

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Pharmacist**

**May 15, 2008**

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Saskatchewan Market Supplement Program is to ensure that 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 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 August 6, 2002 and implemented on October 16, 2002. The first annual review was conducted by the MSRC in October 2003. Annual reviews were conducted October 2004 and October 2005 when the MSRC recommended to maintain the existing market supplement. An additional market supplement amount was implemented in April 2007. This latest annual review is considered part of the on-going market supplement review for the Pharmacist classification.

There were ten health regions that reported to this review on the Pharmacist classification. Pharmacists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

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 specialise 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 to 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 nine universities in Canada that offer a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy including the University of Saskatchewan.*

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

**Table 1 – Pharmacists – Budgeted and vacant positions (April 2008)**

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of April, 2008)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of April, 2008)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full- Time	Part-Time
Cypress	2	0	0	0	0	0
Five Hills	4	0	0	0	0	0
Heartland	0	3	0	0	0	0
*Kelsey Trail	2	1	0	0	0	0
Prairie North	3	4	0	0	0	0
Prince Albert Parkland	5	1	0	0	0	0
Regina Qu'Appelle	38	8	1	2	2.6%	25%
Saskatoon	48	21	3	0	6.2%	0
Sun Country	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sunrise	5	2	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

\*Kelsey Trail also has one temporary vacancy.

## ANALYSIS

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

**SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS:** *(Employers 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).*

A total of ten health regions reported data to the annual market supplement review. Eight health regions reported no service delivery issues and two regions reported minor service delivery issues related to recruitment and retention. Some regions reported service delivery issues that are related to the amount of time that is required to train and orient new staff.

**VACANCY RATE ANALYSIS:** *(Employers 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).*

Health regions reported a total of four full time vacancies. Health regions report that although many vacancies have been filled and new positions recruited to, competition for Pharmacists across Canada remains strong.

**Table 2 – Pharmacists - Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002 – 2008)**

Pharmacist Classification (all levels)	Number of Budgeted Positions		Number of Vacant Budgeted Positions		% Vacancy	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
<b>2002 Totals</b>	84	39	12	2	14%	5%
<b>2003 Totals</b>	82	35	8	3	9.7%	8.5%
<b>2004 Totals</b>	78	31	4	1	5.1%	3.2%
<b>2005 Totals</b>	80	20	1	1	1.2%	5%
<b>2006 Totals</b>	85	38	9	2	10.5%	5.2%
<b>2008 Totals</b>	109	40	4	2	3.6%	5.0%

\*Disclaimer: Data reported in Table 1 and/or Table 2 may be as a result of different employers reporting year to year.

**TURNOVER RATES:** *(Employers 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.)*

Of the regions that track and report turnover, the following is reported:

- 2008 (year to date) – 2
- 2007 - 10
- 2006 – 10
- 2005 – 7

Employers have identified several reasons for turnover in the past two years including: retirements, work in the retail sector, transfer to another Saskatchewan health region, moved to Alberta, resigned for family reasons, and unknown. Discrepancies in turnover data from previous reports may be as a result of different employers reporting year to year.

**RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS:** *(Employers 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).*

Two regions reported no recruitment initiatives. Six regions have reported minor recruitment efforts while two regions reported moderate recruitment initiatives. Some regions again reported that they attempt to recruit Pharmacists beyond their budgeted capacity even though they may not be experiencing vacancies or turnover.

Of the regions that reported vacancies in the past, the following recruitment and retention initiatives were utilized:

- Offering higher initial pay rates (five regions),
- Changing job responsibilities (two region),
- Using other classifications (four regions),
- Advertising (five regions),
- Offering residencies (two regions),
- Offering recruitment allowances (three region),
- Relocation assistance (four regions),
- Attending career fairs (four regions),
- Training allowances (four regions),

- Offering practicums (three regions).

Some health regions have placed Pharmacists on their “Hard to Recruit” list making this occupation eligible for recruitment incentives through the Ministry of Health.

**SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS:** *(Employers 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:

- Saskatchewan health regions – Minimum \$39.457/hour, maximum \$45.481/hour (current market supplement rate), 5 steps, effective April 1, 2008.
- Alberta health regions – Minimum \$34.58/hour, maximum \$45.91/hour, 9 steps, effective April 1, 2007 (currently re-negotiating).
- British Columbia health regions – Minimum \$36.870/hour, maximum \$45.970/hour, 6 steps, effective April 1, 2008.
- Manitoba health regions – Minimum \$37.905/hour, maximum \$47.015/hour, 8 steps, effective April 1, 2008.

The retail sector remains as the main competitor to health regions for Pharmacists. SAHO research indicates that Pharmacist pay rates in the retail sector vary from employer to employer. Some retail businesses offer the same minimum and maximum pay rates that are dependent on skill, experience and difficulty in recruiting.

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- Health regions report either no service delivery issues or minor issues.
- Health regions report four full time vacancies out of 109 full time positions.
- Regions have maintained on-going recruitment efforts for the Pharmacist classification as they recognize the competitiveness of this occupation.

Having reviewed the information as provided by employers and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends maintaining the current market supplement for the Pharmacist classification.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Market Supplement Consideration Request – Pharmacist**

#### **Respondents**

1. Cypress Health Region
2. Five Hills Health Region
3. Heartland Health Region
4. Kelsey Trail Health Region
5. Prairie North Health Region
6. Prince Albert Parkland Health Region
7. Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
8. Saskatoon Health Region
9. Sun Country Health Region
10. Sunrise Health Region