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## Temporary recovery and detox centre opens Monday

MEDICINE HAT — A new temporary residential recovery and detoxification centre will open Monday to serve area residents until a new permanent facility opens next year.

The Alberta Health Services (AHS) facility, located in a vacated wing of the Medicine Hat Remand Centre, 874 2 St. S.E., will house up to eight clients, male and female.

Six spaces will be available for local residents to participate in a five- to seven-day residential detoxification program. Two spaces will be available for individuals from other communities who require a three-week addiction treatment program.

About \$270,000 in renovations were completed to the space to create a separate entrance, private rooms, washrooms and meeting space for therapy sessions. The building's doors, windows, air handling and fire alarm systems were upgraded.

Sean Chilton, Chief Zone Officer of AHS South Zone, says AHS worked with local community organizations, City of Medicine Hat and provincial government to find the temporary facility.

"Until now, there was no residential detoxification program in southeast Alberta," he says. "This facility will provide much-needed services until the permanent 18-bed facility opens in 2015."

The temporary facility provides a non-medical, social detoxification program to help clients while they withdraw from alcohol or other drugs. Clients identified as high risk for severe withdrawal would be referred to the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital for medical detoxification.

"The facility will be staffed 24/7 with addictions counsellors, client care assistants, and nurses," says Rita Duren, AHS director of addiction and mental health services for Medicine Hat and area. "Depending on the severity of their withdrawal, clients will attend group and individual counselling."

Additional addiction programs and services are also available in Medicine Hat: home detoxification; mobile addiction outreach; inpatient detoxification; outpatient services; day treatment program; and evening services to help families understand addictions and the services available.

These services will continue while the temporary facility operates and after the permanent 18-bed facility opens.

Construction has started on the Medicine Hat Detoxification and Residential Treatment Centre, located at 370 Kipling St. S.E.

There are also detoxification facilities in Fort Macleod and Calgary, and residential addiction treatment centres in Lethbridge, Claresholm and Calgary.

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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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**For media inquiries, contact:**

James Frey  
AHS Communications  
403-388-6313  
587-220-1774 (cell)