

SGEU Health Providers COVID-19 Pandemic Update

April 30, 2020



SGEU Health Provider Members:

We are reaching out to all SGEU health provider members to thank you for the service you have been providing to clients, patients and residents during this difficult time as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to move into different areas of the province.

The situation is changing rapidly and new rules and processes are being put in place to try to prevent the spread of the virus and keep people safe. The provincial government and the Saskatchewan Health Authority recently implemented strict guidelines for health providers and all those who live in northern Saskatchewan.

The community of La Loche has been particularly hard hit, but other areas of the north have also been impacted. We would like to acknowledge and commend you for the hard work you are doing in the workplace and for practicing social/physical distancing, hand hygiene and using other precautions to help flatten the curve. We want you to know that all of these actions are working, and together we will overcome this pandemic scare. We know it hasn't been easy for you or your families; we are thinking and praying for all of you as we continue to battle through Covid-19. Keep up the great work.

As your elected representatives, the members of the SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee have heard many of your concerns and questions. In some cases, answers are not yet known. However, we want to assure you that we are doing everything possible to raise your concerns and questions with senior representatives of the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and the Ministry of Health. One of our priorities is to keep you safe so that you are able to do your job caring for those who need you the most.

We have sent an official letter, signed by SGEU president Bob Bymoen, to the Minister of Health, pointing out how serious the situation is and asking for a commitment to take further action in addition to the measures the government announced last week.

These are some of the issues and concerns we have raised with the government:

Self-isolation - Health providers or others are asked to self-isolate because they have been in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, but we need clarity about the specific guidelines for self-isolation.

Testing and tracing – Additional resources are being put in place in various locations across Saskatchewan to ensure testing takes place quickly and that there is fast and thorough tracing when someone has been exposed to COVID-19. We continue to advocate for priority testing for all health care employees and long term care (LTC) residents.

Recognizing ALL health care providers – It's important to recognize and thank all those who contribute to the health care system in the fight against COVID-19. All health care employees deserve our thanks but, perhaps more importantly, they also deserve to be provided with the appropriate level of protection, communication and access to ensure they are safe at work.

Collective Bargaining Rights – The Employer and all managers must remember to follow the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Health Providers. This document is very important because it is meant to protect the rights of health providers, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have questions or concerns about these or any other issues, please contact one of the members of the SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee.

#staysafe

In Solidarity,

SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee

Tracey Sauer, Chair

Diane Ralph, Vice-Chair

Jolean Brochu, Member, KTHR

Ryan Favel, Member, KYRHA

Wendy McPhail, Member, MCRRHA

Danny Hind and Kim Nordmarken, Labour Relations Officers