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Medicine Hat hospital celebrating its 125th anniversary

MEDICINE HAT – Alberta Health Services (AHS) is celebrating Medicine Hat Regional Hospital's 125th anniversary with a public display that charts the city's health care history.

A population boom caused by Canadian Pacific Railway expansion and a typhoid fever epidemic led to the need for a local hospital. The Medicine Hat General Hospital, located in what is now downtown Medicine Hat, came into legal existence on Nov. 22, 1889, when it was incorporated by a Special Act of Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Construction on the 25-bed hospital was completed later that year and the first patients were admitted Jan. 27, 1890.

"I extend my sincere thanks to all of the dedicated staff and health professionals who have been a part of this hospital's history, and who are helping to shape its future," says Stephen Mandel, Minister of Health.

"Through the \$220-million redevelopment and expansion project now underway, the Alberta government is committed to continuing and enhancing the legacy of excellence in health care at this hospital. This project, and similar projects in communities across the province, will mean that Albertans will have better, easier access to high-quality health care services for themselves, and their families and loved ones."

The hospital moved to its current southwest location in 1955 and, today, it's a 232-bed facility offering a significant number of ambulatory care programs and services.

"We've experienced many changes in our services, technology, and even our name and identity over the years," says Linda Iwasiw, Alberta Health Services' Senior Operating Officer, Acute Care East South Zone. "But what hasn't changed is the commitment and professionalism demonstrated by the staff and physicians to provide patients and their families with exceptional health services."

Week-long anniversary celebrations conclude today at the Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, 401 1 St. S.E., where displays illustrate the history of health care in the city.

In its first year of operation, 124 patients were admitted to Medicine Hat General Hospital, and 101 operations were performed for dislocations, amputations and fractures. Top ailments included typhoid fever, abscesses, hemorrhoids and uterine ailments. The average hospital stay was about 16 days; surgical patients averaged 41 days.

More historical facts and photos are available on Facebook; search for 125th Anniversary Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

To celebrate the anniversary, AHS has created keepsake cookbooks, *Recipes, Memories and More*, which are available for \$10.

Proceeds will be donated to the Medicine Hat and District Health Foundation.

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Medicine Hat Regional Hospital serves residents living in southeast Alberta, including Oyen, Brooks, Bassano, Bow Island, as well as southwest Saskatchewan and other parts of Alberta.

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:

Lisa Squires
AHS Communications
403-502-8619
403-581-9036 (cell)
Lisa.Squires@albertahealthservices.ca