

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Physical 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 Physical 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 Physical Therapist classification.

There were eleven health regions and one affiliate that reported to this analysis on Physical Therapists. Physical Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

### Role of a Physical Therapist:

*Physical Therapists (PT's) work collaboratively to enhance clients/patients abilities within environments and communities in which they live and work. They provide preventative, diagnostic and therapeutic services aimed at maximizing function and helping people achieve their highest quality of life through physical movement. Also, individualized treatment of an injury or disability based on scientific knowledge, a thorough assessment of the condition, environmental factors and lifestyle is provided.*

*The major areas of client/patient programs that are supported by physical therapists may include neurological, musculo-skeletal and cardio-respiratory. Physical Therapists assess and treat patients in a number of inpatient and outpatient settings. There are both generalist skills required as well as highly specialized skills dependent upon the setting and the patient group.*

### Qualifications:

*Physical Therapists require a five years of study for a university degree in Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy (B.Sc.P.T.): two pre-Physical Therapy years followed by three years in the School of Physical Therapy (University of Saskatchewan).*

*The University of Saskatchewan graduates thirty Physical Therapists per year and has each year since 1986. However, the demand still exceeds the supply. The University has considered expanding the program. Other Physical Therapy programs in western Canada are located at the University of Manitoba, the University of Alberta, and the University of British Columbia.*

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

*According to the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (licensing body), there are approximately 579 Physical Therapists registered in Saskatchewan. Approximately 180 Physical Therapists work at 32 private clinics in the province and the remainder work in hospitals and rehabilitation centres and in the community.*

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

**Table 1- Physical Therapist – 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
Cypress	Senior – 5	Senior – 3	-	-	-	-
Five Hills	7	-	-	-	-	-
Heartland	4	-	1	-	25%	-
Keewatin Yatthe	1	-	-	-	-	-
Kelsey Trail	7	2	3	1	42.7%	50%
*Prairie North	8	-	3	-	37.5%	-
Prince Albert Parkland	12	1	2	-	16.6%	-
Regina Qu'Appelle	Senior – 21 Staff - 20	Senior – 17 Staff - 7	Senior – 2	Senior – 1	Senior – 9.5%	Senior – 5.8%
Santa Maria Nursing Home	-	1	-	-	-	-
**Saskatoon	Senior – 17 Research - 2 Staff – 37	Senior – 8 Staff – 31	Senior – 1 Staff – 2	-	Senior – 5.8% Staff – 5.4%	-
*Sun Country	Senior – 3 Staff – 2	Senior – 2	Senior – 2	-	Senior – 66.6%	-
Sunrise	Senior – 12	Senior – 1	Senior – 2	-	Senior – 16.6%	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>	Senior – 58 Research – 2 Staff – 98	Senior – 31 Staff – 41	Senior – 7 Staff – 11	Senior – 1 Staff – 1	Senior – 12.0% Staff – 11.2%	Senior – 3.2% Staff – 2.4%
	<b>Total: 158</b>	<b>Total: 72</b>	<b>Total: 18</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 11.3%</b>	<b>Total: 2.7%</b>

\*Both Prairie North and Sun Country each have 1 temporary position that is also currently vacant.

\*\*Saskatoon has chosen not to fill the vacancy in the FIT program (Senior full time vacancy) and Kinetic (Staff full time) programs at this time.

Note: For Prairie North, the 2002 position numbers included all Lloydminster (Alberta), Physical Therapist positions whereas in 2003, the numbers included only HSAS positions.

**Table 2 – Physical Therapist - Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002/2003)**

Physical 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)	164	80	39	9	24%	11%
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)	-6	-8	-21	-7	-12.7%	-8.3%

**\*Note: The data reported in the above chart may not include the same employers as the previous report.**

## 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).*

All reporting health regions and affiliates reported some service delivery issues. Specifically, four of twelve regions reported significant service delivery issues due to vacancies and the inability to recruit. Seven health regions reported that the workload in this area has increased over the past year. Several health regions reported that although vacancies have been filled, waiting lists remain an issue. Backlog of service is still an issue as vacancies have only been recently filled.

A total of ten health regions and one affiliate reported information to this review. Health regions have utilized a number of service delivery initiatives in an attempt to improve the overall service. Reported initiatives include: using different classifications to help alleviate the workload i.e. Physical Therapist Assistants (eight regions); transfer of patients to another facility or region (four regions); referrals to private clinics and/or contract out (nine regions); and using partnerships i.e. aboriginal partnership (one region).

Three regions reported that limited budget resources rather than inability to recruit has hindered their ability to deliver a preferred level of service.

**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 rates have improved since the implementation of the market supplement in October 2002 by 12.7% (full time positions). Four regions that reported vacancies state that the average length of recruiting time is six to twelve months. Many vacancies have been vacant for up to twelve months.

One region reports significant vacancy issues i.e. up to 37.5% of full time positions, and one region reports critical vacancy issues i.e. 42.7% of full time positions. Employers including affiliates, who reported to this review, may not have reported to the last review in 2002.

**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 – 29 terminations (twelve moved to other provinces; four to private clinics)

2001 – 21 terminations

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

Three regions report significant turnover issues i.e. turnover has typically been a concern for more than two years and has been higher than other occupational groups.

**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).*

Standard recruitment and retention initiatives were reported by regions and include advertising in newspapers and on the internet, and attendance at career fairs (ten regions).

More significant recruitment and retention initiatives that were reported include: offering a higher initial rate of pay than the first step (five regions); reclassifying Staff Physical Therapists to the Senior level (three regions); using signing bonuses i.e. \$2,000 to \$5,000; education bursaries i.e. typically \$1,000 (nine regions); paying relocation expenses i.e. \$2,000 to \$4,000 (eight regions); providing training/professional allowances (six regions); and, conducting off-shore recruiting (one region).

According to the University of Saskatchewan, Physical Therapy Program, approximately 70% of new graduates have remained in Saskatchewan this past year.

A number of health regions reported hiring Occupational Therapists (OT) where they were unable to fill vacant Physical Therapist positions, as there has been a greater supply of OTs over the past year. This is because there were two graduating OT classes in 2003 at the University of Alberta and hence double the number of available graduates. This is an anomaly that occurred only this year. OT's are unable to fulfill all service requirements of the Physical Therapy program.

Two regions report significant recruitment issues i.e. up to one year recruiting time to fill vacancies, nine regions report moderate recruitment issues i.e. typically 3 to 4 months of recruiting time and, one affiliate reports no issues.

**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 Physical Therapists over the past year with the implementation of a market supplement wage rate. However, regions reported Physical Therapists have resigned for work in other provinces (Alberta) and to private clinics. Confirmed data from private practices is unavailable, while in Alberta, bargaining for this classification is still in progress at the time of this report.

Prior to October 16, 2002, the wage rate (top step) for Physical Therapist Diploma position was \$24.346 per hour and \$25.274 (top step Degree). Effective October 16, 2002, this Physical Therapist

position wage rate increased to \$28.10 per hour (top step – 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:

- Although a number of vacancies have been filled since the last report, service delivery is still an issue because of a backlog of service.
- Vacancy rates have improved by 12.8% (full time positions) since the last Physical Therapist report by the Market Supplement Review Committee.
- When Physical Therapist vacancies have not been able to be filled, some employers have hired Occupational Therapists to provide service within their scope of practice.
- Regions report that the market supplement has had a positive impact on recruiting and retention although there has been less than one year to measure the effects.

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 Physical Therapist classification.

## **APPENDIX A**

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

#### **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. Santa Maria Nursing Home (affiliate)
10. Saskatoon
11. Sun Country
12. Sunrise