

Ministry of Health

Chapter 20 & 15 – Monitoring Enforcement of Tobacco and Vapour Products’ legislative Requirements

- **Is there a special process in order to sell tobacco or vapour products in the province and what are the steps a retailer will take to obtain the license they need?**
 - The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act does not contain licensing, registration, or any other special processes or requirements for the sale of tobacco and vapour products in Saskatchewan.
 - As of September 1, 2021, all vapour product vendors are required to obtain a vapour products tax vendor’s license from the Ministry of Finance. This licensing requirement is for the purpose of reporting and submitting the vapour products tax collected at 20% on taxable sales. Vendors may complete the application online or by completing and submitting the Registration Form.
 - The Tobacco Tax Act, 1998 requires all tobacco importers, mainly wholesalers, to be licensed to import and sell tobacco in Saskatchewan. No tobacco specific license is required from the Ministry of Finance for tobacco retailers. There is a general requirement for vendors of any type of product or service to obtain a PST vendor license, but this is not specific to tobacco retailers.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 561)

- **Is there a cost associated with licensing retailers in particular that sell tobacco or vapour products? If there is a cost associated with that, if those funds go to the Ministry of Finance?**
 - There is no cost associated with the Ministry of Finance vapour products tax vendor’s license.
 - There is no cost associated with obtaining a tobacco importers licence or a PST vendor license.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 561)

- **The Ministry of Health provides clear guidance to the Saskatchewan Health Authority on handling complaints related to the sale and promotion of tobacco and vapour products. On page 189 of the Auditor’s 2023 Volume 2 report, it is noted that the ministry has not provided the Health Authority with reporting since August 2022. What is the update since August 2022.**
 - An initial report for tracking complaint response timeframes was provided to the SHA in July 2022 and, as of Q2 this fiscal year, is now being sent to the SHA at the end of each quarter.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 563)

- **It looks like that the reporting is on complaints outstanding for more than six months. How many complaints are outstanding beyond that six-month period and what, if any, action has been undertaken since then?**
 - The latest active complaint monitoring report generated on January 18, 2024, did not contain any complaints that have been outstanding for more than six months.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 563)

Affiliates - Health

Chapter 4, 7 & 6 – Affiliates

- **What were the shifts in those increases and decreases in funding, and how beds and employees were added if funding from the SHA decreased?**

- The net decrease in total SHA-reported funding to affiliates from 2021-22 to 2022-23 is primarily due to:
 - \$11.7M decrease due to non-recurring community initiatives (Covid) funding provided to affiliates in 2021-22;
 - \$4.4M decrease in capital grants; partially offset by,
 - \$6.0M increase in operating funding, primarily for collective bargaining increases.
- Below is a table showing the headcounts in the Affiliates based on the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organization's report and consistent with the Provincial Auditor's 2023 Volume 2 Report:

Year	Headcount
2019	6,100
2020	6,272
2021	6,418
2022	6,486
2023	6,651

Note
* Data obtained from 3sHealth Payroll employee count files, as of March 31, 2023.

- The approximately 3,000 employees in the Affiliates indicated in the Auditor's 2020 and 2021 report may have captured and limited the counts in multiple ways.
- Possible cause of the variance includes:
 - the headcounts might be over-counted as employees who work in multiple locations with the same employee id are counted multiple times, and vacant Out-of-Scope positions may also be included.
- The numbers of beds at the Affiliates were about 2,450 and 3,000 in 2020 and 2023 respectively as indicated in the Auditor's Volume Report. The SHA confirmed with the Provincial Auditor that the 3,000 beds in the 2023 report includes St. Paul's Hospital, however the 2,450 beds in the 2020 report does not include St. Paul's hospital, which should account for the difference. The number of beds at the Affiliates did not increase from 2020 to 2023.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 570)

- **When did the last review of all the organizations that the SHA has operating service agreements or contracts with occur?**
 - The prescribed Affiliates tables in *The Provincial Health Authority Administration Regulations* were reviewed as part of a red tape regulatory review that was completed in 2018.
 - Updates to the tables were considered a housekeeping amendment that would be addressed by bringing forward regulatory changes.
 - The regulations were amended in 2023 to update some of the tables and are planning future stakeholder consultations to look at updating the rest of the tables via further regulatory changes.

(Hansard Verbatim Report No. 26, February 26, 2024, Page 571)