

PROVINCIAL MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

**SENIOR PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR**

Final Report

August 6, 2002

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Provincial 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 Public Health Inspectors.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed documentation included in the request for consideration of a market supplement for Public Health Inspectors.

Eleven (11) employers (see Appendix B) were identified as employing Public Health Inspectors, all of which contributed information to the analysis. The Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan also contributed information for the purpose of this report.

Role of Public Health Inspectors:

Definition from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors: *The Public Health Inspector/Environmental Health Officer (PHI/EHO) is a vital member of the public health team and delivery system. The role of the PHI/EHO includes preventing disease, promoting health and improving the environment through the use of education, consultation, inspection and monitoring techniques and, if necessary, by the enforcement of health legislation. The scope of interest covers food hygiene, insect and rodent control, communicable disease investigation, public accommodation, community care facilities, public recreational facilities, water supply and waste disposal systems, occupational health and safety and environmental pollution - air, water, soil and noise.*

The following institutions provide programs of instruction which are currently approved by the Board of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI):

- Ryerson Polytechnical University, Toronto, ON
- British Columbia Institute of Technology, Burnaby, BC
- Concordia University College of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
- University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, NS
- Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Regina Saskatchewan

Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following Table for **Field - Public Health Inspectors** and is as of May 27, 2002

Table 1

Districts	Number of Budgeted PHI Positions		Number of Permanent Vacant Positions		Temporary Vacancies	% Vacancy (Permanent)	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T		F/T	P/T
Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek	3	0	0	0	0		
Prince Albert	4	0	0	0	0		
Regina	11	0	0	0	3		
South Central	3	0	0	0	0		
Battlefords	4	0	*0	0	0		
North Central	3	0	0	0	0		
Saskatoon	12	1	*0	0	0		
Midwest	3	0	0	0	0		
Swift Current	4	0	1	0	0	25%	
Mamawetan Churchill River	4	0	1	0	0	25%	
East Central	4	0	**0	0	1		
TOTAL	55	1	2	0	4	3.6%	

*Note: One trainee at both the Battlefords and Saskatoon Districts are not yet accredited however, expect to be this fall.

**Note: One recent hire will begin work in June.

Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following Table for **Senior Public Health Inspectors** and is as of May 27, 2002

Table 2

Districts	Number of Budgeted Senior PHI Positions		Number of Permanent Vacant Positions		Temporary Vacancies	% Vacancy (Permanent)	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T		F/T	P/T
Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek	1	0	0	0	0		
Prince Albert	1	0	0	0	0		
Regina	1	0	0	0	0		
South Central	1	0	0	0	0		
Battlefords	1	0	0	0	0		
North Central	1	0	0	0	0		
Saskatoon	2	0	0	0	0		
Midwest	1	0	0	0	0		
Swift Current	1	0	0	0	0		
Mamawetan Churchill River	0	0	0	0	0		
East Central	1	0	0	0	0		
TOTAL	11	0	0	0	0		

The competition for Public Health Inspectors (PHI's) includes the federal government, all provincial governments (health, water and resource management departments), municipal governments, tribal councils, and the private sector.

There are 55 full-time and 1 part-time (.5 FTE) field Public Health Inspector positions reported in Saskatchewan Health Districts. At the time of the survey and as noted in Appendix A – Table 1, there were 7 permanent full-time vacancies and 0 permanent part-time vacancies for a 12.7% vacancy rate for permanent positions. 5 temporary full-time vacancies are reported. Also, there are 11 Senior Public Health Inspector positions with 0 vacancies reported (See Table 2).

Over the past several weeks, members of the PHI profession have actively lobbied for more resources and higher wage rates, and the media has given substantial attention to the role of the Public Health Inspector given the unfortunate circumstances of Walkerton and North Battleford. Recent announcement by the provincial government in its introduction of the new *Tobacco Control Act* has also resulted in increased wage expectations by members of the PHI profession.

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.)*

Eight of 11 employers who initially reported in the March 1, 2002 survey, did not indicate that they currently have service delivery problems. Some employers indicated that while they currently have a full complement of PHI staff, all service needs could not be met at current levels of budgeted FTE's. However, employers did state that should vacancies arise that this could have significant impact to service and to public risk, and that increased liability could arise.

Service impacts as reported by the other 3 employers include:

- **Reduced “field” services.** Service delays occur (building inspections) and only high priority services are provided. The approach is to be “reactive” to situations rather than a focus on prevention. One employer indicates that 50% of the mandated services are currently not completed (such as inspections of public water systems and addressing diarrhea outbreaks).
- **No expansion of current level of service.** Employers indicated that other emerging issues such as bio-terrorism and/or the implementation of the provincial government's new *Tobacco Control Act* could not be addressed with current staffing and resource levels.

Significant orientation is required for new recruits. One employer indicated that a new recruit requires 1 year of orientation time to be fully competent on his/her own.

Overtime payments to provide required PHI services was documented as an issue by 2 employers.

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.)*

4 of the 11 employers reported that they had no vacancies at the time of completing the input documents. Concern was expressed that finding Public Health Inspectors to provide either relief or temporary coverage was difficult and that they were also concerned about their ability to attract candidates should a vacancy arise.

Table 1 indicates that there are 55 full-time and 1 part-time (.5 FTE) field Public Health Inspector positions reported in Saskatchewan Health Districts. At the time of the survey (March 1, 2002) and as noted in Appendix A, there were 7 permanent full-time vacancies and 0 permanent part-time vacancies for a 12.7% vacancy rate for permanent positions. 5 temporary full-time vacancies were also reported.

There are 11 Senior Public Health Inspector positions with 0 vacancies (Appendix A – Table 2).

New data collected as of May 27, 2002 shows that the vacancy rate has changed since March, 2002 (see page 3). Table 1 indicates that there are now 2 permanent full-time vacancies and 0 permanent part-time vacancies for a 3.6% vacancy rate. There are now 4 temporary full-time vacancies. The data for Senior Public Health Inspector positions remains the same as reported above.

It was noted by two employers that the vacancy rate for temporary positions varies on a regular basis.

Two employers have hired retirees, and as well, one of these employers has hired temporary PHI staff who have taken leave (i.e. vacation) from their regular PHI jobs with other employers.

Collectively, the 3 employers reporting vacancies have a total of 2 full-time permanent and 4 full-time temporary vacancies.

Reasons for vacancies are listed in the Turnover Rates Section of this report.

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.)*

Nine of the 11 reporting employers have four (or fewer) field PHI's and one senior PHI in their employ. Only 2 employers have more than 4 field PHI's and 1 senior PHI.

Four of 11 employers indicated that there is no turnover at the time of submitting their input.

No employers reported turnover rates for senior PHI positions.

Seven employers report that turnover is a current concern. Several reasons for turnover were listed by employers and included: wage rates (mostly as compared to Alberta); excessive workload; preference for and relocation to an urban center; feeling that the incumbent is not able to do a good job; and, retirement. One employer has 4 temporary positions that are vacant.

Three employers specifically indicated that PHI's have "threatened" to resign.

Three employers report turnover to be 24%, 50% and 30% (historical) per year respectively and employers indicate that a vacancy can exist from 3 months to 1.5 years.

Based on employers' input, potential trends to vacancies include:

- Movement of PHI incumbents to urban based positions.
- New grads attracted to non-health district positions.
- The demand for PHI trained personnel exceeds the supply. This gap appears to be increasing.

WORKPLACE INITIATIVES: *(Employers were asked to identify workplace initiatives undertaken to address staff shortages, i.e., workload, job redesign, local joint union/management processes, health & safety, etc.)*

One employer did not report implementing workplace initiatives.

Six employers reported that they prioritized work based on risk to the public.

Five employers indicate that they utilize students (for the summer season), trainees and/or uncertified PHI to complete project work. This practice is more prevalent in rural areas.

Five employers indicate that they use financial incentives to attract and retain Public Health Inspectors. These incentives include:

- moving expenses (2 employers - \$2,000 maximum)
- bursary (2 employers - \$2,000 maximum)
- progressing incumbents through the pay range more aggressively than the provisions of the collective agreement (3 employers)
- signing bonus (range \$3,000-\$6,000) (2 employers)
- market supplements where field PHI earns the equivalent of a Senior PHI and the Senior's wage rate is adjusted upward to maintain a proper rate of pay (1 employer)
- employer paid housing (1 northern employer)
- other incentives such as paying professional fees, and permitting use of personal vehicle for business use.

Other non-financial incentives include allowing flexible hours of work, provision of training and development opportunities, and encouragement of "specialization projects". One other employer is changing the location of the "home base" to attract applicants (including potential commuters from urban centers) to preferred locations.

Two employers report that as a retention strategy they upgrade equipment to keep in line with technical advances, and one of these provides for a local lab facility in which a PHI may do their own basic analysis.

One employer reported that they have contracted-out to a journeyman plumber to conduct plumbing inspections.

Employers who have rural-based positions are considering the advantages (i.e. retention) and disadvantages (possible decline in service and increased cost) of centralizing PHI positions into urban centers.

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.)*

There are two schools in western Canada and two schools in eastern Canada who offer the education program for PHI's. Historically, there were no schools in Saskatchewan offering a PHI program until recently. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) has developed an "environment and health" program which has just recently been accredited by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI).

Seven employers report that they advertise provincially and nationally in newspapers, use Internet advertising eg) CIPHI website, attend recruitment fairs and advertise at PHI schools.

Five employers stated that they have made offers, or plan to make offers, to PHI trainees in the hope of hiring and retaining them following their respective certification. Only one employer has indicated that it can no longer provide training for students due to a shortage of PHI's.

One employer reported that 3 candidates have turned down their offers of employment because of salary and other applicants have turned an offer down because of location. Statements made regarding salaries are provided later in this report.

Employers reported that they have been continuously recruiting to fill their respective PHI vacancies. Examples provided by employers indicates that it has taken them 3 months, 8 months, 10 months, 17 months and 18 months respectively to successfully recruit replacements.

Employers comment that their lack of success is due to:

- Higher salaries offered by other employers including Alberta, the federal government, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, First Nations employers and other provincial government departments
- The current supply of graduates of PHI programs in Canada does not meet current demands for PHI's. One employer states that a shortage will continue for the next 10-15 years
- The perception/reputation of Saskatchewan, eg) rural de-population, and comparison to other provincial economies
- Cost of housing

One employer (who has no vacancies currently) reports a concern that if a vacancy occurred that they could not be able to fill the vacancy due to salary.

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.)*

Eleven health care employers indicate that employers within Saskatchewan, and other employers in western Canada (especially Alberta) are the largest competitors regarding wages. Wages in those jurisdictions exceed those paid to PHI working in health care in Saskatchewan.

- The provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario offer higher wages. Alberta is considered as the key competitor for PHI's.
- Nationally, the federal Government, which employs PHI's in every province (i.e. Canada Food Inspection Agency), offers higher wages.

- First Nations/tribal council employers such as the Northern Inter-tribal Health Authority, offer higher wages.
- Within Saskatchewan, government and private sector employers offer higher wages for the same or similar qualification(s). These include Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) and Saskatchewan Labour (OH&S Inspector).
- SaskWater recruits individuals with qualifications that include a Water Technology Certificate. As such, wage rate comparisons to PHI positions requiring a degree are not considered relevant.

One employer currently provides a market supplement to field PHI equivalent to the rate of a Senior PHI. The wage rate of the Senior PHI is then adjusted upwards to achieve the proper wage compression.

One employer states that added competition is being put on the value of the work that PHI's perform due to national incidents at Walkerton, Ontario and North Battleford.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES: *(The magnitude and timing of any market adjustment will be subject to the availability of existing resources. Please make any comments as to the impact of addressing this staff shortage if resources are not available in the short term.)*

Two employers did not provide a response to this section

One employer indicates that they plan to hire more summer students for projects and will provide practicum opportunities for PHI trainees.

Most employers state concern of the consequences not being able to offer a competitive wage – overtime will be mandated, services will be reduced, legislated requirements will not be met, contracting services may become necessary.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is aware of the sensitivity of market supplements for Public Health Inspectors. In particular the Committee has been made aware of the organized and comprehensive public relations efforts, contact with Government and broad media attention that PHI members have generated. Given the foregoing, the committee felt that follow up data collection would be appropriate to ensure validation of the committee's recommendation which was based on February, early March, 2002 submissions.

As such, vacancy rate data was collected as of May 27, 2002. This survey data indicates that past vacancies have been recruited to and that the vacancy rate for field PHI is a reported 3.6% (See page 3 – Table 1) as compared to a reported 12.7% as of March 1, 2002 (See Appendix A). The vacancy rate for senior PHI positions remained the same.

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

1. Both field PHI and senior PHI perform the work of Public Health Inspection.

2. Eight of eleven (or 72%) employers did not indicate that they have service delivery issues. If those employers noted any issues, they existed despite having a full complement of staff. The remaining 3 employers indicated that they have either reduced services or, have not expanded current levels of service.
3. The information as of May 27, 2002 (Table 1 - page 3) indicates vacancy rates for full-time permanent PHI positions are 3.6 % for field PHI and 0% for senior PHI. Cumulatively, the vacancy rate for permanent positions is calculated at 3.0% including both field and senior PHI's.
4. Employers have used a variety of recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure services are provided. Initiatives include the prioritization of work responsibilities, contracting out, utilizing PHI trainees and providing various forms of financial incentives.

Having reviewed the employer and union (Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan) information and considering all the labour market criteria defined by the market supplement framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends:

1. A temporary market supplement not be implemented for Public Health Inspector classification at this time.
2. SAHO Labour Relations assess the current practices with respect to the classification, and work to standardize those practices.

APPENDIX A

Table 1- Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following Table for **Field - Public Health Inspectors** and is as of March 1, 2002

Districts	Number of Budgeted PHI Positions		Number of Permanent Vacant Positions		Temporary Vacancies	% Vacancy (Permanent Positions only)	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T		F/T	P/T
Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek	3	0	1	0	0	33%	
Prince Albert	4	0	0	0	0		
Regina	11	0	0	0	4		
South Central	3	0	0	0	0		
Battlefords	4	0	2	0	0	50%	
North Central	3	0	0	0	0		
Saskatoon	12	1	1	0	0	8.3%	
Midwest	3	0	0	0	0		
Swift Current	4	0	1	0	0	25%	
Mamawetan Churchill River	4	0	1	0	0	25%	
East Central	4	0	1	0	1	25%	
TOTAL	55	1	7	0	5	12.7%	

APPENDIX A (con't)

Table 2 - Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following Table for **Senior Public Health Inspectors** and is as of March 1, 2002

Districts	Number of Budgeted Senior PHI Positions		Number of Permanent Vacant Positions		Temporary Vacancies	% Vacancy (Permanent Positions only)	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T		F/T	P/T
Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek	1	0	0	0	0		
Prince Albert	1	0	0	0	0		
Regina	1	0	0	0	0		
South Central	1	0	0	0	0		
Battlefords	1	0	0	0	0		
North Central	1	0	0	0	0		
Saskatoon	2	0	0	0	0		
Midwest	1	0	0	0	0		
Swift Current	1	0	0	0	0		
Mamawetan Churchill River	0	0	0	0	0		
East Central	1	0	0	0	0		
TOTAL	11	0	0	0	0		

Market Supplement Consideration Request – Public Health Inspectors

Employer Respondents (11)

Swift Current Health District
Battlefords Health District
South Central Health District
North Central Health District
Prince Albert Health District
East Central Health District
Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek Health District
Regina Health District
MidWest Health District
Saskatoon District Health
Mamawetan Churchill River Health District