

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 28, 2007

Health 07-654

REGINA QU'APPELLE HEALTH REGION UPGRADING EQUIPMENT

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region will receive nearly \$1 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.

"This investment will mean substantial benefits for both patients and health providers," Taylor said. "It is another step towards increasing our capacity to provide diagnostic imaging services, and shortening wait times for people who need those services."

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region identified its highest priority diagnostic imaging equipment needs, which include a new fluoroscopy machine for Pasqua Hospital and an ultrasound unit for Regina General Hospital. About \$750,000 will be used for those purchases.

"This new equipment will enhance our ability to provide state-of-the-art diagnostic testing to the people we serve," Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region vice-president of Specialty Care Diane Larrivee said. "We are also continuing to invest in equipment which will provide medical specialists with faster access to the results from diagnostic tests."

The remainder of the funding will upgrade nuclear medicine 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 Regina 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.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Joan Petrie
Health
Regina
Phone: 306-787-4083

Mark Torjusen
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
Regina
Phone: 306-766-5332