

## Healthcare Workers Show Solidarity Outside Saskatoon Hospital

**Saskatoon**—Members of SEIU-West were outside of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon today to demonstrate their frustration with the pace of contract negotiations. This event is the most recent in a series of information pickets that SEIU-West members are participating in across the province.

"Our members were out today to show the government that healthcare workers are done waiting for the significant wage increases that are needed to help retain our current healthcare providers and recruit more people into the system," says Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. "Our members are taking a stand all over the province and this should send the message: 'We're exhausted, burned out and need a collective agreement!'"

"Our members are restricted on how they can take job action and this information picket is one of the actions that's allowable," Cape explains. "Though the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that we have the right to strike, here in Saskatchewan, our members are bound by one of the most restrictive essential services regimes making it nearly impossible to take job action."

Ten years ago, on January 30, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the right to strike is a constitutionally protected right, a huge win for the labour movement and workers in Canada.

However, in Saskatchewan, there are barriers to this right for workers deemed essential under the essential services provisions in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. There is a long, drawn-out process that must take place before any workers deemed essential—like healthcare workers—are able to exercise their right to strike.

"During the pandemic, our members were lauded for their dedication to public service and called heroes," says Cape. "Now we want to ensure that the government understands that we are done waiting for better wages. Healthcare workers have been patient for far too long and we deserve to be paid what we're worth for our skill, knowledge, and expertise."

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Service Employees International Union West (SEIU-West) represents over 13,000 people across Saskatchewan. They include people who work in health care, education, municipalities, community-based organizations, retirement homes, and other sectors. They are joined by one colour – purple – and one union – SEIU-West. Visit [PurpleWorks.ca](https://PurpleWorks.ca) to find out more about SEIU-West members.

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