

For immediate release, June 4, 2009

Essential Services Final Notice Sent to CUPE

The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) advised that the final notice of essential services will be delivered to CUPE by the health regions by the end of the week. Last month CUPE announced it was taking a strike vote, triggering the section of the legislation that obligates health care employers, who do not have an essential services agreement with CUPE, to serve final notice to the union and those employees declared essential. The five health regions impacted by potential job action by CUPE members are Prairie North, Prince Albert Parkland, Regina Qu'Appelle, Sun Country and Sunrise.

Under the legislation, if there is a potential work stoppage and an essential services agreement has not been reached with the union, the employer must serve notice to the union. The list of services, classifications, and names and numbers of employees will be provided to CUPE this week and letters will be issued by employers to all employees named essential. It is expected that the delivery of the letters will take place over the next few days.

Susan Antosh, President and CEO of SAHO commented on the process. "Employers are without an essential services agreement as CUPE has refused to negotiate the draft notices provided to the union. Due to a potential strike, employers have taken the next step in ensuring that essential services are maintained to prevent danger to life, health or safety of the public."

Draft notices named approximately 75% of the full time equivalent (FTE) positions represented by the provider group as essential. To provide coverage for leaves of absence the employees are entitled to under the terms of the collective agreement, particularly moving into a high vacation leave period, a higher number of the individual part time and full time employees, as well as casual workers, may have been named as essential.

"The union is making claims that misrepresent the proposals that SAHO has presented at meetings to negotiate a collective agreement and are using those statements to take a strike vote," said Antosh. "The union is entitled to take a strike vote and use that as a bargaining tool, but employers need to be prepared to maintain essential services in the event of a strike. This step will provide some assurance to clients, patients and residents that if the union does

.....page 2

Essential Services Final Notice Sent to CUPE (cont.)

withdraw services, at a minimum those services named essential will be maintained.”

Meetings between CUPE and SAHO to negotiate a collective agreement are expected to continue as scheduled on June 10 – 12 and June 15 - 17.

-30-

Background information on the employers’ response to CUPE’s claims can be found at www.working-together.info under CUPE.

*SAHO represents more than 40 health care employers in the province.
SAHO is a non-profit, non-government association that provides leadership, advocacy, support and programs for member health agencies throughout the province.*

For more information, contact:
Marj Gavigan,
Director, Member Relations,
SAHO
306.347.5558
306.529.6211 (cell)