

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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NEW DAUPHIN MRI NOW OPEN!

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A new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner in Dauphin is now accepting patients, increasing access and reducing travel times for residents in Manitoba's Parkland region who require this diagnostic service, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

"We are working to transform the health-care system so that it provides easier access, shortened wait times and common standards of care for patients across the province," said Pallister. "This new MRI shows our commitment to providing better care sooner, and closer to home for the people of Dauphin and the Parkland region."

The new MRI machine, which is projected to perform approximately 3,500 scans per year, is expected to reduce the number of inter-facility transfers required for patients who would previously have been transferred to another site, such as Brandon or Winnipeg, to receive a diagnostic scan. As patients who would have had scans at other sites are scheduled for MRI appointments in Dauphin, spaces will open up at other sites, reducing waits provincewide.

"The opening of this new site builds on our work to reduce wait times to transform our health-care system," said Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen. "As we make changes to ensure access to consistent, reliable care, we will continue to invest in opportunities to reduce wait times for Manitoba families."

The addition of the scanner is expected to further enhance the recent success in tackling MRI wait times across the province. Since July 2017, average wait times for MRIs have seen a 30 per cent improvement, declining to 16 weeks from 24.

The scanner is located close to Dauphin Regional Health Centre's existing diagnostic imaging department and the new \$23-million emergency department, which is slated to open in mid-2019, Friesen added.

PROVINCE ANNOUNCES DIALYSIS SERVICES EXPANDED IN BRANDON



Dialysis services are being expanded in Brandon, launching new options for Westman residents living with kidney failure, Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen announced this week.

“Providing more options for dialysis closer to home will allow Brandon and Westman-area residents to manage their own care without having to travel or temporarily relocate to Winnipeg for home training and support,” said Friesen. “Receiving services closer to home is a cornerstone of our government’s approach to improving Manitoba’s health system and this significant measure will benefit patients in the region in a variety of ways.”

The province is investing more than \$500,000 annually to support the expansion, which will make home dialysis training and ongoing support more accessible for patients in the region.

The site in Brandon is the only one in the province operating seven days a week to treat a growing number of patients with kidney failure. It is also the only site outside Winnipeg with nephrologists (kidney specialists) on staff.

FUNDING DELIVERED TO REDUCE CRIME ACROSS MANITOBA



The Manitoba government is distributing nearly \$450,000 through the Proceeds of Crime Fund to Manitoba police agencies to engage communities in combating the illicit drug trade and reduce crime, Premier Brian Pallister and Justice Minister Cliff Cullen announced this week.

“We will continue to invest in programs and initiatives that help keep Manitobans safe,” said Pallister. “Our government is working together with police agencies and community organizations across the province to achieve our shared goals of combating the illicit drug trade and reducing crime.”

The province’s investment is part of Manitoba’s share of forfeited funds from federally prosecuted Criminal Code offences. Proceeds for the fund come from confiscated property or proceeds of unlawful activity and property used in committing a crime.

“We are pleased to support these programs, which look for tangible ways to deter crime and prevent theft without putting a strain on police resources,” Cullen said. “Our commitment to crime reduction will strengthen support for new and existing projects that involve meaningful community engagement.”

TASK FORCE CREATED TO COMBAT INCREASED DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS



Federal, provincial and municipal leaders have formed a task force to address and respond to the rapid increase in the distribution and use of methamphetamine and other substances.

The creation of the Illicit Drug Task Force was announced this week by Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen, Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman and Robert-Falcon Ouellette, member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre.

“The problems associated with illicit drug use destroy families, hurt communities, cross all jurisdictional boundaries, and require a collaborative and coordinated response from all levels of government,” said Friesen. “We look forward to working together with our federal and municipal partners to find solutions and build on recent initiatives of the Manitoba government, such as Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinics.”

The task force will determine practical short- and long-term recommendations to combat the use and distribution of illicit drugs, such as methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine and hallucinogens. The task force is expected to publicly release a report in June 2019.

MANITOBA ADDING COVERAGE FOR 79 NEW MEDICATIONS TO PHARMACARE

The Manitoba government has added 79 drugs to the provincial drug formulary to ensure patients have access to these medications through the Manitoba Pharmacare Program, announced Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen this week.

“Medications are important treatments for many different illnesses and diseases,” said Friesen. “Manitoba’s universal prescription drug benefit program is one of the most comprehensive in the country and these new additions will help families across the province access drug coverage through the program.”

Of the 79 drugs added, 73 are generic medications at different strengths. The minister said the additions reduce the amount that would have otherwise been spent on higher-cost equivalent drugs by \$350,000 annually, allowing that money to be reallocated to coverage for new drugs. Coverage for the new drugs will be effective on Jan. 24, 2019.

For more information on the Manitoba Pharmacare Program, visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/pharmacare.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

This is the final edition of PC Caucus Review for 2018. On behalf of all of the MLAs and Staff of the Manitoba PC Caucus, we extend our best wishes for a Merry Christmas, a joyous holiday season with family and friends, and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!

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