MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Report of the Market Supplement Review Committee

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer

August 24, 2022

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Authority 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:
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.

OVERVIEW

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

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.*

This Market Supplement Review included the following classifications;

- #105 Diagnostic Medical Sonographer

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 seven locations throughout the SHA that contributed data for this analysis on Diagnostic Medical Sonographer.

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

Table 1 – Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (Budgeted and Vacant Positions):

Number of Budgeted Positions (August 2022)		Number of Vacant Positions (August 2022)		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
34	11	3	2	8.82%	18.18%

ANALYSIS

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

Seven locations participated in this review.

Three locations reported minor to moderate service delivery issues, three locations reported significant delivery issues and one reported critical service delivery issues.

One location reported they only have one FT Sonographer. That location has patients traveling to Saskatoon or Swift Current for service as they can't handle the workload.

Sonographers are identified as a hard to recruit occupation. They are eligible for a range of incentives including recruitment and relocation with return for service agreements. Students are offered practicum placements and there has been attendance at career fairs.

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 three full-time vacancies and two part-time vacancies reported by respondents, for vacancy rates of 8.82% and 18.18% respectively. Four of the locations reported no vacancies.

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.)*

Reported external turnover did not appear to be related to market competition. Employees were reported as leaving the reporting seven locations but related to other employment, same occupation not related to wages/benefits (1), retirement (3), medical leave (2), family reasons (5) and other employment, retirement, failed probation/dismissal (5)

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.)*

Sonographers are identified as a hard to recruit occupation. They are eligible for a range of incentives including recruitment and relocation with return for service agreements. Students are offered practicum placements and there has been attendance at career fairs.

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 12.34%) and Manitoba (by 7.88%) and pays less than Alberta Health Services (by 11.30%).

- Saskatchewan Health Authority – Medical Diagnostic Sonographer - maximum of $48.29 per hour with three steps as of April 1, 2022.
- Alberta Health Services – Diagnostic Sonographer I – maximum of $50.64 per hour with nine steps as of April 1, 2019.
- British Columbia Regional Health Authorities – Diagnostic Medical Sonographer I – maximum of $41.50 with 6 steps. Effective April 1, 2021.
- Manitoba Regional Health Authorities – Diagnostic Medical Sonographer – maximum of $43.609. Effective April 1, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering all the labour market criteria defined by the Market Supplement Program, the Market Supplement Review Committee makes the following conclusions:

- Three of the seven locations were reporting significant service delivery issues related to recruitment and retention concerns. Three locations have been experiencing some impacts upon service delivery issues and one location has experienced critical impacts.
- A total of three full-time vacancies and two part-time vacancy were reported, for vacancy rates of 8.82% and 18.18% respectively.
- Most respondents reported that sonographers are in demand and difficult to recruit.

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 classification at this time.