

Surgical Update - Backgrounder

July 2022

Saskatchewan's surgical system is striving to achieve aggressive targets and is making progress in ramping up volumes and providing surgeries to patients who need them most.

The province set a target to perform **7,000 more surgeries in 2022-23 than the highest-ever level, to reduce the surgical backlog.**

During the first five months of 2022:

- The health system delivered **5,000 more surgeries** than during the preceding five months in 2021 when services had been slowed down.
- There was a **2,500 (50%) increase** in the number of surgeries performed on patients who had already waited over six months compared with the preceding five months in 2021.
- Saskatchewan hospitals have performed 240 more joint replacements during the first five months of 2022 compared with the same period in 2019, the last year without pandemic service disruptions.

Work is ongoing to increase capacity in Regina and Saskatoon, along with regional and some smaller surgical centres that provide or support joint replacements.

These facility expansions can provide added surgical capacity (Operating Rooms and hospital beds) for Saskatchewan's orthopedic surgeons.

Saskatoon: ORs reopened and expanded at Saskatoon City Hospital (SCH), St. Paul's Hospital (SPH) and Royal University Hospital (RUH) in January 2022.

Prince Albert/Moose Jaw/Humboldt: ORs have been upgraded at Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, Dr. F. H. Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw and Humboldt District Hospital to improve patient flow.

Moose Jaw: Regina-based orthopedic surgeons are exploring options in collaboration with Dr. FH Wigmore hospital to bring patients on the Regina wait list to Moose Jaw for hip and knee replacements.

Yorkton/Swift Current: Day surgery areas have been upgraded (stretchers were purchased for Day Surgery and the area was renovated for better patient flow.

Meadow Lake/North Battleford: Meadow Lake Hospital and Battlefords Union Hospital in North Battleford are preparing to support joint replacement procedures. A partial knee replacement was performed in Meadow Lake in June 2022, and North Battleford plans to add this procedure in fall 2022.

The SHA is focusing on **key improvements within orthopedic surgery** to shorten post-operative recovery period for patients and reduce length of stay in hospital while improving patient outcomes and their experience. This includes teams exploring stronger utilization of pooled referrals, along with work to implement an orthopedic pathway for total joint replacements, similar to other surgical pathways, built on national best practices.

The SHA is also exploring **expansion with private sector partners**. An RFP will be issued to build a stand-alone orthopedic surgery facility in Saskatchewan focused on increasing operating room and bed capacity for in-patient joint replacements, as well as a variety of day surgery procedures.

To further accommodate patients, the Government of Saskatchewan is also exploring the potential for **contracting with an out of province surgical facility** to deliver publicly funded joint replacement surgeries for long waiting Saskatchewan patients.