

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Orthotist  
(Annual Review)**

**Final Report**

**October 15, 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 the Orthotist classification.

## OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed documentation for the Orthotist classification which was submitted for the first annual review further to the market supplement resulting from the SAHO/Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan negotiations in the fall of 2002.

Although this classification received a market supplement, this is the first full analysis and review by the Market Supplement Review Committee.

One Health Region reported that they employ Orthotists. Other regions use other agencies such as the Saskatchewan Abilities Council and private services.

This classification is under the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

Role of an Orthotist:

*Orthotists help those who have physical limitations by designing, constructing and fitting orthopedic braces and supports. They work closely with doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others in rehabilitation medicine. After assessing the needs of a patient, the Orthotist may fabricate the support personally, or may develop specifications for its construction by a technician. The device is then fitted and adjusted to the patient. From time to time, repairs and maintenance work must also be done.*

*Orthotists work in rehabilitation centres, and in private practice.*

Qualifications:

*Orthotists are graduates of a two year course and must be certified by the Canadian Board of Certification for Prosthetists and Orthotists. After twenty two months of work experience under the guidance of a certified Orthotist, graduates may write the*

*National Certification exam of the Canadian Board of Certification for Prosthetists and Orthotists.*

*In Canada, there are three schools of Orthotics and Prosthetics i.e. British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), in Burnaby, B.C., George Brown College, in Toronto, Ontario, and College Montmorency, in Laval, Quebec. Three western provinces i.e. B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan, jointly fund the Orthotist and Prosthetist program at BCIT. BCIT accepts ten applications every second year to the program. Applications are accepted on a pro-rated basis from each of these three provinces. The next intake of students will be September 2004.*

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

**Orthotists – Budgeted and vacant positions**

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of August, 2003)		Number of Vacant Budgeted Positions (As of August, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
Regina Qu'Appelle	3	-	1	-	33%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0%</b>

**ANALYSIS**

The MSRC discussed the Labour Market Criteria as guided 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).*

The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region reported service delivery issues. Reduced staffing for the Orthotist positions has resulted in reduced intake to the program, increased client wait lists, increased turnaround time for products and decreased revenue for the department. Long wait lists impact client satisfaction and recovery. Currently, wait lists for specific products can be six months.

Alternate service delivery methods that were reported include: transfer out of patients and referral to private industry.

**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).*

Currently, there is one reported vacant Orthotist position at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. This vacancy has been on-going for the past few years. Hiring Orthotists is very difficult given the low number of graduating students and the high demand for this profession.

**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.).*

Orthotists are in high demand across North America. At the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region one Orthotist left in 1999 to private practice and one employee left in 1998.

**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).*

Standard recruitment and retention initiatives that have been reported include: advertising i.e. internet, trade journals, mail outs, career fairs, etc

Other reported initiatives included: offering a higher initial rate of pay; promoting flexible hours; professional growth opportunities such as to conferences; bursaries; relocation allowance i.e. \$4,000 maximum; and, the use of interns. In addition, the health region provided financial support to one certified Orthotist to participate on the BCIT Orthotist/Prosthetist Program Advisory Board.

On-going recruitment efforts have not been successful to date.

**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).*

Market comparisons are made with private practice as well as Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. In Alberta, bargaining for the Orthotist classification is still in progress at the time of this report.

Prior to October 16, 2002, Orthotists earned: \$29.231/hr. (Certified top rate): As of October 16, 2002, Orthotists (Certified top rate) earned \$32.809/hr. (top rate – including market supplement). This represents a \$3.578 per hour (or 12.2%) increase.

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- Orthotists received a market supplement as part of the SAHO/HSAS collective bargaining process in the fall of 2002. This is the first review of this classification by the MSRC.
- There is a limited supply of Orthotists in Canada. There are only three schools in Canada that graduate candidates to this profession.
- Vacancies, both historically and current are difficult to recruit to for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.
- Orthotists are in great demand by private clinics and other health care employers across North America including the United States.

Having reviewed the employer information and considering the labour market criteria defined by the market supplement framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends:

- To maintain the current market supplement for the Orthotist classification

10/15/03

**APPENDIX A**

**Market Supplement Consideration Request – Orthotist**

**Employer Respondent**

**1. Regina Qu'Appelle**