



For immediate release

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Unions question government claims about hiring of Continuing Care Assistants

SGEU, SEIU-West and CUPE – three Saskatchewan unions representing health care providers – are concerned by the legitimacy of a recent statement by Premier Scott Moe who claimed his government has followed through on a commitment to hire additional Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) positions for home care and long-term care services.

Earlier this month, the government issued a news release and the premier claimed on Twitter that his government has filled 95 of the 108 CCA positions they committed to hiring in the 2020-2021 provincial budget. These additional health care staff were meant to address understaffed home care and long-term care services across the province but were far less than the 300 new CCAs Moe promised during the 2020 election campaign.

“The Premier wants people to believe that he’s recruited new CCAs into home care and long term care,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “But, the latest numbers the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) supplied to SEIU-West show that this is simply not true. In fact, most of the new hires were already working as CCAs in the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), often in the same facility or program, and the vast majority of these new positions are designated as temporary and/or part-time.”

“The province’s health and long-term care systems have struggled for many years due to understaffing and the government’s continuing mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused even more strain,” said Tanya Schmidt, Acting Chair of the SGEU Health Providers Bargaining Committee. “Now, instead of hiring new staff, the government is trying to squeeze a few extra hours out of an already overworked CCA workforce and that isn’t going to solve the problem for staff or the residents, clients and patients in their care.”

“The government needs to get serious about addressing a staffing crisis that has plagued Saskatchewan’s health and long-term care systems for over a decade,” said Bashir Jalloh, President of CUPE 5430. “Some people thought the premier was finally acknowledging the staffing problem in the system when he promised to hire 300 additional CCAs during the 2020 election campaign but that commitment was watered down to 108 positions in the last budget. Now, we aren’t convinced any meaningful action will occur since we can’t even confirm the existence of the new positions the government claims to have hired.”

“Sadly, due to the provincial government’s inaction, the situation in our health and long-term care systems has become untenable,” Cape added. “In many long-term care facilities today, seniors are not receiving even the most basic levels of care without assistance from their family members because of inadequate staffing levels. It’s unacceptable for Premier Moe to pat himself on the back by claiming to have hired dozens of new staff when that can’t be verified by any of the three unions representing health care providers.”

SGEU, CUPE and SEIU-West represent over 30,000 health care providers working in acute care, home care, public health and long-term care across the province.

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