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Mar. 19, 2025

2:15 PM

Health 225-4386

2025-26 HEALTH BUDGET DELIVERS RECORD FUNDING FOR BETTER PATIENT ACCESS, MORE RESPONSIVE CARE

The 2025-26 Budget delivers on key health care commitments including better access to acute and emergency care, team-based primary care and continuing care services. This year's budget also supports progress on the *Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan*, accelerates health care workforce hiring and continues building on future infrastructure projects, including new hospitals, long-term care homes and additional urgent care centres.

The record Ministry of Health budget is \$8.07 billion, an increase of \$484.6 million, or 6.4 per cent, over the previous year. The Saskatchewan Health Authority will receive a \$261.1 million increase, or 5.6 per cent, for a total record budget of \$4.94 billion.

"This year's budget delivers on key commitments to deliver more timely access to our health care system," Health Minister Jeremy Cockrill said. "Our government will provide significant budget investments to increase access to acute care in Saskatoon, perform more surgeries, increase access to specialized diagnostic imaging and invest in programs that connect all Saskatchewan residents to a primary health care provider.

"This budget also expands glucose monitoring coverage to vastly improve quality of life and ease financial impacts for nearly 10,000 Saskatchewan people with diabetes. We will open the highly anticipated Breast Health Centre in Regina to provide a full range of services and wraparound support for women experiencing a challenging diagnosis."

The 2025-26 Budget provides better access to acute health care services for safer, more responsive patient care with total investment increases of \$88.1 million.

Plans to ramp up surgical volumes this year through a \$15.1 million investment increase will kickstart ambitious plans to perform 450,000 procedures over four years and reduce surgical wait times. This investment will introduce the innovative robot-assisted surgery program at Pasqua Hospital in Regina and enhance other services to meet this aggressive four-year surgical target.

Optimizing space and realigning services at Saskatoon City Hospital will help address capacity pressures in Saskatoon with a multi-phased approach to open more than 100 acute care beds. This \$30.0 million investment will support physical space upgrades to expand acute care and convert outpatient and other spaces to inpatient units.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will receive a \$6.6 million increase for additional paramedics in the system and Diagnostic Imaging will receive a \$6.0 million boost to increase specialized medical imaging volumes to continue gains made in patient wait times.

Other 2025-26 acute care investment increases include:

- \$7.6 million for enhanced and expanded pediatric care, including specialist recruitment in areas of endocrinology, rheumatology and other specialties. The budget will also support additional multidisciplinary staff and physicians in pediatric gastroenterology, allergy and immunology, and cardiology programs, as well as enhancements to physician staffing at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Prince Albert;
- \$6.6 million for HealthLine 811's Virtual ER Physician Program to expand support to a minimum of 25 small-to-medium rural Emergency Department locations;
- \$4.3 million to bolster the province's kidney health programs to better meet patient demand for hemodialysis services closer to home;
- \$2.0 million for enhanced laboratory medicine services;
- \$1.9 million to complete and fully staff the new Breast Health Centre in Regina; and
- \$1.9 million to support operational costs for the Regina Urgent Care Centre.

"Rural and northern Saskatchewan receive important focus in this budget with extensive kidney health enhancements and staffing for satellite hemodialysis services in rural locations, including Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Tisdale and Fort Qu'Appelle," Rural and Remote Minister Lori Carr said. "A virtual ER physician program demonstrating great success will expand to more rural communities at risk of service disruptions this year, and increases to EMS will improve response times and stabilize services across the province."

The 2025-26 Budget will deliver better and more prompt patient access to team-based primary care settings and preventative care initiatives to meet the health care needs of Saskatchewan people with a \$42.4 million increased investment.

A \$5.0 million increase will support primary care improvements, including the expansion of a new model of care called Patient Medical Homes to new communities following a successful pilot in Swift Current that demonstrated better access to primary care for patients.

In addition, a \$7.1 million increase is provided for immunizations and program enhancements. Beginning April 1, 2025, nearly 10,000 Saskatchewan patients managing diabetes will benefit from a \$23.0 million investment for a Glucose Monitoring Expansion Program for young adults aged 25-and-under and seniors aged 65-plus.

The 2025-26 Budget also includes new funding to support the transition to HPV self-screening for cervical cancer, make progress on a provincial lung cancer screening program, lower breast cancer screening

eligibility to age 43 and support operations to add a second mobile mammography bus that will increase capacity for women in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

The 2025-26 Budget will further provincial commitments to accelerate the hiring and growth of the health care professional workforce in the third year of the ambitious, multi-year *Health Human Resources Action Plan* to recruit, train, incentivize and retain employees.

The College of Medicine will add 10 more in-province physician training seats for family medicine, anesthesia, plastic surgery and other specialties, for a total of 150 provincial seats, as part of a \$7.4 million increase.

Supports for 65 new and enhanced permanent full-time nursing positions in 30 rural and northern locations across Saskatchewan for improved nursing stability and reduced reliance on contract nurses will receive a \$4.9 million increase.

In addition, this year's budget includes an additional \$94.6 million increase for physician services to support the province's efforts to recruit and retain doctors, including funding for negotiated Saskatchewan Medical Association fee increases, increased utilization of services and additional physicians.

This year's budget will continue building momentum on strategic investments and successful programming within the multi-year *Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan* to improve patient access to professionals and services, delivering the help and support needed to overcome mental health and addictions challenges. This budget provides new capital funding to expand Complex Needs Emergency Shelters into new communities.

Saskatchewan residents will see steady and significant progress throughout the province on multiple infrastructure projects, such as new hospital builds and long-term care facilities, with a total record capital investment of \$656.9 million, a \$140.1 million increase over last year.

Major infrastructure investments include:

- \$322.4 million for Prince Albert Victoria Hospital construction;
- \$40.0 million for Regina Long-Term Care Specialized Beds construction;
- \$33.8 million for construction of the La Ronge Long-Term Care facility;
- \$24.4 million for Weyburn General Hospital construction;
- \$10.0 million for Grenfell Long-Term Care project construction; and
- \$3.0 million to advance the Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre (UCC), in partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments.

Due to the success of Regina's UCC model in reducing emergency room pressures and providing access to thousands of patients, planning is underway for additional UCCs in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert and North Battleford, as well as second UCCs in Regina and Saskatoon.

Additional funding will continue to support ongoing projects, including the Yorkton Regional Health Centre, Rosthern Hospital, Royal University Hospital's ICU Expansion, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's (SCA) Saskatoon Patient Lodge, Esterhazy Integrated Care Facility and long-term care projects in several communities including Regina, the Battlefords, Watson and Estevan.

Other capital investments include leading-edge and upgraded technology, equipment and innovations to shape the future of health care.

The 2025-26 Budget will ensure Saskatchewan people receive strengthened continuing care support to remain at home and within their communities for as long as possible. A \$7.1 million increase will fund care for all ages - from children with complex medical needs to seniors - to support individuals of all ages and patients in the most appropriate community setting.

The SCA will continue to deliver access to world-class care with additional funding toward oncology drugs, therapies and treatment options. The SCA will see an increase of \$30.4 million, or 12.2 per cent, for a total record budget of \$279.3 million.

The 2025-26 Budget also delivers on the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to provide a Fertility Treatment Tax Credit to improve affordability for individuals and couples to access fertility treatments.

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