MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Report of the Market Supplement Review Committee

Medical Sonographer Dual Credential

August 24, 2022

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) 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 also 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:

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

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed documentation submitted in the review process for consideration of a market supplement for the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Dual Credential classification. The request for a market supplement review was made by Service Employees' International Union (SEIU-West).

This Market Supplement Review included the following classifications;

- #352 Diagnostic Medical Sonographer – Dual Credential

Sonographers are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU), and Service Employees' International Union (SEIU-West).

There were three locations throughout the SHA that contributed data for this analysis on Diagnostic Medical Sonographer – Dual Credential.

Role of a Sonographer:

> *Sonographers perform a variety of ultrasound techniques in order to provide images to assist with the detection and diagnosis of conditions and diseases. Specifics of the job include: preparing, assessing and imaging patients; preparing, organizing, processing and reporting test results; assisting physicians during interventional procedures; quality assurance/quality control checks on all equipment; and participating in research projects as per designated protocol and criteria.*

Qualifications:

> *A Sonographer must possess a Diagnostic Medical Sonography diploma, and be certified by Sonography Canada as a Canadian Registered Generalist Sonographer.*

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

Table I: Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Dual Credential – Budgeted and Vacant Positions:

Number of Budgeted Positions (As of August 2022)		Number of Vacant Positions (As of August 2022)		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
12	4	2	2	16.67%	50.00%

ANALYSIS

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

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS: *(Respondents 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.)*

One location reported no service delivery issues; one reported minor issues; and one experienced significant issues that are contributing to wait lists, restricted/reduced service, and delays in patient flow throughout the system.

One reported that limited resources are resulting in patients being referred to private clinics and/or the use of contract sonographers.

VACANCY RATE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents 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.)*

There were 12 full-time and four part-time vacancies reported in this review, for vacancy rates of 16.67% and 50.00% respectively.

TURNOVER RATES: *(Respondents 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.)*

The following turnover is reported:

- Last 12 months = 3 (2 other employment; 1 other reasons).
- Previous 12 months = 0

RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents 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).*

From this review one respondent reported average recruiting times of three years. Relocation, recruitment and bursary incentives, with return for service agreements are offered. They also provide practicum placements and mentoring for students. Because there is no Sonography training program in Saskatchewan, it is a challenge to attract and retain new graduates to the province.

Respondents generally used typical recruiting/retention measures (i.e. advertising online; attending career fairs; and other networking activities).

SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS: *(Respondents 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 rates for Western Canada public health care employers. Saskatchewan leads both British Columbia (by 5.96%) and Manitoba (by 4.28%), and Alberta Health Services leads Saskatchewan (by 11.30%).

The MSRC reports the following market conditions for Sonographers:

- Saskatchewan Health Authority – Medical Diagnostic Sonographer Dual Credential - maximum $48.29/hour. Effective April 1, 2022.
- Alberta Health Services – Diagnostic Sonographer I - maximum $50.64/hour. Effective April 1, 2019.
- British Columbia Regional Health Authorities – Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (Grade II) - maximum $44.52/hour. Effective April 1, 2021.
- Manitoba Regional Health Authorities – Senior Sonographer - maximum $45.316/hour. Effective April 1, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- One of the respondents experienced minor service delivery issues due to recruitment and retention pressures, one respondent experienced minor service delivery issues and one experienced none.
- Vacancy rates of 16.67% for full-time and 50.00% for part-time positions were reported for this this classification.

Having reviewed the information as provided by respondents, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee does not recommend implementing a market supplement for the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Dual Credential classification.