

Saskatchewan Party First Step Toward Better Health Care in Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Party will work with all stakeholders to develop a 10-year comprehensive health human resources plan to get health care back on track.

A Saskatchewan Party government will work in partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses to create a recruitment and retention program that works for nurses and benefits patients.

In addition to the current government's efforts, a Saskatchewan Party government will invest \$275 million over 4 years to:

- Hire 800 Registered Nurses, first filling the existing 600 RN vacancies, plus an additional 200 RNs within the first term of government;
- Ensure that new graduates have permanent full-time employment opportunities;
- Undertake a significant recruitment campaign to bring non-practicing RNs and LPNs back into the health care system;
- Recruit expatriates back to Saskatchewan;
- Recruit more immigrant nurses;
- Provide incentives for senior nurses to stay in the workforce longer such as recognizing long-term service and providing opportunities for mentoring new grads and immigrant nurses
- Establish a bridging program to make it easier for LPNs to become RNs;
- Provide assistance and training opportunities for professional development such as obtaining the specialized skills required in intensive care units, emergency rooms, and operating rooms;
- Increase the use of nurse practitioners; and,
- Improve workplace conditions for nurses by improving nurse/patient ratios, addressing safety issues, and providing up-to-date equipment that works.

Expanding Nursing Education Seats

A Saskatchewan Party government will work with the province's post-secondary institutions to fast-track the Integrated Health Sciences Facility at the University of Saskatchewan and create 300 new Registered Nurse education seats in Saskatchewan over four years. These seats are in addition to the commitments the current government has already made.

Every effort must be made to stabilize the nursing work force considering the impending retirements. Over the next decade about 4,000 nurses of the current 8,800 are eligible for retirement which means we could lose almost half of our workforce.

Increasing Physician Training Seats to 100

Saskatchewan has a shortage of physicians – particularly specialists – and is increasingly reliant upon physicians trained in foreign countries.

A Saskatchewan Party government will increase physician training seats at the College of Medicine to 100 to provide Saskatchewan with a comparable number of physician training seats as Manitoba.

Creating 60 New Physician Residency Positions in Saskatchewan Hospitals

All too often our medical students are forced to fulfill their residency requirements out of province. Many do not come back. Statistics show that most residents stay in the communities where they complete their residency.

A Saskatchewan Party government will provide more opportunities for doctors to complete their residency training in Saskatchewan by funding 60 additional residency training positions—with the goal of restoring the residency ratios to former levels.

Recruiting and Retaining More Doctors

A Saskatchewan Party government will work with all stakeholders, including the Saskatchewan Medical Association, to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts to increase the number of doctors in Saskatchewan by:

- Enhanced efforts to recruit expatriate physicians back to Saskatchewan;
- Taking steps to facilitate the transition phase for foreign doctors, including opportunities to take upgrading in the province;
- Increase the number of doctors working in rural areas, including locums for relief situations;
- Increasing the number of specialists where shortages exist;
- Implementing physician exit surveys to improve future retention rates; and,
- Support and improve bursary programs for local health care professionals

Premier's Council on Health Care Work Place Issues

A Saskatchewan Party government will hold quarterly meetings between the Premier and/or Minister of Health and health care worker representation to discuss work place issues such as new graduate integration, part-time/full time workers, and other work-related issues that affect workers. The purpose of the Council will be to reach consensus decisions to deal effectively with issues that affect workers and their ability to provide the best health care possible for Saskatchewan people.

Patient Exit Survey

A Patient Exit Survey will be undertaken. The survey will be filled out by patients about their health care experience. The information will be compiled and made public in a 'report card' and will be used to help improve areas of the health care system.

Wonder why Saskatchewan's waiting lists are longer than Manitoba? Let's compare the facts.

	Manitoba	Saskatchewan
Population		
Stats Can 2006	1,177,765	985,386
Health Budgets		
2007/08	\$3.9 billion	\$3.4 billion
Number of RNs		
2007	11,000	8,800
(Source: SRNA)		
Number of Doctors*		
2007	2,272	1,500 approx.
Number of GPs & Family Physicians*		
2007	1,167	800 approx.
Number of Specialists*		
2007	1,105	700 approx

*Source: Manitoba Medical Association and College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.