

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

**Pharmacist
(Degree & Degree Senior)**

FINAL

**Report Due Date: January 20, 2025
(Annual Review)**

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Saskatchewan 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 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. The most recent increase to the market supplement rate was effective March 1, 2022.

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 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.

ANALYSIS

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

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

Table 1 – Pharmacists (Degree & Degree Senior) – Vacant Positions

	Number of Positions (January 2025)		Number of Vacant Positions (January 2025)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full- Time	Part- Time
Degree	195	77	22	22	11.28%	28.57%
Degree Senior	44	2	4	0	9.09%	0%
Total	239	79	26	22	10.88%	27.84%

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.)*

A total of eleven (11) areas responded to the market supplement survey. There were varying degrees of experience across the province in filling vacancies with the majority of issues being in Rural Saskatchewan. Combined with full time and part time positions, two rural areas and one northern area reported critical issues meaning that vacancies are either unlikely to be filled or may be vacant for extended periods of time. Two rural areas indicated that their issues were significant in that vacancies are difficult to fill and may be vacant for extended periods. Two rural areas and the Saskatoon area identified vacancies as being moderate meaning that vacancies may be difficult to fill and may require a greater than a standard amount of time to fill. The last two rural areas and Regina noted their concerns as being minor in that vacancies are filled usually within a reasonable amount of time

Concerns continue to be identified with filling positions that are less than full time in addition to filling temporary positions or casual positions. Covering leaves is very difficult.

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 were also varied across the province.

One of the eleven areas responding indicated their service delivery impacts due to vacancies to be minor in that there is some impact to service, there may be inconveniences to patients but they are temporary. Three areas indicated a moderate service impact meaning that the department provides a level of service but some routine duties are not being performed or that they are needing to be prioritized. Five rural areas, one northern area and the Saskatoon area all identified a

significant impact in service delivery existed where there were vacancies where only a basic level of service is provided and there may be gaps and persistent problems.

Other strategies used to augment service delivery are the following:

- Posting consistently to try and recruit candidates
- Provide remote order entry support.
- Consideration for the use of contracted services.
- Further skill task alignment to ensure individuals are working to their full scope.
- Offering of overtime.
- Reduction in services.

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.)*

Trends noted by respondents to the survey include the following:

- Individuals leaving for tertiary centres with more opportunity.
- Individuals pursuing work in community pharmacies as opposed to the health sector for work life balance and higher salary.

The following turnover information was provided where known:

- Number of employees who retired from this classification – 2
- Number of employees who failed their probation period – 0
- Number of employees who left due to family/domestic reasons – 3
- Number of employees who left the organization for reasons not wage related – 6
- Number of employees who left the organization for increased salary – 6

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.)*

There was relatively consistent experience across the province related to recruitment. All respondents noted that their recruitment efforts were significant in that qualified professionals and new graduates were in great demand by employers who are willing to pay significant recruiting bonuses. Respondents to the survey also noted that there are not enough graduates to meet the current demand and universities do not appear to be filling all of their current seats to capacity. Educational costs are also significant.

Many of the initiatives undertaken to address recruitment and retention are outlined below:

- Advertising consistently online and in trade journals and publications;
- reaching out by word of mouth; keeping in contact with recent grads who had worked practicums in the department;
- Increasing the use of student placements;
- providing financial recruitment incentives associated with return for service agreements;
- proving relocation assistance with return for service agreements;
- attending career fairs;
- providing training allowances;

- offering of northern incentives;
- Offering of variable hours where possible;
- Use of pharmacy practice networks to facilitate mentorship;
- Further promotion of the cost of living considerations as a draw to Saskatchewan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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

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):

Table 2 - Pharmacists (Degree) – Salary Market Conditions

Province	Job Title	Effective Date	Maximum Rate of Pay (April 1, 2023)
British Columbia	Pharmacist - Grade I	April 1, 2023	\$61.39
Alberta	Pharmacist I	April 1, 2023	\$62.88
Saskatchewan	Pharmacist - Pharm D/Degree	April 1, 2023	\$59.751
Manitoba	Pharmacist	April 1, 2023	\$60.056
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$61.019

Saskatchewan Rate	\$ 59.751
Western Canadian Average	\$ 61.019
Sask from Average (\$)	\$ (1.27)
Sask from Average (%)	97.92%

Notes:

- Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average.

Note: The April 1, 2023 rates for Manitoba are slightly changed from the April 1, 2023 rates in the 2024 report as a result of the Manitoba contract recently being ratified.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Wage rates for Saskatchewan are below the western Canadian average.
- Recruitment efforts for Pharmacists continue to be significant with the majority of areas noting that community pharmacies are the major competitors paying higher wages.
- Turnover trends noted are movement to tertiary centres from rural areas in addition to the move to community pharmacies.
- Service delivery impacts are varied across the province with some areas experiencing more impact than others.

Having reviewed the information as provided by respondents, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee determine that the current market supplement for the Pharmacist classification should be **maintained**.