

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Psychologist  
(Masters level)**

**Final**

**November 26, 2003**

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the 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 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/retention pressures.

A market supplement will be an acceptable option only if:

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

This report deals with the Market Supplement Review Committee's analysis of the recruitment/retention pressures facing employers with respect to Psychologist Masters level.

## OVERVIEW

The request for a market supplement came from the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) in October 2003. The MSRC reviewed this classification in August 2002 as part of an overall review of all Psychologist level positions. At that time, the MSRC recommended not to implement a market supplement.

There were eleven health regions that reported to this analysis on Psychologist Masters level. Psychologists Masters level are members of HSAS.

Role of a Psychologist Masters level:

*Psychologists work in clinics, correction facilities, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, schools and universities. They diagnose and provide therapy for psychological and emotional disorders, help clients manage physical illnesses and disorders, consult with other health care professionals, plan and implement research and apply theory relating to behavior and mental process.*

Qualifications:

*The Saskatchewan Registered Psychologists Act was enacted in 1962. This stipulated that only those with a doctorate in psychology could call themselves psychologists and engage in private practice. In this Act however, there was an exemption from this provision for individuals who were less qualified and who worked for the provincial government and school boards. In 1997, a new Act regulating psychologists was passed but not enacted until March 2002. The new Act allows Psychologists to be registered at a Masters level.*

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

Table 1- Psychologist Masters Level (Budgeted and Vacant Positions)

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of October, 2003)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of October, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Cypress	3	-	1	-	33%	-
Five Hills	3	-	-	-	-	-
*Heartland	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kelsey Trail	1	-	1	-	100%	-
Mamawetin Churchill River	1	-	-	-	-	-
**Prairie North	4	-	-	-	-	-
Prince Albert Parkland	3	2	-	-	-	-
Regina Qu'Appelle	Senior - 3 Masters - 16	Masters - 2	-	-	-	-
***Saskatoon	8	4	-	-	-	-
Sun Country	4	-	2	-	50%	-
Sunrise	2	-	2	-	100%	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>-</b>

\*Heartland utilizes a contract service for Psychologist (Masters).

\*\*Prairie North employs 1 Psychometrician as a Masters Psychologist

\*\*\*Saskatoon also has 1 temporary position that is filled.

## 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).*

Seven regions reported no service delivery issues, while four regions reported service delivery issues. Of the four regions that reported issues, one stated moderate issues (including 6 months of waiting for children testing and no adult service except for emergent situations), two regions reported significant issues (including a backlog of service due to a shortage of Psychologists Masters level and another region has no Psychologists to provide service at present) and one region reported critical issues.

One region is utilizing a contract arrangement to ensure the continuation of this function. This region reported no service delivery issues.

One region attributed current service issues to budget constraints rather than a shortage of Psychologists Masters level. This region does not have any current vacancies.

**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)*

The provincial vacancy rate for full time Psychologists Masters level is 12.5%. No part time vacancies were reported.

Two regions reported significant issues with respect to vacancies. This represents a total of 4 full time vacant positions (out of a total of 6 full time positions). One region has experienced vacancies since July 2002 and September 2003. The other region has experienced vacancies since February 2000 and April 2003.

Recently, HSAS surveyed members in this classification. Respondents reported there were 13 vacancies, which would translate into a 34.67% vacancy rate. The survey claims low response rates and the somewhat unclear distinction between this classification and the Ph.D. Psychologist classification.

**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 terminations, the following is reported:

2003 – 5 resignations

2002 – 5 resignations

2001 – 10 resignations

The resignations above include reasons that may include retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, and others. Regions reported many incumbents who terminated to take positions with other regions as well as Psychologist positions in Alberta.

**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)*

Regions have utilized several recruitment and retention initiatives: offering higher initial pay rates (5 employers), advertising (9 regions), changing job responsibilities (3 regions), using other classifications (5 regions), attending career fairs (4 regions), offering relocation assistance (6 regions), offering training allowance (6 regions), and offering a hiring bonus (3 regions). One region utilizes a contract service to maintain this function.

Saskatchewan Health currently offers bursaries to students in the amount of \$7,000 each.

As mentioned previously in this report, the Saskatchewan Registered Psychologists Act now allows Masters level Psychologists to be registered to practice in Saskatchewan. Two of the largest funders of private practice in the province i.e. SGI and WCB still require Ph.D. qualifications to perform assessments but many Employee Assistance Programs utilize Masters level Psychologists. With these recent changes to the Act, it is difficult at this time to determine the supply and demand for these professionals given potential opportunities in the private sector.

**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)*

At present, the rate of pay for Masters level Psychologists is \$30.261/hr, and the Senior level is \$32.682 (both are top rate).

The Masters level pay rate in Alberta is \$30.08/hr (top rate), and the Manitoba rate is \$29.927/hr. British Columbia employs Ph.D. level Psychologists rather than Masters level at this time.

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- Seven of the eleven reporting regions are not experiencing any service delivery issues related to Masters level Psychologists. Three regions are experiencing the majority of the service issues in the province.
- Two of the eleven employers that reported are experiencing most of the vacancies in the province i.e. four of six full time vacancies.
- With the changes to the *Saskatchewan Registered Psychologists Act* in March 2002, there is no conclusive evidence at this time regarding the supply and demand for Masters level Psychologists in the private sector, although the situation needs to be monitored closely.
- Bursaries are available to students in the Masters level Psychologist program from the Department of Health in the amount of \$7,000.
- Regions have utilized other classifications such as Psychometrician, Mental Health Therapist and Social Worker, to alleviate workload issues and to assist in the delivery of service.

Having reviewed the information as provided by employers and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends:

- That a market supplement not be implemented for the Masters level Psychologist at this time

## APPENDIX A

### Market Supplement Consideration Request – Psychologist Masters Level

#### Employer Respondents

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