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New MRI arrives at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital

MEDICINE HAT – Installation begins today on a new, state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, which will improve patient care by providing higher-quality images in less time.

Ten to 12 weeks of construction will be required to remove the current 14-year-old MRI and install the new machine.

Medicine Hat Regional Hospital will use a mobile MRI unit during the installation to ensure continuity of MRI services in the area. The mobile MRI is now being installed and, when it becomes operational Feb. 7, the current MRI will be removed.

The transition is not expected to cause delays for patients needing an MRI scan.

“MRI technology has advanced significantly since the first MRI scanner was installed at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital in 2001,” says Darrin Gerl, Manager for Medicine Hat Diagnostic Imaging for Alberta Health Services (AHS).

“Because of the changes in technology, the new MR scanner will allow us to do things we have not been previously able to do. We do expect to gain some efficiency in patient throughput and we will have new imaging options at our disposal. As well, the new MRI has a more comfortable design and is more spacious, capable of accommodating larger patients. In terms of patient care and MRI services offered locally, this is a step forward.”

Extensive construction is required to accommodate the 4,800-kilogram machine, a Siemens 1.5T Magnetom Aera, in existing space in the hospital.

The mobile MRI will be located inside a tractor-trailer unit parked outside, adjacent to the current diagnostic imaging department.

Total cost for the new MRI and installation is about \$3.5 million.

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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