

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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NEW ADDICTIONS MEDICINE CLINICS OPEN IN BRANDON AND THOMPSON

October 19, 2018



Two more Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinics have opened in Brandon and Thompson, offering front-line help for Manitobans in different regions of the province suffering from addictions, Justice Minister Cliff Cullen announced at an event in Brandon this week. A satellite announcement also took place in Thompson with local MLA Kelly Bindle.

“RAAM clinics provide assessment, counselling, the prescribing of appropriate medication, and connections for patients to community treatment programs and primary care physicians,” said Cullen. “The clinics are key elements in the provincial effort to help Manitobans seeking treatment for addictions or substance-related concerns including opioids, methamphetamine and alcohol,” added Bindle.

“We’ve already seen RAAM clinics in Winnipeg assess and connect a number of patients with addictions services in the short time they have been open,” said Greg Nesbitt, legislative assistant to the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living. “Opening these new locations in Brandon and Thompson will expand our abilities to get help in a timely manner for those seeking it.”

The 7th Street Access Centre will house the Brandon RAAM clinic, while the Thompson clinic will be located at the Addiction Foundation of Manitoba’s Eaglewood site. The clinics are designed to help patients more easily navigate the health system, moving them between addiction medicine specialists, primary care providers and community supports. The clinics are typically staffed by an addictions physician and a combination of clinicians, counsellors and outreach workers.



NEW DISTRACTED DRIVING FINES COMING ON NOVEMBER 1ST



Changes under The Highway Traffic Act and the Drivers and Vehicles Act that come into force Nov. 1 will allow for short-term roadside license suspensions for using a cellphone or other hand-operated electronic devices while driving, Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler announced this week.

“Our government is focused on keeping Manitobans safe, and we are determined to reduce the growing threat posed by distracted driving that adversely affects Manitoba’s citizens and communities,” said Schuler. “By using the right combination of tools such as public education, legislation and enforcement, we aim to change public perception and make distracted driving as socially unacceptable as impaired driving.”

The amendments mean drivers will be subject to a three-day roadside license suspension for the first time a driver is caught using a cellphone or other hand-operated electronic device, and a seven-day suspension for a subsequent occurrence within 10 years. Suspended drivers will be required to immediately surrender their driver’s license at roadside.

The amendments will also require officers charging a driver with careless driving to immediately notify Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) to review the driver’s record in order to determine if further penalties may be required. As part of the changes for roadside license suspensions, MPI will collect a \$50 license reinstatement fee on behalf of government.

Further distracted driving penalties will also come into force on Nov. 1 including an increase in the fine for using a hand-operated electronic device while driving to \$672 from \$203 and an increase in demerits for careless driving to five points from two for each infraction.

REVIEW OF KEYASK AND BIPOLE III ANNOUNCED

The Manitoba government has appointed Gordon Campbell to conduct an economic review of the development of two major Manitoba Hydro projects, Crown Services Minister Colleen Mayer announced this week.

“Mr. Campbell has been appointed pursuant to The Manitoba Evidence Act to review the planning and decision-making processes relating to the Keeyask Generation Project and Bipole III Transmission and Converter Stations Project,” Mayer said. “In particular, he will review actions taken prior to and during the construction of those projects.”

Campbell is the chief executive officer of Hawksmuir International Partners. He was premier of British Columbia from 2001 to 2011, and served as Canada’s high commissioner to Great Britain from 2011 to 2016.

The review has a budget of \$2.5 million and will begin immediately, the minister said. It will build on work previously conducted by the Public Utilities Board and Manitoba Hydro. Campbell will deliver his final report by no later than Dec. 31, 2019, the minister noted.

MANITOBA ADDING COVERAGE FOR 154 NEW MEDICATIONS UNDER PHARMACARE

Patients now have access to an additional 154 medications through the Manitoba Pharmacare Program, including enhanced access to drugs used to treat diabetes, Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen announced this week.

“We are continuously working to add drugs to the pharmacare program in a timely manner to ensure Manitobans have access to medications that offer important treatments for many different illnesses and treatments at a more affordable price,” said Friesen. “By participating in the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, we are able to add more brand-name and generic drugs to the program, saving money that can then be reinvested into further increasing drug coverage for Manitobans.”

The province is adding coverage for the drug Tresiba, a long-acting insulin used to control high blood sugar, for the treatment of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. In addition, the long-lasting insulin drugs Lantus, Levemir and Basaglar will move from Part 3 of the formulary to Part 1, enhancing access for people with diabetes as physicians will no longer need to apply for coverage of these drugs before the patient gets it from their pharmacy.

Of the 154 drugs added, 120 are generic medications. The minister noted the additions reduce the amount that would have otherwise been spent on higher-cost equivalent drugs by \$1 million, allowing the money to be reallocated towards coverage for new drugs.

For more information, please visit: <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=44696&posted=2018-10-18>

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS KICK OFF ACROSS MANITOBA

Budget 2019’s pre-budget consultations began this week and Manitobans are encouraged to take the opportunity to share their ideas and views for the upcoming provincial budget.

“From health care to public safety and infrastructure investments, we understand that fiscal sustainability is essential to protecting our ability to invest in the priorities of Manitobans,” said Finance Minister Scott Fielding. “The work of government directly affects households and communities throughout the province, and we want to hear Manitobans’ advice on the choices we must make as we prepare the 2019 budget.”

Manitobans are invited to share their views in different ways, including public consultation meetings, to give people the chance to provide their feedback to the minister. Public meetings were held this week in Selkirk, Thompson, Brandon and Winnipeg. An additional meeting will take place at the Manitoba Legislature on Thursday, October 25th from 7 to 9pm.

To encourage as broad an engagement as possible, Manitobans unable to attend a public meeting can fill out an online survey to share their views. The survey seeks feedback from Manitobans on several topics including balancing the budget, sustaining health care and funding education. In addition, written submissions on all subjects can be sent directly to the minister of finance.

For more information on the pre-budget consultation meetings and to access the survey, visit www.manitobansmakingchoices.ca.