



*SGEU health providers*

# Upcoming changes in health care: Government to restructure health regions

## Why this matters to you!

- Health restructuring can have a major impact on patients, residents, families, and workers.

## What's happening?

- The provincial government has set up a review panel to recommend a new health care structure with fewer health regions. According to government, the goal is to achieve administrative efficiencies as well as improvements to front-line service delivery.
- The review will also look at ways to consolidate health care services now provided through the health regions. Both clinical and support services will be considered. The government says this is to determine if it is more effective to deliver services on a province-wide basis.

## What are the major concerns for health providers?

- **Instability in the workplace** . Providing quality care is our priority. A reorganization could lead to workplace disruptions that affect services. For example, the review panel's recommendations for restructuring health regions could upset the current labour relations balance. Maintaining existing union representation is an important way to ensure certainty and continuity for staff.
- **Privatization** . Plans to consolidate services could open the door to further out-sourcing. The consolidation of laundry services a few years ago led to a province-wide privatization, with all services handed to Alberta-based K-Bro Linen. Profit-driven businesses have no place in our public health care system.

## What is SGEU doing?

- SGEU is working with other health care unions to emphasize that stability and security for workers is essential to maintaining good-quality health services.
- We have had a preliminary meeting with the review panel and are preparing a submission to outline our priorities and concerns.
- We will continue to work to ensure that any changes are in the best interests of patients, residents and families, and take into account the vital role that health providers play in delivering services.

## What can you do?

- Everyone's voice should be heard! You can let the review panel know your concerns by responding to an online survey on the government website at Saskatchewan.ca.
- The deadline for sending in your opinions is September 26, 2016.
- You don't have to answer all the questions in the online survey . only those that are relevant to you. Here are some key points you could raise in your submission:

### **Ensuring stability in the workplace**

- Maintaining high-quality health care must be the top priority.
- Health providers' work is already stressful and demanding. Any additional stress caused by instability in the workplace will have a negative effect on health services.
- Being forced to change unions as a result of reorganization would be disruptive, adding unnecessary stress and uncertainty to the workplace. For example, current rules on vacation and seniority could change.
- Staff provide the best possible quality of service when they work in a stable, predictable environment.
- Respecting the needs of health care workers is an important part of ensuring high-quality care for patients and residents.

### **Preventing privatization**

- Private companies are in business to make profits for their shareholders. Too often, privatization means that corners are cut, and quality of service is eroded. In health care, this can have disastrous results. For example:
- A researcher [interviewed hospital support workers](#) and health professionals in the Vancouver area, where cleaning and other support jobs were contracted out in 2003. He concluded that % simply put: outsourcing has made hospitals less clean and more vulnerable to outbreaks of infectious pathogens.+
- Hospitals which outsourced their cleaning staff saw substantial increases in hospital-acquired infections compared to those that maintained in-house cleaning crews, [according to a 2016 California study](#).
- Private companies are less accountable. Contracts and financial information are not available to the public. It is more difficult for patients and families to provide input and influence policies and practices when the provider is an outside organization, potentially based in another province or country.

- Privatization often leads to the loss of good, family-supporting jobs. This hurts communities, especially in rural Saskatchewan. Union jobs are replaced with low wage positions that typically offer few, if any, benefits.

**This is your chance to make your voice heard!** Tell government that you want a stable workplace . and one that is publicly owned and operated.

If you have questions or concerns about this process, please let us know.

We will continue to keep you informed about the reorganization and the impact on you.

In solidarity,

Health Providers Negotiating Committee:

Bonnie Erickson  
306-920-7668  
[berickson@sgeu.org](mailto:berickson@sgeu.org)

Kim Nordmarken  
306-276-7765  
[kimnordmarken@hotmail.com](mailto:kimnordmarken@hotmail.com)

Dennis Favel  
306-833-7423  
[Dennis.favel@sasktel.net](mailto:Dennis.favel@sasktel.net)

Bart Beckman  
306-425-9568  
[bbeckman@sasktel.net](mailto:bbeckman@sasktel.net)

Teresa Sauer  
306-327-7856  
[Sweetnsauer1@hotmail.com](mailto:Sweetnsauer1@hotmail.com)