

## Backgrounder

### **Recruitment and retention of Saskatchewan nurses**

#### **Through the government/SUN partnership agreement:**

- Commitment to hire 800 nurses by filling 600 existing vacancies and hiring 200 nurses. Funding from the provincial government and health regions to recruit nurses to achieve the target of 800 nurses over four years is provided under the SUN/government partnership agreement.
- Commitment to increase number of nursing seats by 300.
- Develop long-term nursing strategy and more detailed action plan through a facilitated process.

#### **Through Ministry initiatives:**

- *Nursing bursary program* – funding for nursing (all levels including nurse practitioners) bursaries is \$800,000 annually.
- *Recruitment agency* - \$500,000 annually to recruit health employees for the province.
- *Recruitment grants* - \$8 million allocated to nurses for grants in return for one to four years' return-in-service commitment.
- *Retention program* - \$6 million available for proposals addressing retention issues.
- *Job guarantee and mentorship program* - \$12.4 million to transition new nurse graduates with a position to work full-time alongside experienced nurses, thereby enabling them to transition into a permanent position.
- *Quality health workplace initiatives* – funding for professional development opportunities, equipment purchases, and initiatives to create a quality working environment.

#### **Through employer initiatives:**

- Health regions have demonstrated significant efforts in recruitment and retention through their own initiatives.
- Nearly 300 new nurses from the Philippines are expected to begin working in Saskatchewan in 2008; 80 nurses were recruited earlier in 2007.
- Between April 1, 2007 and February 29, 2008 the 12 health regions have spent almost \$500,000 on more than 400 advertising or direct mail efforts locally, provincially, nationally and internationally; spent more than \$800,000 on recruitment trips and job fairs, making more than 120 appearances at job fairs; provided \$1.5 million in areas such as bursaries, moving assistance and specialized training; and spent almost \$250,000 to support recruitment efforts.

**Through SAHO's final offer:**

- *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 an incentive to consider or continue a nursing career in Saskatchewan.

*Elements of the offer address:*

- 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 (maternity/parental top-up).
- Opportunities for learning through mentorship, orientation and professional development.
- Retention of long-service nurses, as it has a significant impact on their ultimate retirement income.
- Recruitment of nurses through the second-highest starting wage rate in the country.
- The strongest professional standards language in the country.
- Maintaining the current number of nursing FTEs.
- No abolishment of positions or replacement with other health care providers except in specific circumstances.
- The SUN/government partnership will be requested to research and develop an initial framework to identify initiatives for late career nurses.
- Competitive wages and benefits.