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First phase of emergency department renos now complete

Upgrades include larger treatment areas and more privacy for patients

LETHBRIDGE – Patients will enjoy more privacy and larger treatment areas with the completion of the first phase of renovations to the emergency department at Chinook Regional Hospital.

The \$9-million, 40-month renovation project began in February. The entire project will be completed in 2017.

“We’re taking on this major renovation one piece at a time,” says Diane Shanks, director of emergency and critical care at the Alberta Health Services (AHS) facility. “It means the entire project will take longer but we have to keep our emergency department open, so it’s the only realistic way to tackle this work with as little disruption to patients as possible.”

The first phase of the project includes a larger treatment room for trauma patients, four smaller acute treatment rooms, two secure psychiatry treatment rooms, additional workspaces for physicians and staff and equipment storage.

A new waiting room and triage area were completed in April.

Overall, the five-phase project will increase the current emergency department floor space by about 30 per cent, adding patient space; creating more waiting room space; and creating dedicated private rooms for gynecology treatment, trauma, psychiatry services, and improved infection prevention and control. Patient privacy will be significantly improved.

“The new treatment space will definitely enhance how we care for patients,” says Dr. Peter Kwan, chief of emergency at Chinook Regional Hospital. “We still expect to have temporary space issues as this project continues but, at the end of the day, everyone will benefit.”

AHS encourages Albertans to consider other options, such as physician clinics, pharmacies, and Health Link Alberta, before visiting an emergency department. For more information on health care options go to: www.albertahealthservices.ca/7581.asp.

Individuals can call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-5465 to determine if the emergency department is the best place to seek care for their health concerns. Recent statistics show about one in four people in Alberta’s emergency departments could have their health concerns managed in a more appropriate setting, such as a family doctor’s office or walk-in clinic.

The emergency department renovation is part of the \$135-million Chinook Regional Hospital redevelopment project funded by the Government of Alberta. The overall project includes construction of a new five-storey wing that will expand acute and ambulatory care, outpatient clinics, respiratory therapy, pre-operative assessment, and labour and delivery.

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The second phase of the emergency department renovation will start next month as a large observation and treatment area and storage rooms will be rebuilt into new acute care treatment rooms. That phase will take about six months to complete.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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