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Evening dialysis now offered at Wetaskiwin Hospital

Service expansion enables more patients to access treatment locally

WETASKIWIN – More patients with chronic kidney disease will be able to access dialysis at the Wetaskiwin Hospital and Care Centre, as the dialysis unit extends its hours to offer additional treatment times.

Dialysis provided through the Northern Alberta Renal Program (NARP) was expanded into the evenings last month and is now available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The 12 extra service hours every week will provide space for six additional patients.

“The demand for dialysis continues to increase and spots are at a premium,” says nephrologist Dr. Kym Jim, Clinical Department Head for internal medicine in Alberta Health Services’ Central Zone. “By creating this additional capacity in Wetaskiwin, we’re able to increase access and serve more patients closer to home.”

An aging population, rising diabetes rates leading to renal failure, and patients living longer on dialysis due to medical advancements are all factors contributing to increased demand for dialysis, the process of cleansing the blood of toxins and excess fluid when normal kidney function is reduced. A patient’s blood is filtered through a dialyzer and returned to the body.

There are currently more than 1,200 patients on dialysis within NARP, a geographical area that includes central and northern Alberta.

The extended hours will also provide patients more flexibility to carry out daily routines and activities. For patients such as Teresa Parks, who has been on dialysis three times a week for the past three years, being able to schedule treatments in the evening gives her more time with her family and her business.

“I’m a single mom, I own my own company, and it can be a burden doing dialysis during the day,” says Parks. “With later treatment times available, it takes into account that we’re human beings first, with busy lives. Coming in the evening makes a huge difference in my quality of life.”

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:

Heather Kipling
AHS Communications
403-341-8687