

For immediate release, June 10, 2011

Union rejects strong offer, continues to make unreasonable wage demands
SAHO urges HSAS to take final offer to members for a vote

The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) is disappointed that the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) has rejected SAHO's substantial and fair wage offer and continues to make unrealistic wage demands.

On Wednesday, SAHO significantly increased its wage offer to an average of 11 per cent over four years, which includes a 7.5 per cent general wage increase for all HSAS employees, with additional market adjustments for specified classifications. This offer would make most base classifications the second-highest in western Canada.

However, HSAS rejected this offer and has resumed job action, disrupting health services for Saskatchewan people. The union is demanding general wage increases of 14.5 per cent, plus even higher wages for certain classifications and significantly higher shift and weekend premium rate increases. A conservative estimate of the cost of the union's monetary demands is \$85 million over four years, resulting in a significant ongoing future cost to taxpayers.

SAHO President and CEO Susan Antosh said SAHO made it clear that the offer presented Wednesday was a final offer. SAHO is urging HSAS to take this fair and reasonable offer to its members for a vote. "The offer provides wage rates for employees that are equal to, or higher than the western Canadian average," Antosh said. "It includes maternity benefits and additional increases that the union identified as priority items. We believe we have been reasonable and thoughtful in our approach to ensure employees are paid competitive wages when compared to the western Canadian market."

"In contrast, the union's demands are not reasonable," Antosh said. "Wage increases for all employees that are almost double what the employers have offered are far beyond what is required to be competitive in the western Canadian market."

SAHO has posted the final offer on the web site, www.working-together.info. Documents that compare wage rates in western Canada and illustrate future wage rates for Health Sciences workers are also posted.

Employees who are eligible for market adjusted rates of pay will not benefit from the increases until the date of signing the collective agreement. The final offer also proposes that retroactive pay ceased to accumulate effective April 1, 2011.

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SAHO represents more than 40 health care employers in the province.

www.working-together.info