

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Dec. 16, 2008

Health 08-977

**PROVINCE TURNS THE CORNER AS WORK CONTINUES ON NURSING SHORTAGE**

Saskatchewan is turning the corner on nursing vacancies. According to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses' (SUN) recent nursing vacancy survey, the province has 50 fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) vacancies than last year.

To build upon this trend, the SUN/government partnership agreement today provided health regions with \$4.35 million in funding to help them reach their newly established nursing targets, and to continue working on the province's nursing shortage.

This funding flows from the \$60 million fund managed by the SUN/government partnership agreement, signed earlier this year. This agreement sets out a framework for SUN and the Ministry of Health to work with health regions, using the funding to hire 800 registered nurses with annual targets set out for achieving this goal over the next four years.

This decline in nursing vacancies is very encouraging and shows the solid progress the partnership has made since February when we signed our agreement," Health Minister Don McMorris said. "I am optimistic the funding being provided to regional committees will help address retention and recruitment issues that have been identified by frontline nurses."

"After three years of escalating nursing vacancies, we're really hoping that the decline in vacancies this year signals that we've finally turned the corner," SUN president Rosalee Longmoore said. "Of course, we have a large number of nurses eligible for retirement, so we really need to be fairly aggressive to fill current vacancies and be prepared for future retirements. The Minister's commitment to the partnership agreement, the specific targets and the funding for joint retention and recruitment committees is a very positive step for nurses and the Saskatchewan public."

SUN and the Ministry say a key element in the agreement, in addition to the newly established targets, is the collaborative problem solving approach envisioned for the Joint SUN/RHA Recruitment and Retention Committees. A portion of the \$4.35 million will be provided to each of the health regions to support the work of each Joint SUN/Health Region Retention and Recruitment Committee. These regional committees will provide a formal process to involve nurse managers and front line staff to jointly problem-solve, develop and implement recruitment and retention initiatives. These resources are intended to help address nursing recruitment and retention issues in the workplace.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Karen Hill  
Health  
Regina  
Phone: 306-787-4083

Rosalee Longmoore  
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses  
Regina  
Cell: 306-539-6162

## Nursing Targets by Health Region and Funding for Joint Recruitment and Retention Initiatives

Health Region	Initial Targets to increase SUN FTEs	Total SUN FTEs adding 2007-08 baseline plus target	Funding for 2008-09 and 2009-10
Sun Country	30	276.06	\$262,313
Five Hills	20	280.06	\$224,925
Cypress	20	218.81	\$224,928
Regina Qu'Appelle	209	1,813.81	\$933,839
Sunrise	30	377.53	\$262,625
Saskatoon	195	2,182.35	\$881,119
Heartland	20	187.52	\$225,046
Kelsey Trail	14	196.07	\$202,346
Prince Albert Parkland	60	364.27	\$375,133
Prairie North	70	439.48	\$412,583
Mamawetan Churchill River	5	32.98	\$168,929
Keewatin Yatthé	7	37.98	\$176,309
<b>Total</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>6,406.92</b>	<b>\$4,350,095</b>
Future Allocation	<b>120</b>		

### FTE – Definition

An FTE is defined as being equivalent to one full-time position. Under the SUN collective agreement this is equal to 1,948 paid hours annually.