

SGEU Health Providers COVID-19 Pandemic Update

April 17, 2020



Your SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee, along with other unions representing health care workers across Saskatchewan, has been continuously demanding that the Saskatchewan Government and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) put the needs and safety of patients, clients and residents first, by giving our members as well as all health care workers the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and staffing levels we need to do our jobs. We continually pushed for appropriate PPE and finally, we were heard. Continuous masking in Long Term Care (LTC) and all patient areas was a great first step. We continue to fight to ensure appropriate PPE is also provided for Home Care staff and workers in Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

Today, the Saskatchewan Government announced the cohorting of Long Term Care (LTC) workers to begin on April 28, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our LTC facilities.

Subsequently, your SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee, along with other health care unions, successfully secured a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, guaranteeing protection for workers in the event that they are asked to work in a different location and/or union jurisdiction during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following protections for workers and the people we provide care for are covered by this LOU in the event that employees are redeployed (moved) to work in another area, or when cohorting (workers to remain in one facility/area) occurs:

- Clear parameters will be in place regarding the redeployment of workers to respond to COVID-19 health care needs.
- A Labour Pool of workers will be created, matching worker skills and availability to respond to emergent needs to help ensure worker and public safety.
- Employees redeployed shall not suffer from monetary loss due to redeployment. All reasonable costs incurred, including accommodation and travel expenses, shall be reimbursed.
- Guaranteed hours will be maintained for those workers who have previously worked in multiple facilities/areas but who may now be reduced to one area/facility.
- No new layoffs shall occur for the duration of the LOU.
- Our members will not be removed from relief/call-in lists in the event that they are unable to work in those areas due to cohorting or COVID-19 health care needs.
- Members will have the ability to opt out of redeployment based on exceptions.
- The employer will ensure appropriate training and orientation to the new work area and will provide the appropriate PPE.

- All members who have asked and offered will be given the opportunity to do more to help in this crisis, and negotiated language will protect their interests.

SGEU Health Provider members who leave their regular workplaces to work in other areas or locations that are covered by different union affiliations will remain SGEU Health Provider members. Your SGEU Health Provider Collective Bargaining Agreement will follow you. You will continue to earn your SGEU accruals such as seniority and benefits. You will remain covered by SGEU Long Term Disability.

We will be posting the LOU in its entirety as soon as it becomes available. If you have any questions regarding the LOU, please contact: Tracey Sauer at tsauer@sgeu.org or Diane Ralph at dralph@sgeu.org.

As you know, the pandemic has created an environment that continues to evolve very quickly, but we are committed to updating you as soon as possible when changes occur. Look for new updates on the SGEU Health Provider [website](#) or [Facebook page](#). We encourage you to sign up for the SGEU [Health Provider App](#) for a convenient way to access information on your mobile phone. You will also find helpful information on the [provincial government's COVID-19 website](#).

Thank you to each one of you for the work you are doing to ensure patients, clients and residents receive the care they need, especially during this difficult time. Please continue to do everything possible to keep yourself, your coworkers and your families safe. #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