



May 3, 2020

Via: kevin.zimmerman@saskhealthauthority.ca

Saskatchewan Health Authority
Labour and Employee Relations
Saskatoon City Hospital
Saskatoon, SK

Attention: Kevin Zimmerman

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

Re: Conditions placed on SUN members regarding working in
Lloydminster and La Loche - and potentially elsewhere

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is well aware of the existing COVID-19 crisis and the numerous outbreaks across Saskatchewan – which appear to be quickly growing. This past week the SHA issued a broadcast call indicating that, on an urgent basis, staff was needed in Lloydminster and La Loche.

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) members quickly answered the call and indicated a willingness to fill the staffing needs to not only ensure COVID-19 patients receive the required care but to ensure all residents of Saskatchewan receive safe care and to ensure the testing and contact tracing required to control COVID-19 can be done. SUN was taken aback to be advised that some SUN members were advised by SHA that if they accepted a shift in Lloydminster Hospital they would be required to self-isolate for a 14 day period following the shift worked. SUN has been advised that there is no direction requiring self-isolation after working in Lloydminster, but rather there has been a verbal order made by the former Prairie North Health Region Medical Health Officer, Dr. Nsungu that anyone who has worked in the Lloydminster Hospital is not allowed to work anywhere else for 14 days following their last shift. SUN has not received a copy of the order, although it has been requested.

SUN has also been advised that an order has been made by the Medical Health Officer for the area including La Loche, Dr. Zayed, that anyone having worked in the outbreak facility will be prohibited from working elsewhere until, I believe, 28 days after the end of the outbreak.

SUN members have been working on the front lines of COVID-19 and as such have been, and are, in the most at risk group. That risk is mitigated by the provision and use of appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE). PPE allows SUN members, and others, to provide needed care without being at risk themselves and without being a risk to others. A joint statement on PPE was recently developed between the SHA and all unions which recognizes the important role of appropriate PPE.

The direction that a SUN member would be considered unsafe to work in their home positions after filling needs in Lloydminster and/or La Loche causes great concern for SUN and for SUN members as it suggests that either appropriate PPE will not be provided to SUN members working in Lloydminster/La Loche – or – that even with appropriate PPE SUN members are at risk. Either of these situations are of grave concern.

An added concern is the fact that not only are the orders for Lloydminster and La Loche different from each other, but they are also contradictory to the staffing protocols in place across the rest of the Province. There are other facilities (and communities) that are in the midst of a COVID-19 outbreak and there are acute facilities where COVID-19 patients are receiving treatment without any order similar to that issued by Dr. Nsungu or Dr. Zayed.

If Dr. Nsungu's and/or Dr. Zayed's orders are needed for Lloydminster and La Loche – how can it be safe for any SUN member to work elsewhere? Stated another way, if it is safe for a SUN member, with appropriate PPE to work elsewhere, how can Dr. Nsungu's/Dr. Zayed's order be reasonable? When dealing with COVID-19 the existence of contradictory positions places SUN members, all health care workers and the public at an unacceptable risk. Immediate clarification is needed.

During Friday's press conference Scott Livingstone spoke and indicated that more than 100 staff responded to the SHA broadcast for Lloydminster – but how many of those SHA staff were actually allowed to go and provide the needed health care?

SUN members are ready and willing and have been offering to provide care. SUN members are confident in their abilities as professionals and that, provided they have access to appropriate PPE, they can provide the necessary health care without risk to themselves or others. It is truly unfortunate that the available resource of SUN members is not being utilized.

SUN is receiving many inquiries from SUN members and a clear and unequivocal position must be taken by the SHA. In the meantime SUN and its members are left wondering and worried about not only themselves, but about all residents of Saskatchewan.

NORDAL Law Office



Ronni A. Nordal, Q.C.

RN/md

cc: Saskatchewan Union of Nurses: Donna Trainor, Tracy Zambory, Amber Alecxe, Carl Veistrup, Colin Hein
cc: Saskatchewan Health Authority: Ingrid Reid, Tyler Kannenberg