

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Dental Therapist

FINAL

**Report Due Date: October 22, 2023
(Annual Review)**

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan healthcare 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.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed updated documentation submitted in the annual review process regarding the market supplement for the Dental Therapist classification. Dental Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS). The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee on August 6, 2002 and implemented on October 16, 2002. The Dental Therapist classification has had annual reviews since 2003.

HSAS and SAHO are parties to a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with a term of April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2024. The Provincial Market Supplement Program language can be found in Letter of Understanding #12 – Provincial Market Supplement Program and Letter of Understanding #13 – Determination of Market Supplement Rates, on pages 168 and 170 of the SAHO/HSAS CBA.

Role of a Dental Therapist:

Dental Therapists are primary oral health care professionals who are trained to perform basic clinical dental treatment and preventive services within a variety of practice settings. As members of a multidisciplinary team, dental therapists provide restorative dental treatment services, disease prevention and oral health promotion programs to maintain and improve health. Dental therapists also advocate for the needs of clients, assist them in accessing care and refer them to other health professionals for services beyond the scope of the dental therapist's practice.

Qualifications:

Diploma in Dental Therapy.

ANALYSIS

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

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.)*

There were four geographical areas that reported to the market supplement survey which included Saskatoon and the 3 former Northern Regional Health Authorities.

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

Table 1 - Dental Therapist – Budgeted and Vacant Positions (as of November 2023)

Number of Budgeted Positions		Number of Vacant Positions		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
12	2	4	0	33%	0%

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.)*

Service delivery for former Keewatin, Saskatoon and Mamawetan is characterized as being significant indicating that the department can only provide a basic level of service and that there may be significant gaps in service and that problems persist. In the former Kelsey Trail area of the province the service delivery is characterized as critical in that the department is not able to provide service. Alternate options used are referrals to urban centers for treatment, contracted out services or referred to the private sector. Waitlists continue to grow. Overtime is used where possible, but this cannot support the existing need. In addition, different classifications are used and patients have been referred to the private sector. The use of partnerships has been a strategy utilized in the past but that practice has been discontinued.

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 ratio {loss of employees to other competitor employers} to the existing staff complement {budgeted positions} in the given occupation.)*

Turnover is categorized as being significant with the following reported:

- Last 12 months – 2 other employment, wage related.
- Previous 12 months – 2, other employment wage related, 1 family/domestic, 1 resignation.

RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents were asked to provide information such as length of recruitment time; 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.)*

Recruitment in all four geographic areas is categorized as being significant in that qualified graduates are in great demand by employers. Currently Saskatoon is experiencing significant difficulty recruiting to temporary positions. Retention bonuses are provided in addition to relocation assistance. The lack of access to educational training for a period of time has significantly impacted the ability to recruit to this profession and until new graduates are available, recruitment will continue to be difficult. Northern living allowance and special northern provisions are provided as per the CBA.

It is hoped that new Dental Therapy Program will enhance the employer's ability to access trained therapists in the not too distant future. This program is offered by the USask College of Dentistry in partnership with the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA), Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and Northlands College.

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 current market conditions for Dental Therapists:

Table 2 – Dental Therapist – Salary Market Conditions

Province	Job Title	Effective Date	Maximum Rate of Pay (April 1, 2023)
British Columbia	No Match	April 1, 2023	\$0.00
Alberta	Dental Hygienist	April 1, 2023	\$51.27
Saskatchewan	Dental Therapist - Diploma	April 1, 2023	\$36.920
Manitoba	No Match	April 1, 2023	\$0.000
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$44.095

Saskatchewan Rate (2023)	\$ 36.920
Western Canadian Average (2023)	\$ 44.095
Sask compared to Average (\$)	\$ (7.18)
Sask compared to Average (%)	83.73%

Notes: Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Considering the labour market criteria under the provincial framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee concludes:

- The vacancy rate for full time positions is 33% which is significant.
- While a new training program has been started, graduates will not be available for 1-2 years.
- Saskatchewan falls below the Western Canadian Average for this classification.
- Service delivery impacts are significant.

Having reviewed the respondents' information, and considering the labour market criteria defined by the market supplement framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends to **negotiate an increase** to the current market supplement for the Dental Therapist classification.