

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Dental Therapist

FINAL

**Report Due Date: October 22, 2024
(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 positions and vacancies is provided in the following table:

Table 1 - Dental Therapist – Positions including Senior (as of September 2024)

Number of Positions		Number of Vacant Positions		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
12	3	1	2	8.33%	66.67%

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 2 of the former Regions was characterized as significant indicating that the department can only provide a basic level of service, there may be significant gaps in service and service problems exist. Two of the former Regions indicated the issue was critical indicating that the department was not able to provide a basic level of service and that service problems persist.

In order to support service deliver, overtime hours are offered and at times, other classifications may be used.

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.)*

Trends noted for turnover included retirements and individuals due to wage disparity.

Turnover over the past twelve months where know is outlined below:

- Number of employees who retired from this classification – 1
- Number of employees who failed their probation/trial period – 0
- Number of employees who left the organization for reasons not wage related – 0
- Number of employees who left the organization for increased salary – 1

- Number of employees who left for family/domestic reasons – 1

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.)*

One former regional Health Authority characterized their recruitment areas as moderate meaning that new graduates and qualified professionals are difficult to recruit. Two of the former Regional Health Authorities categorized their recruitment efforts as being significant in that qualified graduates are in great demand by employers. Saskatoon identified their issues as being critical in that there are exhaustive recruiting measures being pursued. 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. Once students are graduating from the new dental therapy program, it is hoped recruitment to this classification will be improved. 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.

Additional recruitment efforts include the following:

- Attending conventions and creating awareness for opportunity.
- Posting of positions on Dental Therapy websites, SHA and Health Careers website.
- Supporting networking opportunities.
- Looking to recruit foreign trained dental therapists.
- Offering of financial recruitment incentives.
- Offering of relocation incentives.
- Offering of educational incentives.
- Northern incentives as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (HSAS).

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 Job Match		
Alberta	Dental Hygienist	April 1, 2023	\$51.27
Saskatchewan	Dental Therapist - Diploma	April 1, 2023	\$36.920
Manitoba	No Job Match		
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$44.095

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

Note: 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 FT is 8.33% and PT is 66.67%
- Recruitment efforts continue to be significant for this classification.
- Saskatchewan continues to be significantly below the Western Canadian Average for this classification.
- While a new training program has been started, graduates will not be available for 1-2 years.

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. It is also noted that the 2023 Market Supplement Report also recommended an increase to the current market supplement for the Dental Therapist classification however it does not appear that these negotiations have been completed. Given the obligation of the committee to do annual reviews, the committee undertook the 2024 review.