

## **New West Partnership Trade Agreement pays off**

Lori-Ann Litzenberger, a contract specialist with 3sHealth, can give you a dozen – maybe more – examples of where the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) has provided quality and savings beyond what Saskatchewan could achieve alone.

The NWPTA applies to British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan and provides opportunities for joint contracting on goods greater than \$10,000, services greater than \$75,000 and construction greater than \$100,000. More information is available online [here](#).

On multiple occasions, 3sHealth, the health regions and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency have posted Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in which other western provinces have requested the opportunity to participate.

In one incredible example, the combined buying power of the western provinces resulted in the cost of a cancer medication (30 tablets) dropping to \$5 per patient from an astounding \$2,600 per patient. That's a cost savings of about \$86.50 per tablet.

There are other examples where the cost savings have been far less dramatic, even some where there have been no cost savings at all and the real benefit has been improved quality.

“People often think 3sHealth is only focused on savings,” says Litzenberger. “The committees we work with to identify products and negotiate contracts look at so much more than that and we encourage them to; we need to ask ‘How does this impact the patient?’ We can't just look at how much we were paying yesterday and how much we'll be paying tomorrow – there's so much more to it.”

Committees composed of experts from across the healthcare system spend a significant amount of time discussing the pros and cons of every contract and product. They consider quality, delivery, and impact to patients, the costs of training and product conversion when that's a factor, and cost.

“We talk about some products where there isn't as much need for ongoing training, where we can minimize errors, and where we can move from a basic product to the Cadillac version with little change management or additional training,” says Litzenberger.

The whole process is made better by the involvement of partners within the healthcare system, she says.

“We know the healthcare professionals we work with are giving a huge amount of their time and energy outside of their day to day work and demands and we can’t express enough thanks for that help and commitment. Together, we really are improving the healthcare system – one step at a time.”