

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Respiratory Therapist  
(Annual Review)  
Final Report**

**October 15, 2003**

## 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 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 and/or retention pressures.

## OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee reviewed documentation included in the request for consideration to continue a market supplement for Respiratory Therapists. The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee March 6, 2002 with implementation on October 16, 2002. This latest report is to be considered as part of the on-going review of the market supplement process for this classification as described in the HSAS Letters of Understanding.

There were six health regions that reported to this analysis on Respiratory Therapists. Respiratory Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS).

Role of a 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 Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (C.S.R.T.) and, successful completion of an exam approved by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists. Membership in the C.S.R.T. and the Saskatchewan Association of Respiratory Therapists (S.A.R.T.) is mandatory.*

*Respiratory Therapists may require up to six months of orientation and training.*

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

**Table 1 – Respiratory Therapist – Budgeted and vacant positions (August, 2003)**

Health Regions	Number of Budgeted Positions (As of August, 2003)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of August, 2003)		% Vacancy	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Five Hills	1	-	-	-	-	-
Prairie North	1	-	-	-	-	-
Prince Albert Parkland	3	-	1	-	33.3%	-
*Regina Qu'Appelle	41	1	2	-	4.8%	-
Saskatoon	24	5	-	-	-	-
Sunrise	3	-	1	-	33%	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>-</b>

\*The position numbers provided by Regina Qu'Appelle in 2002 did not include the sleep clinic and the pulmonary function testing departments.

**Respiratory Therapist - Budgeted and vacant position comparisons (2002/2003)**

Respiratory Therapist Classification	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 (All Regions)</b>	60	7	16	3	27%	43%
<b>COMPARISON (2002 vs. 2003)</b>	+13	-1	-12	-3	-21.6%	-43%

**Note: The data in Table 1 and Table 2 may be incomplete as not all the same employers may have reported data for both years.**

## 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).*

Health Regions have reported that although service delivery issues remain, overall service has improved because of their ability to recruit to longstanding vacancies. Two regions reported no service issues at all while one region reported significant difficulty in providing service because of on-going vacancies including temporary vacancies.

One region has hired eight new Respiratory Therapists who are currently receiving orientation.

**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).*

Collectively, there has been a reduction in the provincial vacancy rate of Respiratory Therapists by 21.6% (full time) since the last report i.e. 2002, March.

One region reported a reduction in recruiting time from eight months to two months in the past 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 report and track terminations, the following data is reported:

- 2002 – 7
- 2001 – 12

Terminations reported above include reasons such as retirements, spousal transfer, wage rates, and others. Of those who moved out of province, Alberta, B.C. and Ontario were the identified destinations. Historical turnover data is inconsistently tracked and may be incomplete and approximate.

One region has stated that prior to market supplement wage rates that the primary reason for staff resignations was wages. This region now indicated that turnover rates are less, and the primary reason for recent resignations was for family reasons.

**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 the following recruitment and retention initiatives: offering higher initial pay rates (two regions); increasing the number of FTE's (one region); attending career fairs (four regions); relocation i.e. \$2,000 to \$4,000 (four regions); bursaries i.e. \$3,000 (two regions); training allowances (three regions); and implementing student practicum's (three regions).

In 2002, a Respiratory Therapist program was initiated through an agreement with Alberta Learning, Saskatchewan Health, Regina Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon Health Region. The program purchases seats at the Southern Applied Institute of Technology in Calgary for Saskatchewan residents and allows them to perform their clinical training in Saskatchewan. The program sponsors eight Respiratory Therapists per year for the province. The regions are optimistic that with the market supplement rate of pay, graduates of the program can be recruited and retained.

**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).*

Saskatchewan health regions have improved their competitive position for Respiratory Therapists over the past year with the implementation of a market supplement. Comparisons are still made by the regions with health care employers in Alberta. Bargaining for this position is in progress in Alberta at the time of this report.

Prior to October 16, 2002, the wage rates (top step) for Staff Respiratory Therapists was \$21.902/hour and \$22.648/hour for the Senior level. As of October 16, 2002, wage rates for Staff

Respiratory Therapists increased to \$27.000/hour and to \$29.160/hour for the Senior level (including market supplement). This represents a \$5.098 per hour (or 23.21%) increase (Staff level), and a \$6.512 per hour (or 28.7%) increase (Senior level).

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- Overall delivery of service has improved for health regions since the last Market Supplement Review Committee report because of successful recruitment to long standing vacancies.
- Vacancy rates have improved by 21.6% since the last Respiratory Therapist report by the Market Supplement Review Committee.
- Regions report that the market supplement has had a positive impact on recruitment and retention.

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

- To maintain the current market supplement for the Respiratory Therapist classification.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Market Supplement Consideration Request – Respiratory Therapists**

#### **Employer Respondents**

1. Five Hills
2. Prairie North
3. Prince Albert Parkland
4. Regina Qu'Appelle
5. Saskatoon
6. Sunrise