



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, April 4, 2008

SAHO CONTRACT PROPOSALS CONSIDERED "MOST REGRESSIVE IN SUN'S HISTORY"

<<<Regina>>>The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says that the province's regional health authorities have tabled the most regressive contract proposals in SUN's history, and has predicted that hundreds of nurses will either resign or retire early in response.

The union is calling for the Minister of Health to replace the department officials and regional health authority leadership that is responsible for what SUN President Rosalee Longmoore describes as "a destructive and malicious attack on nurses and safe patient care and a crude attempt to tear up the SUN/Government Partnership."

Longmoore says, "They are refusing to commit to fill current vacancies, because they are using the vacancies to balance their budgets. Instead, they have submitted proposals that would require nurses to work unlimited overtime. That's not a retention strategy - that's a detention strategy that will backfire -nurses cannot work more and more overtime. They have a professional obligation to refuse more overtime if they are too tired to provide safe patient care. They will refuse, or they will just quit."

SUN says that regional health authorities want to muzzle nurses who report instances where safe patient care is being jeopardized. According to Longmoore, "Nurses went on strike in 1988 and 1999 to get the right to report in writing to supervisors when patient care is jeopardized. Nurses are obligated by legislation and professional standards to protect patient safety - we will never give that up."

"The Minister of Health is going to have to decide - how long is he going to continue to let his own Ministry officials and regional health authorities try to tear up the SUN/Government Partnership and avoid implementing it? How would the worst contract in SUN's history help the government achieve its retention and recruitment targets? The retention and recruitment proposals from the Partnership must be binding in the collective agreement, or regional health authorities will continue to defy the Minister," said Longmoore.

The union has advised Conciliator Doug Forseth that they are adjourning contract talks until after their annual meeting on April 23-25.

-30-

To speak to a SUN representative, please call:
Rosalee Longmoore, SUN President (306) 539-6162 (cell)