



## **Joint Statement: COVID-19**

***March 16, 2020***

We have been actively monitoring the growing issue around COVID-19 and how it affects not only health care members but members in all the sectors that we represent. We have been considering the best advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan which changes as this outbreak evolves.

We have begun daily conversations, with follow up, with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and all health care unions to ensure that we are responding to this outbreak with solid evidence and calm advice.

If you are sick – do not go to work... it is really that simple; contact your employer to advise of your illness. Practice increased safety in social contacts: cough/sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve; don't touch your face; wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds; no handshakes or hugs; if you feel ill with COVID-19 symptoms, call 811 for advice.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be at the highest standards. We believe that should be the N95 masks and adopting the precautionary principle in order to both address and contain this outbreak and adequately protect those responsible for assessing COVID-19 in our communities.

Presently, in assessment sites, gown, gloves, mask and face shields are the current direction from SHA for 'droplet precaution' and we continue to demand the higher standard of N95 masks to ensure the safety of all healthcare workers. We are waiting for answers from the SHA and the Ministry of Health.

You have the right under the *Saskatchewan Employment Act* to refuse work that you believe, on reasonable grounds, is unusually dangerous to you or anyone else in the workplace. An example of unusual danger can include not being provided with the proper PPE.

We strongly encourage members to check the Government of Saskatchewan website for the latest information: [www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus).

Also, advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada is information worth having: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html)

Our members are at the front line of this outbreak. You have the skill and expertise to respond to this challenge. Do your work – take your time to ensure that all aspects are done properly. Look to proper protocols for safety – for yourself, your families, and the people we serve in our work. Stay in touch with your union if you have any questions about what is happening.

In solidarity,

Tracy Sauer, Chair SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee; Barb Cape, President SEIU-West; and Sandra Seitz, President CUPE 5430