

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Health Budget 2023-24 - \$6.9 Billion Investment

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2023-24 budget for the Ministry of Health is \$6.867B, which is an overall increase of \$431M or 6.7 per cent from last year. This record budget ensures the Saskatchewan health system is making strategic investments around growth that works for everyone.
- The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) budget for 2023-24 includes an increase of \$191.4 M for total funding of \$4.433B. This is an increase of 4.5 per cent from last year's budget.
- This year's budget will provide eHealth an increase of \$9.6M or 7.1 per cent to support IT security initiatives, MySaskHealthRecord, health card renewal and data centre enhancements.
- The 2023-24 budget provides a \$6.5M increase for cancer care, including a \$2.9M increase for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, to provide funding for oncology drugs and additional direct care support staff for patients. The SHA's pediatric hematology-oncology program will receive a \$957,000 increase.

HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES (HHR)

- This budget continues to invest in Saskatchewan's Human Health Resources (HHR) Initiative with a \$55.5M allocation to this high priority area, as part of Government's nearly \$100 million commitment to the HHR Action Plan. This innovative health human resource strategy will recruit, train, incentivize and retain hundreds of health care workers and physicians in communities across the province.
- For further Budget details on HHR, refer to the 2023-24 Health Human Resources Budget backgrounder.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- The 2023-24 Budget includes the largest health capital budget ever of \$337.6M for health care infrastructure, equipment and IT infrastructure to ensure physical spaces and systems are in place and prepared to meet the needs of a growing and thriving province. This is a \$181M increase from last year directed to infrastructure and equipment for hospitals and other care facilities. Highlights include:
 - \$98.6M investment for the Victoria Hospital redevelopment project in Prince Albert.
 - \$65.7M for maintenance and equipment, which is a 15 per cent increase.
 - \$38M investment for the Weyburn General Hospital redevelopment project.
 - \$20M investment for the La Ronge Long Term Care project.
 - \$10M investment for the Grenfell Long Term Care replacement project.
 - \$10M investment for Regina Long Term Care specialized beds.
 - \$5.2M in funding for the St Paul's Hospital Front Entrance Redevelopment in Saskatoon.
 - \$2.6 million in new funding to initiate work on other key infrastructure priorities, including developing plans for the Rosthern Hospital, Battlefords District Care Centre, and St. Anthony's Hospital in Esterhazy.

- \$1M for the Estevan Long-Term Care redevelopment project.
- \$1M for the Watson Quill Plains Lodge redevelopment project.
- \$500,000 for the Yorkton Regional Health Centre replacement project.
- \$500,000 to continue planning and developing the Regina parkade.

SENIORS

- This budget provides a \$39M increase for initiatives to help seniors age within their communities and provide the supports they need. Highlights include:
 - \$17.6M to support additional standard long-term care beds in Regina.
 - \$9.3M for additional financial support for third-party long-term care homes. This funding is intended to stabilize operations for the next 12 months.
 - \$5.5M to fulfill Government's commitment to hire 300 additional continuing care assistants (CCAs) in long-term care and home care.
 - \$4.9M to address increased demand for home care requirements.
 - \$900,000 to create a Geriatric Evaluation and Management program in Regina.

CRITICAL AND ACUTE CARE INITIATIVES

- Saskatchewan will build a stronger, more responsive health system that works for all patients by investing in critical and acute care initiatives. This budget includes an \$89.7M increase for health system recovery and expansion of services to support our growing population.
- Budget 2023-24 includes:
 - \$42.5M increase to address surgical wait times, which doubles the investment from last fiscal year for this priority area. This investment will provide an additional 6,000 procedures for individuals on wait lists throughout the province.
 - \$19.8M increase, for 64 permanent acute and complex care beds for Royal University Hospital and Pasqua Hospital.
 - An additional \$7M for specialized medical imaging procedures, including CT and MRI scans, to reduce the waitlists.
 - \$6M to support Year 2 of a multi-year Intensive Care Unit (ICU) enhancement strategy to support new ICU beds and improve levels of care. This includes the operational costs for 11 new ICU beds first funded in 2022-23, and enhancements to ICU care.
 - Cardioscience and neuroscience services will be enhanced in the 2023-24 provincial budget. \$6.9M in new funding will be provided to the two tertiary sites to provide additional procedures, including additional transcatheter aortic valve insertion (TAVI) and electrophysiology procedures, the establishment of a Mitral Clip program in Saskatchewan, and additional staffing.
 - \$2.6M will be invested to provide additional endoscopy procedures to reduce the waitlist.
 - This year's budget also includes an investment of \$2.3M to develop a comprehensive pediatric gastroenterology program for the province at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

- Mental Health and Addictions will receive a \$12.4M targeted increase. With this additional funding, budget 2023-24 invests a record amount of \$518M for this priority area.
- For more information on these investments, please refer to the Mental Health and Addictions News Release and backgrounder.

OTHER KEY INVESTMENTS

- The 2023-24 budget also makes important investments in the Prescription Drug Plan with an additional \$25.7M provided in this year's budget. This increase will fund utilization pressures, including growth in the number of patients needing coverage, increase in prescription volumes and high-cost drugs. Investments are also being made in the Multiple Sclerosis Drug Plan to help patients better manage their disease and treatment.
- An \$8.8M increase will enhance emergency medical services (EMS) and provide reliable emergency healthcare services in all areas of the province. This funding will go toward stabilizing services in rural and remote areas, additional support for contracted EMS operators and EMS system and radio upgrades, allowing EMS to respond to emergencies in a timely manner.
- A \$6.6M increase will focus on public health, as well as primary and community care initiatives. Highlights include:
 - \$2.7M for HealthLine 811, including \$1.7M to fund five additional virtual triage physicians, who provide virtual care to patients via HealthLine 811, and \$1M to increase HealthLine 811 staffing levels;
 - \$1.1M to support the Regina Chronic Pain Clinic;
 - \$1M to increase programming to reduce communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs);
 - \$500,000 for early childhood immunization campaigns; and
 - \$500,000 for the development of the Province's primary care strategy.
- An additional \$5M is also included in the provincial budget for operating costs for the Regina Urgent Care Centre. This facility will function as a more suitable option for treatment of illnesses, injuries and mental health care that is not life threatening, but requires immediate treatment. Once operational, the Regina Urgent Care Centre will further alleviate Emergency Department pressures.