



Prairie Harm Reduction Workers Laid Off with Closure

Over 100 workers at Saskatoon's Prairie Harm Reduction (PHR) were laid off as of 5 p.m. Thursday, April 9. This included 76 SEIU-West members in youth group homes, family support services, and PHR's education department, who were preparing to negotiate their first collective agreement with PHR.

Last month, the PHR board reported a significant financial shortfall impacting the organization. The programs offered by PHR, other than the Safe Consumption Site, relied extensively on provincial funds to support Saskatchewan residents.

The government's choice to pull all funding for PHR plays a key role in the loss of 76 good union jobs in Saskatoon. "The sudden cuts to funding impacts these workers, the community, and the whole province. The people our members served will suffer as a result of the government's decision," said Graham Mitchell, Organizing Director at SEIU-West.

The workers at PHR united around their dedication to make the programs better for the people who access services and a desire to save PHR and its programs. The working conditions for staff are the conditions of care for the clients. "We're not just grieving the loss of our jobs," says one worker from Family Support. "For us it's not about the money, it's about showing people love and compassion when no one else was."

"Other systems and organizations that are already strained will bear the weight of the closure of the PHR programs," continues Mitchell. "We will see more children, youth, and adults living on the streets, more families without basics like diapers, food, and infant formula. This will result in deaths."

SEIU-West is working with its members to ensure that they get what they are entitled to under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

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.