

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Dental Therapist

FINAL

**Report Due Date: October 22, 2025
(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 (the Committee) 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.

The Committee recommended an increase to the market supplement for the Dental Therapist classification in 2023. As negotiations had not been completed by the 2024 annual review, the Committee reaffirmed the continued need for the market supplement increase in its 2024 annual review. As of the writing of this report, negotiations between HSAS and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations Inc. (SAHO) for the 2023 recommended market supplement increase remains outstanding.

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 Committee 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.)*

Vacancies for the geographic areas which employed Dental Therapists were categorized as critical meaning that vacancies represent over 30% for extended periods. Vacancies are either unlikely to be filled or may be vacant for extended periods of time i.e. greater than 12 months.

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

Table 1: Dental Therapist – Positions including Senior (as of August 2025)

Number of Positions		Number of Vacant Positions		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
13	2	6	2	46.15%	100%

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 impacts for the North East area were categorized as significant meaning that the department only provides a basic level of service; there may be significant gaps in service; service problems persist and waiting lists are prevalent and growing.

The North West area of the province indicated their service provision issues were moderate in that the department provides a level of service some routine duties are not being performed and that quality of service is maintained but that service problems may linger as timelines to recruit or secure alternate arrangements are beyond expectations.

The Saskatoon area noted their service provision issues as being minor in that there is some impact to timing or quality or quantity of service.

Strategies to address service delivery issues include the following:

- Use of different classifications.
- Use of contract workers.
- Use of overtime.
- Referring to services outside of the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

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 over the past twelve months where known is outlined below:

- Number of employees who retired from this classification – 0
- 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 – 0
- Number of employees who left for family/domestic reasons – 3

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.)*

Both the North East and North West areas of the province noted their recruitment efforts as being critical meaning that Employers have attempted exhaustive recruiting measures/initiatives and that qualified professionals do not exist.

Saskatoon has noted their recruitment efforts as moderate meaning that new graduates and qualified professionals are difficult to recruit. Educational institutions are not graduating sufficient new grads to meet the demand.

The University of Saskatchewan launched a Dental Therapy program in the fall of 2023. The first cohort is expected to begin practicums in 2025. The previous lack of access to educational training in this field has significantly affected recruitment efforts. It is anticipated that graduates from the reinstated program will help alleviate ongoing recruitment challenges.

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.
- Offering of financial recruitment incentives.
- Offering of relocation incentives.
- Offering of practicums.
- 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 Committee reports the following salary 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		
Indigenous Services Canada	Dental Therapist (EG-6)	April 1, 2023	\$54.725
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$47.638

Saskatchewan Rate (2023)	\$ 36.920
Western Canadian Average (2023)	\$ 47.638
Sask from Average (\$)	\$ (10.72)
Sask from Average (%)	77.50%

*Notes:

- Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average.
- The Indigenous Services Canada - Dental Therapist (EG-6) was included as an additional market comparator that was not included in the 2024 costing which has resulted in a modified Western Canadian average.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SAHO and HSAS are currently negotiating a new collective agreement as their previous agreement expired on March 31, 2024.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The vacancy rate for FT is 46.15% and PT is 100%
- Recruitment efforts continue to be very difficult for this classification.
- Saskatchewan continues to be significantly below the Western Canadian Average for this classification.
- Turnover trends noted were that individuals continue to leave due to the lower wages experienced within the SHA.
- The first cohort of the University of Saskatchewan's Dental Therapy program graduated in 2025. It is anticipated that this will help alleviate ongoing recruitment challenges over time.

The Committee has completed its annual review of this classification in accordance with the SAHO/HSAS collective agreement. As negotiations on the Committee's 2023 recommendation, which was reaffirmed in 2024 have not concluded, the Committee is unable to evaluate that market supplement on current market conditions as part of this review. Until the market supplement increase for 2023 is implemented, there is no way to assess its impact on this classification going forward. Therefore, similar to 2024, the Committee reaffirms its support for the 2023 report's recommendation to **increase the market supplement** but is not in a position to provide any recommendation for the 2025 report.