

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRINCE ALBERT PARKLAND HEALTH REGION UPGRADING EQUIPMENT

Victoria Hospital will receive \$1.2 million in funding from Saskatchewan Health to purchase and upgrade diagnostic imaging equipment.

Health Minister Len Taylor said the funding from the 2007-08 provincial budget recognizes the need to support timely access to quality health services.

"The benefits of this investment will be substantial for both patients and health providers," Taylor said. "It is another step towards increasing our capacity to provide diagnostic imaging services, and to achieve reasonable wait times for people who need those services."

Prince Albert Parkland Health Region identified its high priority needs, which include a new ultrasound unit. Nearly one million dollars of the funding will be used for those priorities.

"This equipment will expand the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region's diagnostic imaging capacity," Health Region Chief Executive Officer Cecile Hunt said. "The funding will also help the region take another important step forward in the development of an information and archive system that will benefit health care providers and improve patient care."

The remainder of the funding will upgrade equipment to prepare the health region for implementation of a Radiology Information System and a Picture Archiving Communications System. These systems will improve diagnostic imaging services and make images and results available electronically to health care providers across the province. Installation in Prince Albert Parkland Health Region is expected to be completed in 2008.

In total, Saskatchewan Health is distributing almost \$5 million to health regions to upgrade and replace diagnostic imaging equipment.

Recent investments in diagnostic imaging have significantly increased the services being provided. In 2006-07, Saskatchewan provided 12 per cent more MRI exams, 20 per cent more CT scans and 21 per cent more bone mineral density (BMD) tests. Last year, the number of patients waiting for BMD tests dropped nearly 50 per cent, while the number waiting for an MRI dropped 23 per cent. The wait list for CT scans increased by six per cent due to increasing demand, even though the province completed 20,000 more scans than in the previous year.

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For more information, contact:

Joan Petrie
Health
Regina
Phone: 306-787-4096

Doug Dahl
Prince Albert Parkland Health Region
Prince Albert
Phone: 306-765-6102