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July 30, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Media Release: It's Time to Focus on Fairness**

**(SASKATCHEWAN)** The unions representing health care providers in Saskatchewan are concerned that the latest expansion of the COVID-19 wage top-up for essential workers still falls short.

On July 30, the government announced it would be lifting the income threshold and expanding coverage for workers at integrated facilities.

The government's latest expansion of the provincial wage top-up for essential workers is a step in the right direction, but it still leaves too many frontline workers behind," said Pearl Blommaert, Vice President of CUPE Local 5430. "Our members who work in acute care, and many other areas are not included in the expansion. Every health care worker deserves recognition for the unprecedented challenges they are dealing with every day."

The unions are also concerned about the limited duration covered by the funding.

"We are still in the midst of the pandemic. Case numbers in the province are increasing at a frightening rate every day. Saskatchewan now has the highest number of COVID-19 cases per capita of any province," said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. "We know the tremendous effort and sacrifice that is occurring with cohorting, denied vacation, crushing workloads, regular occurrences of understaffing – all of which play a role in creating a stressful work and care environment. It doesn't make sense for the top-up to end on July 4, when we are still facing all of the same stressors and risks.

The health provider unions have been actively campaigning to expand the wage top-up. An on-line campaign [www.skhealthproviders.ca](http://www.skhealthproviders.ca) provided an opportunity for members of the general public to speak out directly and let our government know that their plan was unfair.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on how important it is to maintain publicly funded health care," said Tracey Sauer, Chair of the SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee. "Premier Scott Moe, Health Minister Jim Reiter and the entire Sask Party government must work with us to ensure safe staffing levels, adequate



protections in the workplace and recognition for the increased stress and higher risk health care providers face during the pandemic. This will allow our members to provide quality professional care based on people's needs now and in the future."

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