1 spouse relocation, 1 to Alberta. Other employers report long standing vacancies of at least 1 year or, the budgeted positions have been converted to other disciplines rather than continually attempting to hire. Reported out of province destinations include Edmonton (2), Winnipeg and Nova Scotia.

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 employers have reported a variety of situations resulting in turnover:

- Turnover rates are difficult to establish as in some cases vacancies have existed for longer than 3 years.
- One employer states that Psychologists move to private practice for more flexibility and higher pay.

- Employers report that signing and retention bonuses are paid by the Federal Government in western Canada accordingly: \$12,000 for Ph.D's and \$6,000 for M.A.'s.
- Employers report that Psychologists tend to leave for larger urban centres (such as Edmonton).
- Some employees relocate because of spouses being transferred and a desire to return to their home province.
- Many full time staff have reduced their hours of work in order to work in private clinics which employers are accommodating.

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).*

Many Psychologists are attracted to larger centres where they can engage in specialty practice. Some employers have hired candidates who are currently enrolled within the Masters Program and hope they will retain the candidates once they become fully qualified as Ph.D. level Psychologists.

Some Districts have offered financial incentives such as relocation expenses of up to \$3,000 and one employer reports that they provide a recruitment bonus.

Other recruitment activities include extensive advertising in professional journals, national websites, as well as initiating and maintaining contacts and liaisons with universities across Canada.

The Psychologist profession has been recognized by the Saskatchewan Health Department as a difficult to recruit position. Various options are being considered by Health in addressing recruiting issues. As such, one employer has developed and submitted a proposal to Saskatchewan Health to expand Pre-Doctoral Internships in rural Saskatchewan.

A large urban employer has moved their clinical focus to the Ph.D. level, thus the M.A. level graduating from the University of Regina has no/limited clinical training and are therefore not viable candidates for employment. The situation is further compounded by the fact that this employer currently employs no Psychologists at the Ph.D. level therefore, they cannot take on Ph.D. students for practicums or internships

One employer was successful in contacting PhD Psychologists who were trained at the University of Saskatchewan and had moved elsewhere to complete their one year pre-doctoral internships. One of these candidates was recruited in 2001/2002.

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).*

Some employers reported losing employees to the private sector where the income potential is higher. One employer reported that some clinics offer between \$100 - \$150 per clinical hour. Also, the wage rates for health employers in Alberta are higher. The Federal Government offers

signing bonuses of \$12,000 to Ph.D. level Psychologists. Within the Saskatchewan education sector, wage rates are higher than health care employer wage rates.

One employer reported that many Psychologists are not willing to wait for wages to “catch up” in Saskatchewan.

One employer reported that First Nations employers pay higher rates of pay.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

1. A national shortage of Ph.D. Psychologists currently exists. Although many employers have attempted to utilize creative means for delivery of service i.e. Masters prepared Psychologists, Psychometricians and Social Workers, clients still require the expertise of a Ph.D. Psychologist because of their clinical expertise.
2. Due to the low number of graduates each year, it is becoming increasingly difficult for employers to recruit Psychologists Ph.D.
3. Employers are experiencing significant service delivery problems.
4. The recent HSAS negotiations have resulted in a cumulative increase of 19.18 per cent in wage rates during the term of the agreement for Ph.D. Psychologists.

Having reviewed the information submitted and considering all the labour market criteria defined by the market supplement framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends:

1. A temporary market supplement for the Psychologist Ph.D. level classification be implemented.
2. An increase in the number of training seats available for Ph.D level Psychologists in Saskatchewan.

APPENDIX A

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Psychologist Ph.D.

Employer Respondents

1. Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority #4
2. Saskatoon Regional Health Authority #6
3. Prairie North RHA #10
4. Sun Country RHA #1
5. Sunrise RHA #5
6. Prince Albert Parkland RHA #9