

October 13, 2004

## **Aspen Health Region to upgrade Edson, Barrhead hospitals**

Edson...The Aspen Health Region will receive \$13 million to renovate and upgrade the Edson Healthcare Centre, and additional funding for a programming study to complete renovations at the Barrhead Healthcare Centre. The funding is being allocated from the \$50 million set aside for rural health infrastructure, announced June 30 as part of the Alberta government's \$700-million reinvestment in health care.

In Edson, the \$13 million means Phase I of an overall redevelopment plan for the Edson Healthcare Centre will get underway. The project will provide new and expanded capacity for several acute care program areas including inpatient, emergency, outpatient clinics, diagnostic imaging and laboratory services. Specifically, the emergency department will be upgraded, the acute care wing will be replaced, and new surgical suites will be added.

"Edson is a major service centre for the area and the health centre needed to be upgraded to continue to accommodate the thousands of people it serves," said Infrastructure Minister Ty Lund. "With the additional funding for a programming study in Barrhead, we are looking to the future and ensuring residents of the Aspen Health Region have facilities that can deliver quality health services when people need them."

Programming studies outline the scope and cost of capital projects and ensure multi-phase projects are coordinated.

The programming study in Barrhead will focus on the final phases of the redevelopment at the Barrhead Healthcare Centre. The study will investigate providing increased services by expanding rehabilitation, laboratory and diagnostic imaging areas, and relocating community health services to the facility. As well, a new addition will accommodate relocated and expanded admitting, health records, emergency and outpatient clinic programs, and the cancer clinic. The exact amount of funding for the programming study will be determined through a Request for Proposal.

The first two phases of the redevelopment were implemented with capital and Infrastructure Maintenance Program funding.

"The redevelopment plans for these two facilities ensures the highest quality of health care both now and in the future. Improving access benefits Edson and Barrhead, and all of the surrounding communities as well," said Gary Mar, Minister of Health and Wellness.

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