

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

**Speech Language Pathologist
(Masters and Senior levels)**

Final

November 26, 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/retention pressures.

A temporary 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 Speech Language Pathologists

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed documentation included in the request for consideration of a market supplement for Speech Language Pathologists.

This classification was reviewed by the MSRC in August 2002, and was recommended for a market supplement. As part of the bargaining process in September and October 2002, and the resulting economic and classification adjustments, the Speech Language Pathologist did not receive a market supplement. Nonetheless, the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) requested that a market supplement be implemented and the matter was sent to adjudication, where it was determined that the Speech Language Pathologists would not receive a market supplement.

A total of ten regions reported that they employ Speech Language Pathologists (SLP's) for the purpose of this report. HSAS also contributed information for this report.

Role of a Speech Language Pathologist:

Speech Language Pathologists provide their service to either pediatric and/or adult clients from acute care to the community.

Speech Language Pathologists diagnose communication disorders (comprehension and expression) and swallowing disorders. They plan and implement treatment in language, speech, voice and/or swallowing disorders. Speech Language Pathologists design and employ augmentative and alternative communication, and, consult regarding language stimulation, inclusion strategies and teaching adaptation for students with language impairments.

Speech Language Pathologists place special emphasis on pediatric and preschool clients in order to identify and correct impairments at early stages of development.

Qualifications:

There are six Canadian training programs. These are located at the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, McGill University and Dalhousie University. There is no training program in Saskatchewan, which becomes a disadvantage when hiring new grads. Typically, students complete their internships and practicums within the province they attend university, become familiar with the system and are offered positions at these locations. Currently, Saskatchewan does not purchase seats in any of these training programs. There is another school at Minot State University in North Dakota where a small number of Canadians graduate. In 2001, eight Canadians graduated.

Timing of hiring is crucial. The Canadian programs graduate students from May to August while, Minot State University graduates students in December. Saskatchewan employers may experience long vacancy periods if they do not hire these grads at these times. Also, both Alberta and Ontario have substantially increased the number of positions in recent years, which will make recruiting to Saskatchewan difficult, given the wage disparity.

In order to increase the pool of available candidates to hire from, some regions have offered to offset the cost of maintaining American certification to their SLP's. This also allows the regions to offer externships to Canadian citizens who are completing their schooling in the U.S.A. and may return to Saskatchewan to work.

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

Table 1 – Speech Language Pathologist (Budgeted and Vacant Positions)

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of October, 2003)		Number of Vacant Budgeted Positions (As of October, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Cypress	2	-	-	-	-	-
Five Hills	2	1	-	-	-	-
Heartland	1	-	-	-	-	-
Kelsey Trail	2	1	1	-	50%	-
Prairie North	5	-	2	-	40%	-
Prince Albert Parkland	3	1	1	1	33%	100%
Regina Qu'Appelle	12	1	-	-	-	-
*Saskatoon	21	6	-	-	-	-
Sun Country	3	-	3	-	-	-
Sunrise	2	1	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	53	11	7	1	13.2%	9.0%

*Saskatoon has 2 temporary SLP positions that are filled. Also, included in Saskatoon's full time count of 21 is 1 Senior level position.

Table 2 – Speech Language Pathologist – Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002/2003)

Speech Language Pathologist 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)	50	13	14	1	28%	7.7%
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)	13	2	7		14.8	1.3

Note: The data in Table 1 and Table 2 may be incomplete as not all the same employers may have reported data for both years.

ANALYSIS

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

Ten regions responded to this survey, four reported service issues, while six reported no issues.

Of the four regions reporting service issues, two regions reported minor service delivery issues while the other two regions reported either significant or critical issues. The significant and critical issues included: waiting lists of 18 months, and long standing vacancies for their SLP positions (2 positions have been vacant since 2001 and 1 vacant since 2002), using private SLP's, and using another region to provide their service.

One region with no reported service issues stated that they have added caseloads because a neighboring region refers their clients requiring SLP 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).*

The vacancy rate for SLP's is 13.2% for full time positions and 9% for part time positions. Compared to the review completed in August of 2002, the vacancy rate for full time positions has decreased by 14.8% while the vacancy rate for part time positions has increased by 1.3% (see Table 2).

Recently, Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan surveyed Speech Language Pathologist members. With an approximate 50% response rate, as well as additional information provided, information was gathered on 56.1 positions that respondents knew about, of which 14.1, or 25% are vacant.

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 is reported:

- 2003 – 5 resignations
- 2002 – 10 resignations
- 2001 – 13 resignations

The resignations above include reasons that may include retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, and others. Historically, the main competition for SLP's has been school boards in Saskatchewan, private practice and employment in Alberta.

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).*

Regions have utilized several recruitment and retention initiatives: advertising (8 regions), relocation assistance i.e. \$2,000 to \$5,000 (7 regions), career fairs (5 regions), hiring bonus i.e. \$1,000 to \$10,000 (4 regions), training allowance (5 regions), changing job responsibilities (4 regions), student practicums (2 regions), offering higher initial pay rate (1 region), and offering temporary accommodation (1 region). At least one region offers assistance to obtain and/or maintain American SLP certification as a recruitment and retention initiative.

There are no SLP training programs in Saskatchewan therefore it can be difficult to attract new graduates to move to Saskatchewan. Employers in other sectors or other provinces often pay out students who receive Saskatchewan Health bursaries. At present, Saskatchewan employers do not purchase seats at out of province institutions that offer the SLP program.

Saskatchewan Health currently offers bursaries to SLP students in the amount of \$7,000 each.

There are approximately fifteen SLP's who are engaged in private practice in Saskatchewan (as listed by the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists).

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).*

Speech Language Pathologist	Pay Rate (April, 2002)	Pay Rate (November, 2002)	% Increase
Bachelors level	\$23.235/hr	-	26.4% (to Masters)
Masters	\$26.630/hr	\$29.380/hr (\$58,973 annual)	10.3%
Senior	\$28.840/hr	\$31.730/hr (\$63,690 annual)	17.6%

The main competition for health regions is the school boards within Saskatchewan. The top wage rates amongst school boards vary from approximately \$62,000 to \$72,000 per year (Masters level).

According to the Saskatchewan Association of Speech Language Pathologists Audiologists fee schedule, the average hourly fee is \$45.00 per hour in office or, \$335 per day (there are lower rates for report writing, travel time, etc).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- There are no Speech Language Pathologist education programs in Saskatchewan, and there are no seats currently being purchased in other jurisdictions by Saskatchewan Health.
- Since the last MSRC review on this classification i.e. August 2002, there has been a 14.8% reduction in the vacancy rate.
- Seven of the reporting nine regions stated that they have no service delivery issues, or have minor service delivery issues.
- Two regions are experiencing the majority of provincial vacancies i.e. 5 of 7 full time vacancies.
- The wage rate for Speech Language Pathologists increased by 10.3% (Masters level) and 17.6% (Senior level) as a result of the last collective agreement i.e. April 2002 to November 2002.
- Bursaries are available to students in the SLP program from the Saskatchewan Health in the amount of \$7,000.
- Some regions have attempted to increase the pool of available SLP candidates by offering to off-set the cost of maintaining American certification and/or offering externships to Canadian citizens who are attending American Speech Language Pathologist schools.

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

- That a market supplement not be implemented at this time for the Speech Language Pathologist classification.
- That Saskatchewan Health investigates the possibility of purchasing seats at SLP programs in other jurisdictions.

APPENDIX A

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Speech Language Pathologist

Employer Respondents

Cypress
Five Hills
Heartland
Kelsey Trail
Prairie North
Prince Albert Parkland
Regina Qu'Appelle
Saskatoon
Sun Country
Sunrise