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Cuts to education and health costing Saskatchewan families

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The provincial government's decision to cut millions in funding from post-secondary education and health care in order to offset a budget deficit is short sighted and undermines public services that Saskatchewan families rely on, according to SGEU.

Among the institutions affected by these clawbacks are Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Gabriel Dumont Institute and the seven Regional Colleges.

"At a time when we are experiencing a skilled labour shortage, it doesn't make sense to cut skills training," said SGEU President Bob Bymoer. "It's counter-productive to cut funding from institutions that provide job-focused training to people and get them into the work force."

"We don't yet know the impact these cuts will have," he added, "but we anticipate they'll lead to program cuts, which will hurt young people trying to get the training they need."

The Saskatoon Health Region has also announced a plan that will erode health services and cut jobs, leaving many families concerned about job losses during the holidays.

These cuts are a sign of things to come if the provincial government moves ahead with its plan to close 40 public liquor stores, says Bymoer.

"Profits from public liquor sales help pay for Saskatchewan hospitals, schools and highways," he says. "At a time when the provincial government is scrambling to find money for public services, it doesn't make sense to sell off profitable liquor stores."

The 40 SLGA stores that are slated for closure earned profits of \$32.6 million in 2014.

"Eliminating 40 public liquor stores will drain millions in revenue from Saskatchewan's public coffers," he says. "If the government privatizes liquor sales, Saskatchewan families will be seeing more cuts to quality public services that they rely on."

Since the government closed four small town liquor stores and opened four new private stores, government revenue from liquor sales has declined for the first

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Page 2 of 2

time in at least a decade. This year's net income is \$8 million less than the year before.

"As we predicted, Saskatchewan's new private liquor stores are draining money away from public coffers," he says. "The profits the four new private stores generated could have been used to prevent these cuts to post-secondary education and health. Instead that money has been handed to private corporations."

"Where is the government's long-term planning?" he added. "Public liquor stores earn high profits for Saskatchewan people. We call on the government to stop the sell off of liquor stores and keep our public services strong."

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