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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release: To recognize Nursing Week, unions call on provincial government to end understaffing on nursing teams

(SASKATCHEWAN) Three unions representing health care providers in Saskatchewan are asking the provincial government to mark National Nursing Week by following through with their election promise to hire 300 additional Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) across the province.

“CCAs do the bulk of the hands-on care in long-term care, and are a vital part of the nursing team,” said Tracey Sauer, SGEU president. “Not only have CCAs suffered from years of understaffing but during the past year, they have also experienced some of the highest risks of contracting COVID-19. It’s shameful that the government won’t do what’s right for long-term care residents and staff, even in the middle of a pandemic.”

Since 2015, Saskatchewan’s population of those 75 years of age and over has risen by more than 10%. However, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in the CCA classification has decreased since 2015.

During the October 2020 election, Premier Scott Moe promised the addition of 300 CCAs. The recent budget announcement confirmed that, once again, the government will not be fulfilling its commitment.

“The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and the government need to fix this situation by investing in human resources in key areas like CCAs,” said Sandra Seitz, CUPE 5430 president. “These are the people everyone depends on to provide high-quality care to our loved ones in long-term care – something that should be a priority for any government.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, all three unions have been calling for fairness for their members in areas such as the temporary wage supplement, vaccine access, and adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).



“Our members have been working their tails off since the beginning of this pandemic, putting their own health and safety at risk – as they are required on an almost daily basis to work in an understaffed care environment in the midst of a pandemic,” said Barbara Cape, SEIU-West president. “We’ve heard too many empty promises from our government. During Nursing Week this year, it’s time for the Premier to follow through with much-needed support for our front-line nursing teams.”

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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