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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release: Health provider unions join forces to celebrate Licensed Practical Nurses during Nursing Week

(SASKATCHEWAN) As Saskatchewan celebrates National Nursing Week, health care provider unions are urging the Saskatchewan government to remember and recognize one key component of the nursing team that is often overlooked – Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs).

“In Saskatchewan, LPNs are front line care nurses that are responsible for managing patient care plans in collaboration with registered nurses and doctors,” said Tracey Sauer, SGEU president. “They perform much more than basic patient care, and are often specialized in critical areas, such as hemodialysis care, peri-operative care and advanced orthopedics. Many LPNs also received additional training and have been an integral part of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.”

There are approximately 3,400 LPNs working in long-term, acute and home care across Saskatchewan. Each one of them has benefitted from higher learning and is certified by the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN), under a scope of practice set up in the *LPN Act*.

“Despite training and regulation, many LPNs are not able to work to their full scope of practice because of employer policies limiting the role of LPNs,” said Sandra Seitz, CUPE 5430 president. “This means there are dedicated health care professionals who are unable to use all their skills in providing patient care. This is a concern every year, but especially in a pandemic that has seen resources across the health care system stretched thin.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been greater public appreciation of the work done by nurses and all health care workers, but LPNs are often not acknowledged for their contributions.

“Health care providers who are working through the pandemic are rightfully being seen as heroes – but that recognition needs to extend to every member of the health care team,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “This Nursing Week, we call on the



government and the employer to acknowledge LPNs and work on a strategy to bring all members of the health care team to their full scope of practice.”

Together, SGEU, SEIU-West and CUPE represent approximately 30,000 health care providers working in acute care, home care and long-term care across Saskatchewan.

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