

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Pharmacist

FINAL

March 1, 2020
(Review October 9, 2020)

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Saskatchewan Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) 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 market supplement to attract and/or retain qualified employees. The program is designed to ensure that market supplements respond to valid labour market criteria, to address recruitment and/or retention pressures.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed documentation submitted in the review process regarding the market supplement for the Pharmacist classification. The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee on August 6, 2002, and implemented on October 16, 2002. The first annual review was conducted by the MSRC in October 2003. An additional market supplement amount was implemented in April 2007.

Because of the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic the actual review of this occupation was delayed until October 9, 2020 when it was formally reviewed by the Committee.

Pharmacists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

Role of a Pharmacist:

Pharmacists are employed in hospitals and related health institutions. Their role is critical to ensuring that patients in hospitals, frequently on complicated and potentially toxic medications, receive safe and effective therapy. This practice area offers opportunities to interact with other health professionals; the potential for significant intervention in patient care; and the chance to be involved in research and education. Pharmacists who work in hospitals are effective members of the health care team, and are actively involved in upgrading their education and knowledge base. Many of them specialize in fields such as oncology, infectious disease, psychiatry, etc.

Qualifications:

In order to be licensed as a Pharmacist in Canada, candidates must obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from a Canadian university, and complete a national board examination through the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada. One year pre-pharmacy is required prior to the Degree program. Pharmacy students must also have obtained practical experience through an apprenticeship/internship program.

According to the Canadian Pharmacists Association, there are ten universities in Canada that offer a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy, including the University of Saskatchewan.

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

Table 1 – Pharmacists – Budgeted and Vacant Positions (October 2020)

Number of Budgeted Positions 2020		Number of Vacant Positions 2020		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full- Time	Part- Time
178	51	6	5	3.37%	9.80%

ANALYSIS

The MSRC discussed the Labour Market Criteria as required by the Market Supplement Program framework.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS: *(Respondents 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.)*

A total of ten respondents provided data to this annual market supplement review. Six reported experiencing no service delivery issues with one reporting minor issues related to recruitment and retention issues.

The remaining three respondents reported experiencing moderate issues related to a number of leaves of absence, and difficulty recruiting to part-time and casual relief positions. As a result, some routine duties have been impacted.

VACANCY RATE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents 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.)*

Respondents reported four full-time and five part-time vacancies, for vacancy rates of 3.37% and 9.80% respectively.

It was noted that recruitment and retention efforts may be more substantial in some areas of the province, as the training and orientation period for pharmacists in this environment can be considered somewhat challenging. As well, it is often more difficult to recruit to temporary, casual and some part-time vacancies. It is also harder to recruit pharmacists with hospital experience or training which is ideal in hospital environments.

TURNOVER RATES: *(Respondents 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 locations that track and report turnover, the following is reported:

- Last 12 months = 18 (4 other employment; 3 other reasons; 3 retirements; 1 dismissal; 7 not specified).
- Previous 12 months = 18.5 (1 other employment; 1 change of occupation; 7 other reasons; 1.5 family/domestic reasons; 2 retirements; 6 not specified).

RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents 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.)*

The following recruitment and retention initiatives were reported:

- offering higher rates of pay for new hires than the first step of pay range;
- advertising online and in trade journals;
- offering practicums;
- providing recruitment and retention allowances;
- providing relocation assistance;
- attending career fairs; and
- providing training allowances.

Recruiting times ranged from one month up to one year.

SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS: *(Respondents 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 MSRC reports the following market conditions for Pharmacists (Degree):

In comparison with Western Canada public health care providers the SHA leads British Columbia (which pays 1.27% less) but lags Alberta (paying 13% higher) and Manitoba (paying 2.63% higher).

- Saskatchewan Health Authority – maximum \$53.742/hour; five steps. Effective April 1, 2020.
- Alberta Health Services – maximum \$60.290; nine steps. Effective April 1, 2019.
- British Columbia Regional Health Authorities – maximum \$53.06/hour; six steps. Effective April 1, 2020.
- Manitoba Regional Health Authorities – maximum \$55.516/hour; eight steps. Effective April 1, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- Most respondents reported little to no service delivery issues related to recruitment and retention.
- This year's annual review reported six full-time and five part-time vacancies. Smaller respondents where it would be expected to see more difficulty in recruitment were in the majority of cases reporting no or few vacancies.
- External turnover was also reported to be small with no evidence that the SHA is losing pharmacists to other jurisdictions or to the private sector.
- Due to the historical competitiveness of this occupation, some locations have maintained on-going recruitment efforts for the Pharmacist classification.

Having reviewed the information as provided by respondents, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends **maintaining** the current market supplement for the Pharmacist classification.