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COPY

Mr. Dennis Lafreniere  
Chairperson, Board of Directors  
Cypress Health Region  
429-4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE  
Swift Current Saskatchewan  
S9H 2J9

Dear Mr Lafreniere:

**CYPRESS HEALTH REGION PROGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT  
INITIATIVES AND RURAL FACILITIES**

This letter is in response to the Media Release from Cypress Health Region regarding Progressive Recruitment Initiatives.

After reviewing the Cypress Health Region's Progressive Recruitment Initiatives, we became concerned that the Initiative did not outline short term solutions to address the current staffing shortages in the Region or to deal with any crisis situation that may arise. All of the initiatives mentioned in the document relate to practices already in place which have had mixed success. The current practices also do not address the present shortage in rural facilities within the Cypress Health Region.

Throughout the Cypress Health Region there are a number of facilities where the Registered Nurse shortage is very apparent. Yet no solutions are proposed by the employer other than to reduce services.

1. In Shaunavon there are two temporary Registered Nurse vacancies which the health region has had little success in filling. SUN has encouraged the region to post permanent positions to attract Registered Nurses to Shaunavon. The region has indicated they do not feel they are resourced to take that risk.
2. In Gull Lake, the facility is operating at reduced hours because of a shortage of RN staff. The employer has not reposted this vacancy, and the manager is away on vacation until the end of August. The employer was to get back to the staff in June with how they were proposing to deal with the situation. To date the staff have not heard from the employer.
3. In Maple Creek, there are RN vacancies with some being filled by LPNs, due to the fact that the Employer has not been able to recruit RN/RPNs to those positions.
4. In Cabri, a facility that according to the Employer is fully staffed, is reducing hours of operations to allow staff to access their vacation.

5. In Eastend, there is a reduction of RN staff due to a leave of absence, which has not been filled by an RN.
6. In Leader, a permanent full time Public Health nurse position was posted which the employer was unable to fill. Part of the job has now been posted in Swift Current.

SUN has requested that the Cypress Health Region provide a detailed plan of how they intend to recruit and retain RN's and RPN's within rural facilities in the Health Region. This plan should also identify what appropriate level of staff is required in order to maintain these rural facilities and must take into account future RN/RPN requirements.

SUN has asked the Cypress Health Region to factor in their plan; the amount of overtime being paid out to already overworked staff to keep these facilities open, and the number of current RN/RPNs who are currently retired and have continued to work, and the number of RN/RPNs who will be retiring in the next couple of years.

It has been suggested to the nursing staff in Shaunavon that if there is not a registered nurse available to fill a shift, the Doctor on duty, the EMT and the nurse finishing her shift, will assess the situation and take appropriate action. This is not acceptable to SUN.

We have expressed serious concerns to the Cypress Health Region in regard to their position on insufficient nursing staff to maintain operations. To date we have not received any documentation from the Cypress Health Region that addresses our concerns noted above.

These matters require immediate action. SUN requests on behalf of our members the opportunity to attend the Cypress Health Region meeting scheduled for September 7, 2006 to outline to the Board of Directors our concerns regarding the shortage of RN/RPNs and how that impacts the future of health services in Cypress Health Region.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at the SUN office.

Yours truly,



Donna Trainor, R.N.  
Acting Executive Director

DT/gf

c.c: SUN Locals within the Cypress Health Region  
Denise Dick, SUN Board of Directors, Region 4  
Honourable Lorne Calvert, Premier  
Honourable Len Taylor, Minister of Health  
Brad Wall, Leader of the Provincial Saskatchewan Party  
Don McMorris, Opposition Whip  
David Karwacki, Leader of the Provincial Liberal Party  
Rosalee Longmoore, President, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses  
Brenda Schwan, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Cypress Health Region



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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 29, 2006

### **Health Region Pursues Progressive Recruitment Initiatives**

The Cypress Regional Health Authority (RHA) held their regular monthly meeting on June 1, 2006 at the Regional Office in Swift Current.

The RHA was provided with an update on a variety of recruitment initiatives that have been implemented to attract health care professionals to the health region. The recent addition of a Medical Affairs Coordinator position has provided early successes in the recruitment of general practitioners and specialist physicians to the health region, as well as assisting with the provision of consistent physician coverage across the region's communities.

Opportunities are also being explored to attract health care students to the region's workforce. These include the hiring of individuals that have agreed to register for an upcoming Continuing Care Assistant (home health aide, special care aide) Course, working with the Cypress Hills Regional College to hire recent graduates of the Continuing Care Aide Course, strengthening relationships with Norquest College in Edmonton to serve as practicum sites for their Licensed Practical Nurses students and the Medicine Hat College for practicum placements of Registered Nursing students, and promoting Graduate Nursing opportunities to Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan students in Regina/Saskatoon and the Medicine Hat College nursing students.

An update was provided on the recruitment process for the Chief Executive Officer position. A list of candidates has been identified that will be offered interviews in early July.

The Board reviewed the audited financial statements for the 2005-06 fiscal year and approved the statements as presented. A small operating surplus was realized during the fiscal year.

**(MORE)**

As recommended by the Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), the RHA approved the granting of privileges and credentials to several physicians who will be providing locum and student services in the health region.

The RHA will not be holding a regular monthly meeting during the month of August 2006. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2006 at the Regional Office in Swift Current. Groups or organizations wishing to make a presentation at a Regional Health Authority meeting are asked to write the Chairperson, in care of the Cypress Health Region at 429 – 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E., Swift Current, SK, S9H 2J9. All regular scheduled monthly RHA Meetings are open for the public to attend and observe.

If there is interest in addressing any of the information provided within this summary, or if a member of the public would like to offer a question/concern/compliment, please feel free to contact the Regional Office at (306) 778-5100 (telephone) or (306) 773-9513 (facsimile).

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For more information, please contact:

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Acting Chief Executive Officer  
778-5100**

**Bryce Martin  
Executive Director – Communications  
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