More surgeries, more beds improve access to health care

First 5-Year Health Action Plan update shows steady progress

Edmonton ... Nearly 10,000 more surgeries were performed in Alberta last year than in the previous year - according to the progress report on the Government’s 5-Year Health Action Plan that aims to increase access and reduce wait times.

The plan’s first update reports on immediate actions that were scheduled to be completed by June 2011. Results show 18 of 19 actions were completed. Achievements include:

- Reducing wait times for surgery through an additional 9,790 surgeries in 2010-11, surpassing the 3,000 target in the 5-Year Health Action Plan by almost 6,800 surgeries.
- Adding 360 new hospital beds to improve hospital access.
- Helping Albertans find their way around the health system by establishing a cancer patient navigation system that improves co-ordination of care, speeds up patient access to resources and services, and helps patients find answers to questions.
- Supporting Albertans with addiction and mental health issues by opening 44 new mental health beds in Edmonton and 5 beds in St. Paul.
- Giving Albertans access to reliable and trusted information about staying well, health conditions and treatment options through www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca.

Work on the 19th action - the 5-year plan for continuing care - is currently being finalized.

“I am very pleased with the progress being made on our 5-Year Health Action Plan,” said Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness. “We are moving forward and focusing on the things Albertans want from their health system - including better access, shorter wait times and more transparency. We will continue to make improvements and to report to Albertans on our progress.”

“The dedication, skill and hard work of our physicians, staff and partners have helped us make significant improvements in a short period of time,” said Dr. Chris Eagle, President and CEO of Alberta Health Services. “Of course, more work awaits us, in the short and long term. But with stable, 5-year funding from the province, we’re in an excellent position to make further progress in the areas of wait times, access, primary care, continuing care and overall health of Albertans.”

Albertans can view the 5-Year Health Action Plan progress update and accompanying performance measures at www.health.alberta.ca. Regular updates will be posted online.
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5-Year Health Action Plan - June 2011 progress update

- The 9,790 additional surgeries performed in Alberta in 2010-11 include:
  - 4,300 surgeries ranging from cancer and cardiac to orthopedic and vascular.
  - 5,000 cataract surgeries.
  - 200 additional cornea transplants.
  - 290 additional hip and knee replacements

Note: During 2010-11, AHS performed approximately 250,000 surgeries province-wide.

- The 360 new beds include detox beds, hospice beds, medical assessment beds, medical observation beds, transition beds and geriatric mental health beds. The locations are as follows:
  - 214 beds in Calgary.
  - 146 beds in Edmonton.

5-Year Health Action Plan facts:

- The 5-Year Health Action Plan, released last November, sets out clearly defined targets for health system performance and outlines how AHS, the Government of Alberta and their health care partners will work together to meet those targets.
- There are 132 actions in the plan grouped under 5 strategies:
  1. Improve access and reduce wait times;
  2. Provide more choice for continuing care;
  3. Strengthen primary health care;
  4. Be healthy, stay healthy; and
  5. Build one health system.

- The 5-Year Health Action Plan is accompanied by a set of 50 supporting performance measures that allow Albertans to measure progress on health system improvement. AHS reports quarterly on its progress to meet the annual targets. For more information and to view results, visit [http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/833.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/833.asp).
- The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta; the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; the Alberta College of Pharmacists; and the Health Quality Council of Alberta provided input and advice that was used to develop the 5-Year Health Action Plan and the 50 supporting performance measures.

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