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### **FIVE HILLS HEALTH REGION UPGRADING DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT**

The Five Hills Health Region will receive \$190,000 in funding from Saskatchewan Health for diagnostic imaging equipment at Moose Jaw Union Hospital.

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 will be substantial for both patients and health providers," Taylor said. "This investment will enable Five Hills Health Region to increase its capacity to provide diagnostic imaging services, and to achieve reasonable wait times for people who need those services."

"We really appreciate this funding from Saskatchewan Health," Five Hills Health Region chairperson Dale Toni said. "The residents of this region tell us about the importance of access to high quality diagnostic imaging services."

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

The upgrades will help health regions benefit from 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 Five Hills Health Region is expected to be completed in 2008.

Recent investments in diagnostic imaging services 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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