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KELSEY TRAIL HEALTH REGION UPGRADING DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT

Kelsey Trail Health Region will receive more than \$315,000 in funding from Saskatchewan Health to replace 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.

"We are investing in diagnostic imaging equipment to help both patients and health providers," Taylor said. "It is part of our plan to improve diagnostic imaging services and reduce wait times for patients."

The region identified its highest priority diagnostic imaging needs. It will use the funding to purchase mobile X-ray machines for hospitals in Melfort, Tisdale and Nipawin, as well as a new mammography unit for Melfort.

"We are extremely appreciative of this funding," Kelsey Trail Health Region CEO Glen Kozak said. "This funding, together with community fundraising efforts which have been undertaken across the region for Computer Radiography Units, forms the basis for the future direction of diagnostic imaging in Kelsey Trail Health Region."

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

The new equipment will help hospitals 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 Kelsey Trail 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.

-30-

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