

Understanding the Final Offer

Regional Health Authorities are responsible for providing health care services to the residents of Saskatchewan – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Maintaining that responsibility takes significant coordination and the skills and experience of a diverse group of professionals. Health employers respect all health care workers and their contributions to providing quality patient care.

Recruiting and retaining nurses in a competitive market takes time and resources. Initiatives to meet recruitment and retention requirements have been addressed in the Government / SUN Partnership Agreement, the final offer presented by SAHO to SUN to conclude the Collective Agreement, and in other efforts funded by the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities.

Responses to concerns raised by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have been provided in a variety of ways:

Issues	SAHO's Final Offer	Partnership Agreement
<p>Recruitment and retention – Initiatives to provide competitive wages and benefits and a quality workplace are included in the final offer and the Partnership Agreement. Each item is offered as incentive to consider or continue a nursing career in Saskatchewan.</p> <p>Elements of the offer address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing more hours for part-time or new nurses who would like closer to full-time hours; • recognizing the value of senior nurses' experience; • providing flexibility for nurses who are also having families; • opportunities for learning through mentorship, orientation and professional development; • the retention of long service nurses, as it has a significant impact on their ultimate retirement income. <p>Recruitment and retention is primarily the responsibility of the employer, and regional health authorities have made significant efforts in the last 18 months to address this issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship program for new hires, nurses returning to their position after extended leave and those who acquire a new position. • Up to six weeks of orientation for new hires based on employer assessment of need and in consultation with the employee. • Providing 16 hours of paid education leave to mentors and those being mentored. • One paid day of professional development for each full time equivalent position. • Maternity/paternity/adoption supplemental employment benefits introduced so the employee receives up to 75% of the employee's regular rate of pay. • Premium rates have been increased for in charge pay, regular and special standby, shift differential and weekends. • Moving allowances and Northern living allowances increased. • 2% long service increase to wages for nurses with 20 or more years of service in the bargaining unit. • Service recognition bonus paid to all nurses in year 3 and 4 of the proposed collective agreement. • Maintain current premiums and benefits for extended health and dental benefits during the 4 years of the proposed agreement. • Positions of .3 full time equivalent or less which are vacated may be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from government and RHAs to recruit nurses to achieve the target of 800 nurses over four years is provided under the Government/SUN Partnership Agreement and would be redundant in the collective agreement. • The SUN/Government Partnership will be requested to research and develop initial framework to identify initiatives for late career nurses and potential funding.



<i>Issues</i>	<i>SAHO's Final Offer</i>	<i>Partnership Agreement</i>
<p>Minimum staffing – Maintaining a minimum number of full time equivalent positions demonstrates a commitment to stabilize the current nursing work force and enhance patient/client safety. The proposal to suspend abolishment of nursing positions until March 20, 2012 is an enhancement to the commitment established in the Partnership Agreement.</p> <p>Overtime – The employers acknowledge there are pockets of high overtime demand. These may be alleviated through recruitment of nurses and filling vacancies.</p> <p>Professional Standards – As per legislation, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses’ Association and the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan set professional standards for their members. Saskatchewan’s collective agreement already has the strongest language in the country regarding professional standards and employers are accountable for providing a working environment consistent with nursing standards, practices and procedures.</p>	<p>offered to part time employees in the work area requesting more hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse Practitioner premium of \$6 per hour. • Wage increases of 5%-5%-5%-5%, a market adjustment of 5%, and the addition of a new step in the wage scale to provide competitive wages with other provinces. <p>An agreement to maintain the number of full time equivalent (FTE) RN/RPN positions within each regional health authority as at November 1, 2007 (approximately 5,900 provincially). A letter of understanding deals with no abolishment of nursing positions during the four year agreement except in specific circumstances. These specific circumstances would include reduction of service, facility or unit closures, mergers or transfers. In those cases where such reductions meant FTE numbers would fall below the numbers on November 1, 2007, positions would be created elsewhere in the RHA.</p> <p>Overtime compensated at 2 times the regular rate of pay. Current language on overtime assignment remains.</p> <p>New provision added to introduce an expedited process at the point of care for nurses to report situations, where in their professional opinion, nursing standards may not have been met.</p>	<p>Commitment to hire 800 nurses by filling 600 existing vacancies and hiring 200 nurses.</p>

