

In the Matter of an Adjudication Concerning Market Supplement Wage Rates for the following classifications:

- Physical Therapist
- Psychologist – Master’s level
- Respiratory Therapist

Between:

Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS)

And:

Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO)

Written Submission on behalf of HSAS

October 31, 2013

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Role of a Physical Therapist:

Physical Therapists (PTs) work collaboratively to enhance clients/patients abilities within environments and communities in which they live and work. They provide preventative, diagnostic and therapeutic services aimed at maximizing function and helping people achieve their highest quality of life through physical movement. Also, individualized treatment of an injury or disability based on scientific knowledge, a thorough assessment of the condition, environmental factors and lifestyle is provided.

The major areas of client/patient programs that are supported by physical therapists may include neurological, musculo-skeletal and cardio-respiratory. Physical Therapists assess and treat patients in a number of inpatient and outpatient settings. There are both generalist skills required as well as highly specialized skills dependent upon the setting and the patient group.

Qualifications:

The Physical Therapist Program at the University of Saskatchewan is a Masters level program. The University of Saskatchewan graduates approximately 40 Physical Therapists per year. Other Physical Therapy programs in western Canada are located at the University of Manitoba, the University of Alberta, and the University of British Columbia.

I. FACTS

1. On November 29, 2012, the SAHO Market Supplement Review Committee released the Market Supplement report on Physical Therapists (dated September 27, 2012). That report indicated that the Market Supplement for Physical Therapists should be renegotiated.
2. HSAS referred the matter of determining the amount of the market supplement increase to adjudication failing receipt of an offer in a timely manner.

II. ISSUE

1. HSAS submits that the issue to be determined by the adjudicator is the amount of market supplement for the Physical Therapist classification.

III. ANALYSIS

1. Service Delivery Impacts

In the SAHO MSRC report, it is reported that seven regions indicated they are suffering significant service impacts as a result of recruitment and

retention issues related to wages, and three health regions reported moderate service delivery impacts.

As noted in the table below, the ability to provide good service delivery in Saskatchewan Health Regions has been becoming worse with each year. There were no “significant” service delivery issues reported in 2004, and now eight years later, that number has grown to 7 regions reporting significant service delivery issues.

Table #1 – Service Delivery Impacts since 2003

	None	Minor	Moderate	Significant
2012	0	1	3	7
2011	0	2	4	4
2009	0	4	4	2
2007	3	6	0	1
2004	1	8	1	0
2003	0	6	1	4

In addition to the Service Delivery issues caused by the recruitment and retention of vacant permanent positions, the SAHO MSRC also indicated that numerous temporary vacancies are adding to the problem.

In the past few months, HSAS has received copies of internal memos highlighting the problem with service delivery by Physical Therapists. The memo from the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region (RQHR) (Tab 5) states that “Occupational and Physical Therapist staffing levels at the Pasqua Hospital have reached a level where it is no longer possible to continue to provided service as per standard practice”.

In the Five Hills Health Region (FHHR), the Regional Director of Therapies issued a memo (Tab 6) that states, “The FHHR Therapies Department is currently experiencing an extreme shortage of Physical Therapists”. As a result of this shortage, the memo goes on to state that Community Services will be reduced, service in Craik is temporarily discontinued, service in Central Butte is reduced to monthly, outpatient service at Moose Jaw Union Hospital is reduced (and clients with chronic conditions or injuries will not be seen at all), and service for pediatrics will be reduced.

2. Vacancy Rate Analysis

Vacancy rates amongst Physical Therapists in Saskatchewan Health Regions have been on the rise since 2002. In fact, full-time vacancy rates are the highest they have been since 2002.

Table #2 – Vacancy Rates since 2002

Year	Full-time Vacancy Rates	Part-time Vacancy Rates
2012	12.9%	2.5%
2011	7.8%	6.3%
2009	9.4%	10.9%
2008	8.5%	4.4%
2007	5.2%	6.8%
2004	7.5%	8.9%
2003	11.3%	2.7%
2002	24%	11%

In the “Position Optimization Report” provided by the Saskatoon Health Region (Tab 7), we see that as of August 2013, there were three permanent part-time vacancies, one temporary part-time vacancy, two permanent full-time vacancies, and two temporary full-time vacancies. Those vacancies may or may not have been approved to be filled. In addition, there were four full-time positions and two part-time that were vacated (and approved to be recruited to). In the Saskatoon Health Region alone, we have eight full-time vacancies and 5 part-time vacancies, for a vacancy rate of 13% full-time and 13% part-time.

3. Turnover Rates

Turnover has remained steady for a number of years. At the time of the report, Saskatchewan Health Regions were reporting that 16 employees had left their employ, and it can be assumed that the number grew by at least one or two more by the end of the year.

We also know that turnover in this classification is still occurring, as the Saskatoon Health Region alone had at least thirteen vacancies as of August 2013.

4. Recruitment Issue Analysis

The SAHO MSRC provided very little information about the Recruitment Issues as outlined in the Letter Understanding. While they did state that the employers undertook “significant” recruitment efforts, there are no details provided about length of recruitment times, training investments, licensing issues, or supply and demand issues. As they did report significant issues, we assume that those issues were experienced in all of the above listed factors.

The SAHO MSRC indicated that the University of Saskatchewan reported that out of 39 graduates, 14 accepted positions with Saskatchewan Health Regions. The majority of those graduates who stayed in Saskatchewan to work went to private clinics. As an example of the compensation offered at private Physical Therapy clinics, we have provided a copy of a job posting from a Yorkton clinic (Tab 8). It offers a full-time position with a four-day work week at \$50/hour, plus annual bonus pay of \$10,000, health and dental benefits package, 4 weeks vacation, and an Education Allowance of \$2500.

5. Salary Market Conditions

The table below indicates the current wages of other public sector, unionized Physical Therapists in the Western Canadian Provinces. In an effort to acknowledge that each province is a competitor employer, we have calculated the average of all provinces, providing equal weight to each province. The average wage for Physical Therapists appears in the table below. We also note that Step 1 in Alberta is only 2.8% lower than the Top Step in Saskatchewan.

Table #3 Wages in Western Canadian Provinces

Province	Step 1	Top Step
British Columbia	\$30.81	\$38.42
Alberta	\$37.79	\$50.20
Saskatchewan	\$31.696	\$38.859
Manitoba	\$29.833	\$34.581
Average	\$32.532	\$40.515

Our members have provided us with some information about private practice compensation, including the aforementioned job posting in Yorkton.

We also received information about a commission structure which is common in Physical Therapy private clinics. With the commission structure, a beginning wage of \$63/hour is typical.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

The SAHO MSRC report indicates that vacancy rates are the worst they have been in more than 10 years. Service Delivery is being impacted by these vacancy rates, as most of the Saskatchewan Health Regions say they are experiencing significant service delivery issues and are in fact refusing public service to

patients who are in need. Turnover rates are consistent for the past few years, and Health Regions have to put significant efforts in their recruitment initiatives.

HSAS respectfully submits that this classification receive a 4.3% increase to their Market Supplement, which would bring the wage rate to 100% of the Western Canadian average.

PSYCHOLOGIST – MASTER’S LEVEL

Role of a Masters Psychologist:

The Masters Psychologist is responsible for the provision of assessment, consultation, and counseling for specified client groups. Specialized knowledge is applied in assessing and diagnosing clients and providing advice and consultation to various groups concerning psychological information

Qualifications:

The Masters Psychologist requires the successful completion of a Masters degree in Psychology and must be licensed by the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists.

I. FACTS

1. On April 10, 2012, HSAS requested a review of the Psychologist – Master’s Level classification as per Letter of Understanding #13.
2. On September 27, 2012, the SAHO Market Supplement Review Committee released the Market Supplement report on Psychologists – Master’s level (dated June 11, 2012). That report indicated that a Market Supplement should be implemented for this classification.
3. HSAS referred the matter of determining the amount of the market supplement increase to adjudication failing receipt of an offer in a timely manner.

II. ISSUE

1. HSAS submits that the issue to be determined by the adjudicator is the amount of market supplement for the Psychologist – Master’s Level classification.

ANALYSIS

1. Service Delivery Impacts

The SAHO MSRC indicates that while not all of the regions are reporting significant issues with service delivery, they indicated that some regions have to fill positions with other classifications. The result of this, although not indicated in the report, is that services that *must* be conducted by a Psychologist, such as psychological testing and diagnostics, are not being provided.

They also provided the data contained in Table #4. While some regions indicate they are not experiencing service delivery issues, resorting to changing the classification of a position to be able to provide minimal service is very concerning.

Table #4 Service Delivery Impacts in Saskatchewan Health Regions

	None	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Critical
2012	3	1	2	1	n/a*
2003	7	0	1	2	1

*Critical is a category no longer used

2. Vacancy Rate Analysis

The SAHO MSRC states that employers have not been able to fill vacant Masters Psychologist positions for a period of a number of months.

There are nine full-time vacancies and two part-time vacancies. This is alarming due to the amount of training and time it takes to become a fully licensed Psychologist.

As of August 2013, the Saskatoon Health Region reported through its “Position Optimization Report” (Tab 7) that they were holding vacant two full-time Master’s Psychologists and one part-time. In addition, one full-time and one part-time vacancy had been approved to be recruited to. Assuming those were the only vacancies in the Health Region, that’s a vacancy rate of 27% full-time and 40% part-time (based on budgeted positions provided in the SAHO MSRC report).

3. Turnover Rates

According to the SAHO MSRC report, in 2011, ten Psychologists left the employ of the health regions, and at the time of the report, another two had left. The vacancy data provided by the SAHO MSRC suggests that most of the positions vacant from the turnover experienced in 2011 are still vacant.

We also know that turnover in this classification is still occurring, as the Saskatoon Health Region had at least five vacancies as of August 2013.

4. Recruitment Issue Analysis

The SAHO MSRC reports that the regions are putting “moderate” effort into recruitment efforts, including offering practicums through University programs. However, these efforts are not proving to be fruitful, as many

employers are hiring lower-trained professionals to carry out some of the work.

5. Salary Market Conditions

The SAHO MSRC reported the following wages at the time the report was compiled in June 2012. We have provided a table below outlining the current wage rates for each of the four Western Canadian Provinces.

In Manitoba, in addition to the hourly wage, Master’s trained Psychologists receive an additional \$150 per month as an “Academic Allowance”.

Table #5 Psychologist Wage Rates in Western Canada

Province	Step 1	Highest Step
British Columbia	\$37.58	\$46.85
Alberta	\$39.86	\$52.97
Saskatchewan	\$37.68	\$46.071
Manitoba	\$35.583	\$46.045
Average	\$37.674	\$47.984

Private practice is the most common employer other than public employers for Psychologists. Our members tell us that in their own public practice, they charge \$80 - \$140 per hour for their services. Of course they have typical costs associated with running their own business, but they are all profitable and make more money as a private practitioner.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

The Masters Psychologist classification has been a difficult to recruit to classification for some time. It is clear from the data provided by the SAHO MSRC that recruitment and retention of this classification is problematic. HSAS respectfully submits that this classification receive a 4.2% increase to their Market Supplement, which would bring the wage rate to 100% of the Western Canadian average.

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

Role of the 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 a graduate of a Respiratory Therapy training program approved by the Council for the Accreditation of Respiratory Therapy (CoARTE) in Canada and, successfully complete an exam provided by the Canadian Board for Respiratory Care (CBRE), which is approved by the SCRT Council. Licensure from the Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists (SCRT) is mandatory.

I. FACTS

1. On July 1, 2012, the SAHO Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) issued a report on the Market Supplement rate for Respiratory Therapists. That report recommended that the Market Supplemented wage rate not increase.
2. On August 31, 2012, HSAS appealed the recommendation of the SAHO MSRC.
3. On January 17, 2013, a Market Supplement adjudication hearing was held. That hearing resulted in the adjudicator finding that an increase to the Market Supplement was in fact required.
4. HSAS referred the matter of determining the amount of the market supplement increase to adjudication failing receipt of an offer in a timely manner.

II. ISSUE

HSAS submits that the issue to be determined by the adjudicator is the amount of market supplement for the Respiratory Therapist classification.

III. ANALYSIS

1. Service Delivery Impacts

Health Regions reported to the SAHO MSRC that they are having some service delivery issues attributed to recruitment and retention of Respiratory

Therapists. Service Delivery issues in Saskatchewan Health Regions for Respiratory Therapists are the worst they have been in seven years.

Table #6 Service Delivery Impacts in Saskatchewan Health Regions

	None	Minor	Moderate	Significant
2012	2	1	3	0
2011	4	0	0	0
2010	5	0	0	0
2009	4	2	0	0
2006	2	3	1	0
2005	5	1	0	0
2004	4	1	1	0
2003	2	2	0	2

2. Vacancy Rate Analysis

In 2008, when the last Market Supplement wage rate adjudication occurred, which resulted in an increase of 3.56%, the vacancy rate appeared to respond somewhat favourably, going from 11.8% to 5.3%. The effect of that increase, and the increase that was negotiated through Collective Bargaining in 2011, has now worn off and once again Health Regions are struggling to recruit Respiratory Therapists.

Table #7 Vacancy Rates in Saskatchewan Health Regions

Year	Full-time Vacancy Rates	Part-time Vacancy Rates
2012	7.6%	33.3%
2011	2.8%	50%
2010	3.9%	0%
2009	5.3%	33.3%
2006	11.8%	0%
2005	5.4%	25%
2004	4.1%	16.6%
2003	5.4%	0%
2002	27%	43%

3. Turnover Rates

In the hearing that was held for this classification, SAHO indicated that seven employees had gone to better-paying jobs in the health regions, one had moved to Saudi Arabia, and five had moved to jobs in Alberta. In addition, turnover as a proportion of full-time positions is on the rise, increasing from

5.2% in 2009 to 13.6% in 2012. Alberta jobs are clearly a draw for these professionals who are being trained in Alberta.

4. Recruitment Issue Analysis

The SAHO MSRC indicates that the health regions are engaged in a number of activities to recruit. They appear to be attempting to improve the workplace, and make them appear to be an attractive employer, however, these efforts are not proving to be effective.

5. Salary Market Conditions

In the chart below, we note the wages of the Western Canadian provinces, both at Step 1 and the top step, effective April 1, 2013. We note that in Alberta, the first step is only 2.8% lower than HSAS' top step. That means that a new Graduate in Alberta can earn nearly what an experienced Respiratory Therapist in Saskatchewan can earn. With the training program in Alberta, it's not surprising that applicants to Saskatchewan positions have been few. Additionally, it was noted previously from the hearing held in January 2013 regarding this classification that five employees left the employ of the health regions to work in Alberta, which pays 25% more than Saskatchewan health regions.

Table #8 Wage Rates in Saskatchewan Health Regions

Province	Step 1	Top Step
British Columbia	\$26.96	\$33.65
Alberta	\$35.29	\$45.35
Saskatchewan	\$29.737	\$36.262
Manitoba	\$29.833	\$34.034
Average	\$30.455	\$37.324

IV. RECOMMENDATION

In 2008, when the last Market Supplement wage rate adjudication occurred, which resulted in an increase of 3.56%, the vacancy rate appeared to respond somewhat favourably, going from 11.8% to 5.3%. The effect of that increase, and the increase that was negotiated through Collective Bargaining in 2011, has now worn off and once again Health Regions are struggling to recruit Respiratory Therapists. We also have evidence for this classification that Alberta, in particular, is a strong competitor for Respiratory Therapists.

HSAS respectfully submits that this classification receive a 5% increase to their Market Supplement, which would bring Saskatchewan wages to 81% of Alberta wages for this classification.

ALL OF WHICH IS RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 31ST DAY OF October
2013.

HSAS

PER: _____
Kate Robinson
Labour Relations Officer