

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Infection Control Practitioner

Final Report

December 19, 2003

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 Infection Control Practitioner.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed documentation received from health regions as part of its annual review on Infection Control Practitioners. The Market Supplement Review Committee released the initial market supplement report December 19, 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 Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) Letters of Understanding. This is the first annual review for the Infection Control Practitioner classification.

There were four health regions that responded to this analysis on Infection Control Practitioners.

Infection Control Practitioners are members of HSAS.

Role of an Infection Control Practitioner:

Infection Control Practitioners are responsible for effective coordination of the Infection Control program to ensure a high quality of patient care. Specifics of the job include; developing and maintaining a system of identifying and reporting infections, investigating outbreaks of infections, and, developing and maintaining infection control policies and procedures by consulting with various disciplines and departments on infection control matters.

Qualifications:

An Infection Control Practitioner must be a Registered Nurse possessing a BScN degree, or have possession of another Bachelor's Degree in a related health discipline. Employees must have training and certification in hospital infection control.

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

Table 1- Infection Control Practitioner - Budgeted and Vacant Positions

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of October, 2003)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of October, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Five Hills	-	1	-	-	-	-
Prairie North	1	-	-	-	-	-
Regina Qu'Appelle	3	1	-	-	-	-
Saskatoon	4	2	1	-	25%	-
TOTAL:	8	4	1	0	12.5%	-

Table 2 – Infection Control Practitioner - Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002/2003)

Infection Control Practitioner	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)	6	5	0	1	0	20%
COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)	+2	-1	+1	-1	+12.5%	-20%

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).*

Four health regions reported to this analysis. One region reported moderate service issues (due to an existing vacancy) while the other three regions reported no service delivery issues.

Last year's analysis revealed that Regina Qu'Appelle was experiencing significant service issues because of retention problems. Currently, the region is not experiencing service issues because positions have been filled since the fall of 2002. However, both Regina Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon Regions have reported that the on-going threat of losing Infection Control Practitioners is constant because of the high demand for the profession across Canada due in part to issues such as SARS. These regions have also stated that there is no alternate method of service delivery for this function.

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).*

At the time of this analysis, there was one full time vacancy. This represents one more full time vacancy since the last review.

Saskatoon Health Region reported an increase in the number of Infection Control Practitioner positions in the past 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 resignations, the following is reported:

2003 – 1 resignations

2002 – 5 resignations

2001 – 2 resignations

The resignations above include reasons such as retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, and others.

The turnover rate at Regina Qu'Appelle is significantly less from last year, when they experienced a complete turnover of Infection Control Practitioners in one 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).*

Health regions have reported that it is virtually impossible to hire a qualified Infection Control Practitioner. There is a limited supply of qualified professionals in this profession. Typically, employers will hire an unqualified candidate and spend the necessary resources to train the individual in order for them to become qualified. Historically, employers have hired Registered Nurses and provided the necessary training however consideration is now being given to technologists with a strong background in microbiology. There is one school in Canada i.e. Centennial College in Toronto, that provides the required training and certification examination. Candidates must work in the field for at least six months to one year before attending the two-week course. At the end of the two-week course, the candidate must write and pass the exam. After successful completion of the course and two years on the job, the Infection Control Practitioner must write and pass a certification exam in order to be certified. The incumbents must write and pass this exam every five years to remain certified.

Recruitment and retention initiatives that have been initiated by employers include offering a higher initial pay rate (one region), increasing the number of FTE's (one region), providing training and certification allowances (two regions), advertising (one region), and offering relocation allowance (one region).

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 Infection Control Practitioner classification first received a market supplement effective December 2002, then again effective April 2003. The market supplement was not implemented until July 2003 due to bargaining and the resulting adjudication process with HSAS.

The adjudication process determined that the SUN level B pay rates be implemented.

The initial MSRC report on Infection Control Practitioners (December 2002) identified the market comparator as Registered Nurses i.e. Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), level B. The initial market supplement pay rate as of December 19 2003 was \$29.47 (top rate). This represented a 6.5% increase from the classification adjustment of November 3 2002, which was negotiated in the fall of 2002.

The Infection Control Practitioner then received a second market supplement adjustment effective April 1 2003 to \$30.36 (top step) in order to maintain competitive with the SUN level B nurse. This represented an 8.8% increase from the classification adjustment of November 3 2002 increase.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- Service delivery in both Regina Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon Health Regions has improved since the last market supplement review.
- Currently there is one full time Infection Control Practitioner vacancy which represents an increase of one position since the last review.
- Qualified Infection Control Practitioners are reported to be in short supply in Canada. Historically, employers have hired Registered Nurses and have provided the necessary funding provisions for training allowances and time off in order for them to become certified.
- Turnover at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has improved from the last review in 2002 when they experienced a complete turnover of incumbents.
- The improved market supplement pay rates were implemented in July 2002.

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 Infection Control Practitioner classification and to continue to follow the SUN level B rates of pay until the next annual review.

APPENDIX A

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Infection Control Practitioner

Employer Respondents

1. Five Hills
2. Prairie North
3. Regina Qu'Appelle
4. Saskatoon