

IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SASKATCHEWAN UNION OF NURSES AND GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN SHOWS POSITIVE RESULTS

The SUN/government partnership agreement, signed 14 months ago, is showing solid results.

Health Minister Don McMorris and SUN President Rosalee Longmoore reported that health regions now employ 159 more RNs and RPNs than last year, achieving 20 per cent of the 800 target set by the SUN/government partnership. Nursing vacancies have also declined, from 793 last fall to 617 in December.

"The very existence of the partnership between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is a public policy initiative that I am extremely proud of," McMorris said. "It is unique in this country and has ended the historic divisions that existed between nursing and the health system. Nurses are now making a significant and badly needed contribution to improving workplaces and are a powerful catalyst in helping us to recruit and retain this valued and vital health resource."

"Although vacancies have declined from last year, we still have a 10 per cent vacancy rate, and we have to move quickly to fill vacancies, integrate newly hired nurses and stabilize nursing practice environments, if we are to outrun looming retirements," SUN President Rosalee Longmoore pointed out.

Both Longmoore and McMorris said that the partnership has produced much more than just increased numbers of nurses, including specific hiring targets for health regions and collaboration with health region employers.

"The Minister's leadership and commitment to work collaboratively in the partnership on an aggressive retention and recruitment program has provided a policy direction and template for the Ministry, SUN and the health regions," Longmoore said. "We've just extended that collaborative model from the SUN/government partnership table to the SUN/health region level to design strategies to achieve the targets. We've seen an enthusiastic response from nurses, and commitment from health region leadership -- that's a huge accomplishment."

The following areas of progress are noted:

- **Competition:** Salaries for Saskatchewan nurses are now directly competitive with other provinces.
- **Declining Vacancies:** Vacancies have declined from 793 last fall to 617 December 31, 2008.
- **Specific Targets:** Regional hiring targets have been established for each health region.

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- **Progress toward hiring targets:** Regina Qu'Appelle, Sunrise, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert Parkland have made substantial progress toward their hiring targets.
- **Funding Support:** Health regions that made progress toward their hiring targets over the last year have been reimbursed \$14.5 million as a retroactive annual payment for the cost of each new position or filled vacancy. As well, these same regions have had their baseline funding from the Ministry increased by 14.5 million for 2009-2010 to cover the future cost of their increased staffing.
- **Evidence-based strategies:** The partnership table is developing indicators and gathering evidence to support decision-making regarding retention and recruitment initiatives.
- **Commitment, Effort and Collaboration:** the Joint SUN/Health Region Retention and Recruitment Committees envisioned by the SUN/Government Partnership completed orientation sessions, and have begun meeting to design region-specific retention and recruitment initiatives, supported by \$4.3 million from the SUN/government partnership fund.

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BACKGROUNDER UPDATE

Note: The chart below shows the initial provincial target of 680 Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurse positions, with each health region allocated a specific target to achieve. The remaining 120 positions to achieve the total goal of 800 will be allocated at a future date.

Provincial and Regional Targets

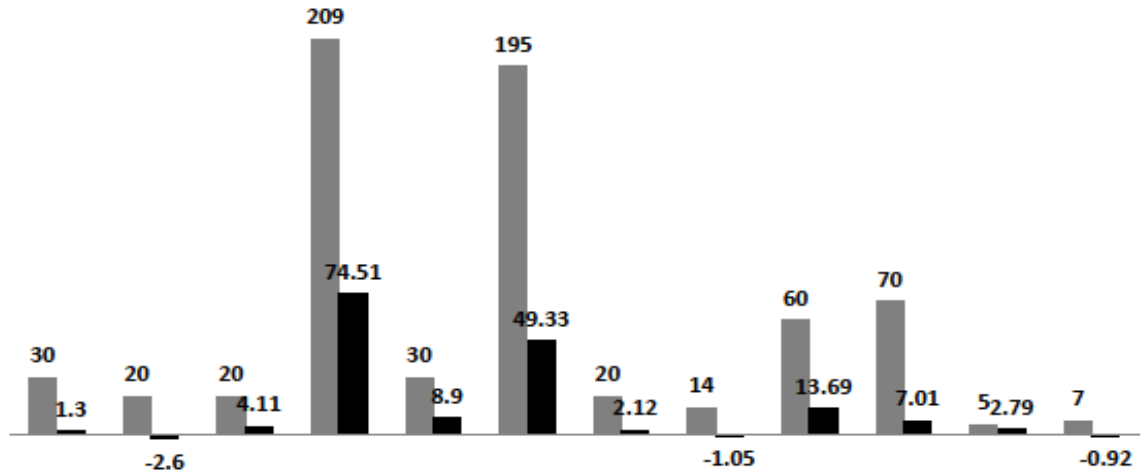
RHA	Initial Regional Targets
SUN Country	30
Five Hills	20
Cypress	20
Regina Qu'Appelle	209
Sunrise	30
Saskatoon	195
Heartland	20
Kelsey Trail	14
Prince Albert Parkland	60
Prairie North	70
Mamawetan Churchill River	5
Keewatin Yatthe	7
TOTAL	680
FUTURE ALLOCATION	120

The Chart "Health Region Retention/Recruitment Progress 2008-2009" below shows the actual gains in the number of Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses employed by each health region, compared to their initial target, for the period March 31/08 to February 28/09. (The term FTE refers to full time equivalent positions, permitting accurate counting of part-time positions).

Health regions that have increased the number of FTEs (full time equivalents) have been compensated and supported by increased baseline funding from the Ministry.

Health Region Retention/Recruitment Progress 2008-2009

■ Initial FTE Target ■ Gain or Loss in FTE



	Sun Country	Five Hills	Cypress	RQHR	Sunrise	Saskatoon	Heartland	Kelsey Trail	PA Parkland	Prairie North	Mamawetan	Keewatin
■ Initial FTE Target	30	20	20	209	30	195	20	14	60	70	5	7
■ Gain or Loss in FTE	1.3	-2.6	4.11	74.51	8.9	49.33	2.12	-1.05	13.69	7.01	2.79	-0.92