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saho NEWS

A publication for members of the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations

www.saho.org

SAHO supports members' pandemic efforts

SAHO workplace health and safety consultant Rob Findlay tests SIAST nursing student masks on October 26.

SAHO has devoted significant resources to helping its members respond to the wave of H1N1 influenza.

In the area of labour relations, SAHO has developed principles and guidelines for health regions to consider when developing their pandemic plans. The principles and guidelines cover issues of employee health and safety, ethical duties to provide care and respond to patient needs, and the application and interpretation of collective bargaining agreements and contracts. The guidelines also address frequently asked questions and possible scenarios.

"The important thing is to keep lines of communication open," says Bernie Young, acting vice-president of Labour Relations. "There may be situations that require

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immediate action, and human resource departments will need to keep unions and employees advised of any actions that need to be taken." Young also points out that SAHO Labour Relations is available to advise health regions on an on-going basis throughout H1N1 planning and implementation.

SAHO's Materials Management team has also worked with the Ministry of Health since early in 2009 to ensure a reliable supply of masks, gowns, alcohol, cotton balls and swabs, syringes and sharps containers, as well as other items such as inhalers, IV products and respiratory care products. The supply of needles and syringes, in particular, is important to guarantee because they are needed for both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 vaccine.

SAHO has also coordinated the purchase of H1N1 kits for doctors' offices and clinics, which contain gloves, masks, alcohol, hand sanitizer, shoe covers, and antiseptic wipes. By helping physicians treat H1N1 patients safely in their offices, regions hope to help decrease the flow of patients to hospital emergency rooms. All doctors will receive kits for their offices and will be able to order new ones from their health region when needed.

SAHO's Workplace Health and Safety staff continue to focus on providing respirator fit testing to health care workers across the province. Properly fitted masks are essential to protecting health workers from contracting the virus while working with infected patients, and are a requirement of the province's Occupational Health and Safety legislation. SAHO consultants have also provided training throughout the province to ensure that health regions can do their own respirator fit testing.

Geddes sees strong role for SAHO

Velma Geddes, vice-chair of the SAHO Board of Directors, believes this is both an exciting and challenging time to be involved in health care in Saskatchewan. She also believes that SAHO plays an important role in working collectively with all the partners in the system to provide consolidated, effective support to the health regions and other health care providers.

Geddes, chairperson of Five Hills Regional Health Authority, was appointed to the SAHO Board in spring 2009. She is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan and a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. Velma has worked as a senior financial manager for the Prairie South School Division, the Government of Saskatchewan Department of Education, Saskatchewan Health, Regina Pioneer Village, the Buffalo Plains School Division and the Qu'Appelle Valley School Division.

Geddes has also served in a leadership capacity as a volunteer for several organizations including the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan, the Association of School Business Officials, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

"Health care is the single most important factor influencing our quality of life," says Geddes. "SAHO has the ability to influence and transform the health care system as we move forward. I think we have the momentum to make meaningful changes so that we will have a high quality, sustainable health care system now and into the future."

Rural hospitals invited to provide summer work experience

Rural hospitals are invited to contact SAHO to learn more about providing a work experience for a second-year Saskatchewan medical student in summer 2010.

The Summer Externship Program offers work experiences to students between the second and third year of their four-year program to familiarize them with rural practice. The program provides students with an opportunity to apply clinical knowledge, learn about rural practice, and establish contacts that will assist in their recruitment upon graduation. Most participating students will not have made a firm choice on career options; it is hoped that by familiarizing them with rural health care at this stage they will give this option more consideration.

Employers do not contribute to the student's wages and living allowance, but are required to provide general orientation, supervision and evaluation by a physician supervisor, and some administrative supports.

Recruitment opportunities are welcome in a range of specialty areas.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health through the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine and is coordinated by SAHO.

For more information, contact Sindi Duncan at 306.347.5545 or e-mail sindid@saho.org.

SAHO engages staff in improving quality

SAHO staff gathered on September 10 to learn about the provincial health sector's focus on Quality as a Business Strategy. "This really is unlike anything going on anywhere in the country," said facilitator Laura Soparlo, who described the province-wide multi-organization movement being led by the Health Quality Council.

Staff also heard about how they will be involved, including an overview of Lean processes, and contributed to a review of SAHO's mission, vision and values.

"It's opened the doors to real discussion on some critical issues," says Susan Antosh, SAHO's president and CEO. "SAHO needs to evaluate and improve its processes and services the same way our member organizations are, and it's exciting."

Facilitator Laura Soparlo leads a learning day for SAHO staff.

saho conference & exhibition 2010

Tuesday & Wednesday, April 13 & 14
Evraz Place, Regina

The SAHO Conference is a unique two-day forum featuring high-calibre keynote addresses and informative sessions on health care policy, administration, and innovation.

The Gilbert Wright/Smith-Walshaw Poster Presentation allows member organizations to showcase innovative programs and services. *Deadline for submissions is Tuesday, December 8.*

SAHO's Green Ribbon Awards recognize health-related projects that demonstrate creativity and innovation, and careful planning. *The application deadline is Monday, November 30.*

Education Tables provide SAHO members the opportunity to share information with health leaders and providers from across the province. Spaces are available for $80 applications are accepted until February 10.

Carnival Fun Night, Tuesday, April 13, is a chance for attendees to eat and celebrate together. The event starts immediately following the final afternoon session.

The ***SAHO Annual General Meeting,*** the final event of the conference, is held on Wednesday afternoon.

New this year! A full day workshop for SAHO's TLR® (Transferring Lifting Repositioning) Program users will be held on Tuesday, April 13.

The ***Commercial Exhibition*** will be held in the new and spacious Co-operators Centre rink space, directly adjacent to the conference. The SAHO Exhibition is the largest health related trade show in Western Canada with close to 100 exhibits of health care related products and equipment.

Visit **www.sahoconference.ca** information or to register.

SAHO launches awards to support certification for health care managers

Beginning in 2010, SAHO will offer four annual awards of $500 to employees of SAHO member organizations who are entering the Certified Health Executive program through the Canadian College of Health Service Executives (CCHSE).

Funding for the awards was left to SAHO by the Saskatchewan Association of Health Services Executives, which was incorporated in 1964 and dissolved in 2008. The organization turned over its cash assets to SAHO to administer a fund to support and recognize academic achievement of health care managers employed in Saskatchewan.

Detailed criteria for receiving the award will be announced in early 2010, and presentations will take place at the SAHO Conference, April 13 and 14 in Regina.

CCHSE offers a self-directed three-year certification program in a wide range of management areas. Visit cchse.org for information on the programs that are available. There are currently 27 health executives certified by CCHSE in Saskatchewan.

Notes from the SAHO Board Meeting

September 18, 2009, Regina

Chair's Report

Chair Greg Kobylka noted that he had spoken with Minister Don McMorris at the recent meeting of Leadership Council, and had also formally invited him to attend the SAHO board meeting. (Minister McMorris declined in his written response, but indicated he was open to meeting some time in the future.) Kobylka also acknowledged Susan Antosh and staff for their work on numerous issues, including collective bargaining, pandemic planning, Quality as a Business Strategy.

Member Resolutions Process

The Board held a lengthy discussion regarding resolutions and concluded that an opportunity exists to both enhance SAHO's communications with government and improve member contributions to the process. A significant portion of the October Board meeting will be set aside to discuss a new process for getting member input. Resolutions from the 2009 AGM are expected to be referred to that new process. Part of the Board's discussion included reviewing legal clarification of the purpose of resolutions vs. motions, and member rights as outlined in SAHO's bylaws.

Financial Statements

The board received first quarter financial statements for the period ended June 30, as well as semi-annual statements on all employee benefit plans.

Disability Income Plan Rates

The Board approved recommendations from the Employee Benefits Committee of contribution rate increases for the CUPE Disability Income Plan from 3.81% of salary to 4.00% and for the SUN Disability Income Plan from 2.65% to 2.80% effective April 1, 2010. Contribution rates for all other disability income plans remain the same.

Canadian Healthcare Association

The Board received a printed copy of a CHA presentation on its advocacy work. CHA's next board meeting is November 4-5 in Ottawa. SAHO's Greg Kobylka and Susan Antosh will attend.

Highlights from Administration

- SAHO continues to work with the RHAs and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to standardize human resources business processes.
- SAHO is actively working on its internal Quality as a Business Strategy plan.
- The unfair labour practice filed in March by CUPE against SAHO was dismissed by the Labour Relations Board in July.

Notes from the SAHO Board Meeting

October 19, 2009, Regina

Chair's Report

Chair Greg Kobylka discussed the release of Commissioner Dagnone's report, and said he was looking forward to participating in needed system-wide changes. He also reminded the Board about SAHO's 2010 conference in April, and of submission deadlines for the Call for Speakers (October 30), Green Ribbon Awards (November 30), GWSW Poster Presentations (December 8).

Employee Benefit Plans

Following a regular annual review, the Board approved updates to the Statement of Investment Polices and Procedures. The Board also approved the Employee Benefits Committee's recommendation of increasing the core dental contribution rate by $1.50 per FTE to $56.50.

Canadian Healthcare Association

CHA's New Directions for Facility-Based Long Term Care explores opportunities to transform facility based long term care and is available at www.cha.ca. SAHO's representative to CHA, Greg Kobylka, will attend the November 5 CHA board meeting, where Federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq is expected to be in attendance.

Collective Bargaining Update

The Board received a detailed update on collective bargaining.

New Issues Management Process

The Board discussed a new process to allow members to raise and discuss key issues, and wrote to member board chairs on September 29 to keep them informed.

Members can expect to be involved in a new process to provide input based on a province-wide strategic plan for health services.

Next SAHO Board Meeting: December 16, 2009, Regina