

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Health Budget 2025-26 - \$8.07 Billion Investment

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2025-26 Ministry of Health budget is the highest-ever at \$8.07 billion, an increase of \$484.6 million, or 6.4 per cent, over the previous year's budget.
- The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) operating budget for 2025-26 will receive a \$261.1 million increase, or 5.6 per cent, for a record \$4.94 billion total budget to support the provincial health system.
- Health capital will receive a \$140.1 million increase, for a total of \$656.9 million, the highest-ever capital budget to deliver major health infrastructure projects such as new hospitals and facilities, IT technology and equipment.
- The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) budget will increase by \$30.4 million, or 12.2 per cent, for a total record budget of \$279.3 million. This investment ensures Saskatchewan patients have access to the most current and effective oncology drugs, therapies and treatment options. The funding increase will support a future rollout of cervix self-screening kits for women to test for the human papillomavirus (HPV) – a leading cause of cervical cancer. This investment will also provide enhancements to the lung screening program for Saskatchewan.
- eHealth will receive an increase of \$9.3 million, or 6.1 per cent, for a total budget of \$161.2 million to address system growth and other pressures to support health care providers and patients.

BETTER ACCESS TO ACUTE CARE

This budget will provide a \$88.1 million total increase for better patient access within acute care settings to provide safer, more responsive patient care. These initiatives include:

- \$30 million increase to optimize Saskatoon City Hospital to address inpatient capacity pressures in Saskatoon with a multi-phased approach to open more than 100 acute medicine and specialized beds and increase overall capacity for Saskatoon.
- \$15.1 million increase to ramp up surgical volumes and kickstart an ambitious plan to perform 450,000 procedures over four years and reduce surgical wait times. This investment will introduce an innovative robot-assisted surgery program at Pasqua Hospital in Regina and enhance other services to meet these aggressive four-year surgical targets.
- \$7.6 million in increased annual funding for pediatric specialists and enhancements to pediatric programs. This increase is designated for hiring pediatric specialists in endocrinology, palliative care, respirology and rheumatology. These funds also support additional multidisciplinary staff and physicians in areas of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Allergy and Immunology, and Cardiology programs, and enhance physician staffing at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Prince Albert.
- \$6.6 million increase in emergency medical services (EMS) to further support multi-year stabilization initiatives to fund approximately 170 paramedic full-time equivalent (FTE) created

within 58 rural communities since 2022-23. An additional staffed ambulance improve response times in Regina and surrounding communities.

- \$6.6 million increase to HealthLine 811's Virtual ER Physician Program to expand to a minimum of 25 small-to-medium rural Emergency Department locations that have experienced ER service disruptions due to physician availability.
- \$6 million increase to accommodate higher volumes of specialized medical imaging services, including CT, MRI and PET/CT services, helping to reduce waitlists for these specialized medical imaging procedures.
- \$4.3 million increase to enhance kidney health programs and dialysis services by adding 30 full-time positions to meet patient demand closer to home, in the communities of Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Fort Qu'Appelle, Tisdale, Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon.
- \$2.5 million increase for more protective services and increased security presence at several provincial hospitals or acute care sites to improve safety for patients, visitors, staff and physicians, as well as promote a culture of safety.
- \$2 million increase to support laboratory medicine services, along with \$4.5 million in new funding for laboratory medicine capital equipment to mitigate Emergency Department disruptions in rural and remote areas.
- \$1.9 million increase to complete and fully staff the new Breast Health Centre in Regina.
- \$1.9 million increase for the Regina Urgent Care Centre to support operational costs.
- \$1.7 million of increased annual funding to support 14 full-time positions at the provincial Genetics and Metabolics Program, located at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital (JPCH) in Saskatoon, which provides medical diagnoses, care planning and treatment pathways for patients with complex medical diagnosis.
- \$1.1 million increase for Cardiology and Neurosciences programs through additional TAVI and Mitral Clip device procedures, and 10 procedures for the newly established in-province Tricuspid Valve device program. These procedures allow patients to receive this minimally invasive, life-saving care closer to home. This funding will also provide additional Respiratory Therapist staffing for Moose Jaw's pulmonary care programs to further support utilization of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapies.

BETTER PRIMARY AND PREVENTATIVE CARE ACCESS

The 2025-26 Budget will provide a \$42.4 million increased investment to support better patient access to team-based, primary care settings and preventative care initiatives to meet the health care needs of Saskatchewan people. This investment includes:

- \$5 million increase to support primary care improvements, including the expansion of a new model of care called Patient Medical Homes to replicate a successful pilot in Swift Current. The Patient Medical Home enhances access to high-quality primary care services by allowing clinics to care for additional patients due to the extra capacity the team creates, with each provider working to their full scope. Physicians are supported by nurse practitioners and allied health professionals, which may include registered nurses, dietitians, mental health therapists, social workers, physiotherapists, pharmacists and others, delivering appropriate care more efficiently, with capacity for more patients.
- \$3.9 million increase to support the transition to HPV self-screening for cervical cancer, progress on a provincial lung cancer screening program, lowering breast cancer screening eligibility to age 43 and

adding a second mobile mammography bus to increase capacity for women in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

- \$2.3 million to advance commitments for Nurse Practitioner expansion in 28 provincial locations. This investment will add 27 new Nurse Practitioners within the SHA to improve access to primary care services in rural, regional and remote communities.
- \$1.1 million to enhance programs dedicated to Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections (STBBI) to address provincial infection rates and support Saskatchewan's Multi-Year Action Plan. This funding will support programs that work to treat and control STBBIs and also work closely with at-risk women, their families and unborn babies, including Prenatal Outreach and Resource Teams (PORT).
- A \$7.1 million increase will support immunizations and program enhancements, including enhanced human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization for males, shingles vaccinations for adult transplant patients and a single-dose respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) antibody for high-risk infants.
- A \$23 million commitment to expand the Glucose Monitoring Program that will benefit nearly 10,000 Saskatchewan patients with diabetes, improving their quality of life and easing the financial impact beginning April 1. The Government of Saskatchewan will provide 100 per cent coverage of Continuous and Flash Glucose Monitoring Systems to young adults aged 18 to 25, and seniors aged 65 plus.

HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to successfully build on *the Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan*, entering its third year. The HHR Action Plan will continue accelerating the hiring and growth of the health care professional workforce. This year's key investments include:

- \$7.4 million increase for the College of Medicine to add 10 more in-province training seats for family medicine, anesthesia, plastic surgery and other specialties for a total 150 seats, as well as add more full-time academic physician positions and expand skills programs to regional sites.
- \$4.9 million increase will support 65 new and enhanced permanent full-time nursing positions in 30 rural and remote locations across Saskatchewan for improved nursing stability and reduced reliance on contract nurses. These positions are in addition to hiring 250 new and enhanced permanent full-time positions in high priority occupations, including registered nurses, to support rural and northern areas.
- \$1 million increase to support the recruitment of specialist physicians in high demand for recruitment areas experiencing shortages in anesthesia, psychiatry, breast and interventional radiology, emergency medicine and targeted pediatric subspecialists.
- \$210,000 for the Final Clinical Placement Bursary offered to students in health care disciplines who complete a final clinical placement as part of their program, in exchange for a one-year return of service.
- \$8.7 million of continued funding for the Saskatchewan Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive (RRRI) Program that includes investment for an additional intake round of up to 180 new applicants, and continued funding for existing recipients completing their second and third-year service agreements.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

- The 2025-26 Budget includes a record investment of \$624 million for mental health and addictions services (7.7% of the Health budget) to continue progress on the multi-year *Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan*. This is an increase of \$53 million, or 9.2 per cent, from 2024-25. This includes a \$20.1 million increase for targeted initiatives to expand mental health and addictions services and improve care, plus \$6 million in new capital funding for expansion of Complex Needs Emergency Shelters.
- For more information on these investments, please refer to the Mental Health and Addictions news release and backgrounder.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Health's total record capital budget of \$656.9 million for facilities and equipment is \$140.1 million higher than last year and includes multiple capital projects across the province, such as:

- \$322.4 million for Prince Albert Victoria Hospital to construct a new multi-level acute care tower;
- \$40 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 million for Grenfell Long-Term Care project construction;
- \$3 million for development of Saskatoon's Urgent Care Centre in partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments; and
- \$1 million to support planning of five new Urgent Care Centres (Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Regina).
- Additional funding will continue to support ongoing projects, including the Yorkton Regional Health Centre, Rosthern Hospital, Royal University Hospital's ICU Expansion, SCA's Saskatoon Patient Lodge, Esterhazy Integrated Care Facility and long-term care projects in several communities, including Regina, the Battlefords, Watson and Estevan.

Since November 2007, the province has invested \$3.7 billion into facilities and equipment to improve the delivery of health care across the province.

STRONGER CONTINUING CARE

Strengthening continuing care programs will provide patients with ongoing support to remain at home and in their communities as long as possible.

- \$4.7 million increase will fund continuing care services for all ages from children with complex medical needs to seniors. Additional programming and resources will improve coordination of home care services, long-term care enhancements, a dementia-friendly community program in Yorkton and other commitments.
- \$2.4 million investment for operations and staffing of 115 established long-term care and convalescent beds to support the *Saskatoon Capacity Action Plan* for alternate level of care services. The 50 long-term care beds and 65 convalescent beds located in Saskatoon will assist with patient

flow complexities. This investment supports adding community care beds and staff to transition patients out of acute care when it is no longer the most appropriate space for the patient, and will improve capacity in acute care.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- 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.
- Saskatchewan will invest \$3 million to introduce a new Fertility Treatment Tax Credit for the 2025 tax year. This credit will provide a 50 per cent refundable tax credit for the cost of one round of IVF fertility treatment, to a maximum of \$20,000 of eligible expenses.