

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Report of the Market Supplement Review Committee

Respiratory Therapist

Final

**Report Due Date: November 17, 2024
(Annual Review)**

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Saskatchewan Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Care 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 and/or retention pressures.

A market supplement will be an acceptable option only if:

- workplace initiatives have not addressed the skill shortage;
- labour market data supports a supplement; and,
- recruitment/retention is a problem, is affecting service delivery, and is well documented.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed updated documentation submitted in the annual review process regarding the market supplement for the Respiratory Therapist classification. The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee on August 6, 2002, and implemented on October 16, 2002. This latest report is to be considered as part of the on-going review of the market supplement process for this classification.

There were seven areas within the Province that reported to this review. Respiratory Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS). 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 Respiratory Therapist:

Respiratory Therapists are an essential part of the health care team providing such services as cardiopulmonary resuscitation; ventilator management; oxygen and aerosol therapy; patient assessment and evaluation; and diagnostic services, including pulmonary function testing and blood analysis.

Qualifications:

Respiratory Therapists must be graduates of a respiratory therapy training program approved by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT), and have successfully completed an exam approved by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists. Membership in the CSRT and the Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists (SCRT) is mandatory.

In Canada, there are 23 accredited Respiratory Therapist schools that train Respiratory Therapists. In western Canada, there are four schools as follows: Northern Alberta Institute of Technology; Southern Alberta Institute of Technology; Thomson Rivers University (formerly University College of the Cariboo); and the University of Manitoba – School of Medical Rehabilitation. Respiratory Therapists may require up to six months of orientation and training.

Saskatchewan Health provides bursary assistance to Saskatchewan Respiratory Therapist students.

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

Table 1 – Respiratory Therapist including Senior – Vacant Positions (October 2024)

Number of Positions		Number of Vacant Positions		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
198	19	48	8	25.24%	42.11%

Vacancy analysis for two areas is characterized as moderate meaning they may be difficult to fill and may required a greater than standard amount of time to recruit. Two other areas indicate significant difficulty in filling vacancies which may take over 6 months to a year to fill. Three areas indicate filling vacancies to be critical in that they are either unlikely to be filled or may be vacant for extended periods of time i.e. greater than 12 months.

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.)*

There were seven areas that reported to the market supplement review. Two areas reported moderate service delivery issues meaning that the department provides a level of service, some routine duties are not being performed, quality of service is maintained but service problems may linger. Five areas reported significant service delivery issues in that the department can only provide a basic level of service, there may be gaps in service and service problems persist.

Strategies to address service delivery issues are as follows:

- Use of overtime and on call support.
- Use of contract staff.
- Working short and prioritizing workload duties.
- Reliance on other areas of the province for support.
- Use of other classifications.

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.)*

There were no specific trends noted regarding turnover. There are a variety of reasons none of which can be considered a trend.

Where it was known over the past 12 months, the following turnover was reported:

- Number of employees who retired from this classification – 2
- Number of employees who failed their probation or trial 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 – 2

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 efforts in 6 of the areas reporting indicate that qualified professionals and new graduates are in great demand by employers who are willing to pay significant recruiting bonuses, or to contract the service if required. Educational institutions have/are trying to increase the number of educational seats each year for the past 2 to 3 years in attempting to provide the workforce sufficient supply. Employers may be looking at international recruiting efforts to bolster their ability to deliver the service.

One area reported the recruitment efforts as being critical meaning that they have attempted exhaustive recruiting measures and initiatives with no success.

The following recruitment and retention initiatives were reported by respondents:

- Recently implemented recruitment incentive of \$30,000 for northern areas and \$10,000 for urban areas.
- Advertising online, attending high school and university career fairs. Word of mouth advertising, posting positions on national RT sites, posted in alumni college/university groups.
- Attending career fairs, posting internal and external vacant positions, attending the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapy Annual Conference and Trade Show.
- Creation of a professional recruitment video and power point presentations distributed to respiratory therapy programs throughout Canada for student distribution.
- Offering of relocation incentives.
- Offering of practicums and mentorship whenever requested.
- Implementation of a 6% market supplement to this classification in November 2023.

Several areas reported that they are not graduating enough therapists to currently meet the demand and that Saskatchewan does not have its own training program.

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.)*

Province	Job Title	Effective Date	Maximum Rate of Pay (April 1, 2023)
British Columbia	Respiratory Therapist - Grade II	April 1, 2023	\$44.23
Alberta	Respiratory Therapist II	April 1, 2023	\$52.83
Saskatchewan	Respiratory Therapist - Diploma Senior	April 1, 2023	\$50.916
Manitoba	Clinical Specialist/Clinical Service Leader- Respiratory Therapy	April 1, 2023	\$49.145
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$49.280

Saskatchewan Rate (2023)	\$ 50.916
Western Canadian Average (2023)	\$ 49.280
Sask from Average (\$)	\$ 1.64
Sask compared to Average (%)	103.32%

Note:

- Saskatchewan rates are above the Western Canadian Average.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- There were no noted trends where individuals are leaving for a higher salary.
- Saskatchewan is above the western Canadian average.
- The ability to recruit to this classification continues to be significant.
- A recent recruitment bonus was recently initiated.

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