

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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NEW EMERGENCY ROOM SET TO OPEN AT GRACE HOSPITAL

May 25, 2018

A new state-of-the-art emergency department will open at Grace Hospital on Tuesday and is expected to treat 35,000 patients this year, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

The \$43.8-million emergency department, which includes a \$5-million community contribution, is 38,000 square feet in size. It features, among other things, an open-concept design, a large ambulance bay that can reduce patient off-load times, increased number of assessment and treatment rooms and spaces, as well as a physical connection to the ACCESS Winnipeg West walk-in clinic.

“The Grace Hospital’s new emergency department will be more than five times larger than its old one and is designed to provide the highest quality care to patients, both now and in the future,” said Pallister, who attended an event celebrating the department’s imminent opening along with Health Minister Kelvin Goertzen and Families Minister Scott Fielding. “The opening of this department is integral to our government’s short- and long-term goals to continue to provide better care sooner, bring down wait times and build a health-care system that’s sustainable for future generations.”

NIGHT HUNTING BILL INTRODUCED

The Manitoba government has introduced a bill that would create a safer and more ethical hunting environment for all Manitobans, Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires announced recently.

“We have seen deaths, serious injuries and far too many close calls as a result of unsafe night hunting practices in Manitoba,” Squires said. “We also know blinding an animal in the dead of the night for the purpose of an easy kill is neither safe nor sustainable.”

Some practices of night hunting, particularly spotlighting – a practice that shines a bright light into an animal’s eyes to paralyze it – would be regulated under this bill, added Squires. The bill would regulate night hunting to ensure the sustainability of Manitoba’s big game population.

In addition to redefining night hunting, this bill would ensure that for the third year in a row the government would be increasing resources and providing better tools to the province’s conservation officers to keep Manitobans safe from dangerous and illegal hunting practices, the minister noted.

PROVINCE ANNOUNCES NEW NORTHERN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Northern Manitobans will benefit from a new workforce development centre that brings together industry and workers, Education and Training Minister Ian Wishart and Thompson MLA Kelly Bindle announced at University College of the North (UCN) Thompson Campus last week.

“We are here to work with northern Manitoba to build a stronger economy and a brighter future,” said Wishart at the grand opening of the Northern Workforce Development Centre. “This new centre will provide innovative training in one convenient place to prepare workers for in-demand jobs here in Thompson and the surrounding regions. We want to create direct paths from training to employment.”

The province will provide more than \$140,000 for the project over two years. Total project investment includes contributions from UCN and local industry and surpasses \$250,000.

The minister noted the Northern Workforce Development Centre (NWDC) supports the priorities of the *Look North Report and Action Plan for Manitoba's Northern Economy*, which calls for strategic alignment among partner organizations and new education and training opportunities based on industry partnerships and labour market needs.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO SENATE COMMITTEE ON CANNABIS LEGISLATION

The Manitoba government has provided a submission to the Senate of Canada to highlight ongoing concerns related to cannabis legalization, including road safety.

“As we address the federal government’s decision to legalize recreational cannabis, our government’s priority is to ensure the public health and safety of Manitobans,” said Justice Minister Heather Stefanson. “While Manitoba continues to make significant progress preparing for the federal legalization of cannabis, many major concerns remain outstanding and require immediate federal attention.”

“Our government continues to hold concerns that the short time frame for implementation presents significant risks to achieving the federal government’s stated objectives for legalization, including keeping cannabis out of the hands of our youth and away from the black market,” said Health Minister Kelvin Goertzen.

Other concerns raised by Stefanson and Goertzen to the senate committee include:

- the timely and appropriate implementation of road safety measures before legalization takes effect;
- resource pressures by law enforcement as they work to keep roads safe;
- the risks associated with a short implementation timeframe;
- the reliability and cost challenges associated with a seed to sale tracking system; and
- the length of time needed to prepare for full cannabis retail operations.

The federal government must address these outstanding concerns prior to legalization coming into effect, said Stefanson and Goertzen.