

June 23, 2004

Medicine Hat program helps patients with chronic diseases

Medicine Hat...The Palliser Health Region will receive more than \$2 million from the Alberta government to consolidate existing community clinics and establish a Chronic Disease Management Program at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

The new program will assist patients battling chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart and lung problems, hypertension, and obesity to better manage their conditions through education and exercise. The focus is on prevention and early intervention to decrease or prevent hospital admissions.

Right now, the cardiac rehabilitation, diabetic education, obesity, hypertension, nutritional counseling and pulmonary rehabilitation clinics are located in various sites throughout Medicine Hat. The project will see the relocation of these services to the Dr. Dan MacCharles Auxiliary wing of the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

"Having these services available under one roof will allow for increased efficiencies and ultimately better patient care," said Infrastructure Minister Ty Lund. "It shows innovative planning by the Palliser Health Region to better serve the residents of Medicine Hat. I commend all those involved for their work."

The funds come from the Alberta government's Health Sustainability Initiative, which was announced in 2003. The fund is intended to help health regions convert health facilities to alternative uses, introduce new service delivery models, and adapt infrastructure to support changing operational directions and priorities for the health system.

"This project will become a centre of wellness for south eastern Alberta to help patients manage their chronic health conditions," said Health and Wellness Minister Gary Mar.

"I am delighted the Palliser Health Region has shown such initiative in developing this project," said Lorne Taylor, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat. "This means that those in need of care will save valuable time and energy by accessing health services all in one location."

Total funding available through the Health Sustainability Initiative is \$68.5 million over three years.

"This project will certainly make it easier for those suffering with chronic illness to access programs and services to help them manage their illness as best they can, " said Rob Renner, MLA for Medicine Hat. "I am very pleased to see it moving forward."

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