

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Report of the Market Supplement Review Committee

Speech Language Pathologist

FINAL

Report Due Date – December 15, 2024
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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) 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 also designed to ensure that temporary market supplements respond to valid labour market criteria, to address recruitment/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 documentation submitted in the review process regarding the annual review for Speech Language Pathologists. This classification received an increase to their current market supplement in December of 2022.

Speech Language Pathologists 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.

There were ten locations throughout the SHA that contributed data for this analysis on Speech Language Pathologists.

Role of a Speech Language Pathologist:

Speech Language Pathologists provide their service to pediatric and/or adult clients from acute care to the community.

Speech Language Pathologists diagnose communication disorders (comprehension and expression) and swallowing disorders. They plan and implement treatment in language, speech, voice and/or swallowing disorders. Speech Language Pathologists design and employ augmentative and alternative communication; and consult regarding language stimulation, inclusion strategies and teaching adaptation for students with language impairments.

Speech Language Pathologists place special emphasis on pediatric and preschool clients, in order to identify and correct impairments at early stages of development.

Qualifications:

There are six Canadian training programs. These are located at the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, McGill University and Dalhousie University. There is another school at Minot State University in North Dakota, where a small number of Canadians graduate.

There is no training program in Saskatchewan. Typically, students complete their internships and practicums within the province they attend university.

ANALYSIS

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.)*

Four former Health Authorities identified no vacancies, 2 identified moderate vacancies in that vacancies are difficult to fill and may require a greater than a standard amount of time to fill and the balance of the Regions responding indicated critical concerns with filling vacancies in that there are either unlikely to be filled or may be vacant for extended periods of time often more than 12 months. Out of the 4 areas, 3 were rural and one was the former Prince Albert Parkland health authority.

Table I: Speech Language Pathologist – Vacant Positions:

Number of Positions (As of December 2024)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of December 2024)		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
86	38	22	10	26.32%	25.81%

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.)*

Two former Regional Health Authorities areas reported no service delivery impacts, 1 reported moderate concerns in that the department provides a level of service but some routine duties are not being performed, six areas indicated significant service issues in that the department can only provide a basic level of service, there may be significant gaps in service and that service problems persist, one area reported critical issues in that the department is not able to provide service.

Additional strategies used to support service delivery are outlined below:

- Prioritization of caseloads and clients;
- Utilizing virtual opportunities if appropriate;
- Referring to other areas of the province;

- Utilization of private contract services;
- Maximize part time hours if possible or utilization of overtime;
- Utilized different classifications if appropriate.

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.)*

Not all former Regions identified any noticeable trends but of those that did it was related to retirements, individuals leaving for private practice or improved schedules. (i.e. school divisions who have summer months off)

- Number of your employees who retired from this classification - 4
- Number of your employees who failed their probation/trial period - 0
- Number of employees who left due to family/domestic reasons - 1_
- Number of employees who left the organization for reasons not wage related - 1
- 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 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.)*

From this review, all respondents reported that recruitment efforts were significant meaning 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 and are attempting to provide the workforce a sufficient supply. Currently supply is not meeting demand and not having education available in Saskatchewan is a contributing factor. It is understood that any graduates from Saskatchewan will not be available until 2028.

Other strategies to support recruitment efforts include the following:

- Posting of positions internally and externally in Health Careers and on websites frequented by potential candidates;
- Attending career events at schools and offering presentations;
- Attending conferences and networking;
- Providing student practicums;
- Word of mouth or shoulder tapping;
- Recruitment incentives and moving allowances;
- Support for practicum students as this is one of the most effective ways to recruit;
- Continued support of students from U of A and Minot State)
- Norther Recruitment Incentives;
- Additional educational support;

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	Speech Language Pathologist - Masters (Grade I)	April 1, 2023	49.260
Alberta	Speech Language Pathologist II	April 1, 2023	57.630
Saskatchewan	Speech Language Pathologist - Masters	April 1, 2023	52.958
Manitoba	Speech Language Pathologist - Masters	April 1, 2023	53.146
Western Canadian Average (2023)			53.249

Saskatchewan Rate (2023)	\$ 52.958
Western Canadian Average (2023)	\$ 53.249
Sask from Average (\$)	\$ (0.29)
Sask compared to Average (%)	99.45%

Notes:

- Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- Service provision is identified as significant predominantly in rural Saskatchewan.
- Vacancy rates are slightly above 25% for both full time and part time positions.
- Extensive recruitment and retention activities were indicated in this review, with several respondents reporting relatively long recruiting times for this classification.
- One of the biggest challenges is education outside of the province and a small number of graduates in general.

Having reviewed the information as provided by respondents, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends to **negotiate an increase** to the current market supplement for the Speech Language Pathologist classification.