

August 6, 2015

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## Work continues on new heliport for Fort McMurray

FORT McMURRAY – Design work for the construction on the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre’s rooftop heliport is ongoing and will be completed during the fall of 2015.

The heliport was announced in October 2014 and is part of the \$25 million Alberta Health Services (AHS) received in 2013 from the provincial government for heliport upgrades over the next three years.

Construction on the project was expected to begin in the spring; however, due to ongoing design work, a delay has occurred. When complete, the design will allow AHS teams to transport patients quickly, safely and efficiently to and from the heliport to the Emergency Department (ED), improving emergency care for Albertans flown to the facility. The project is scheduled to be completed in late 2016.

“The addition of the heliport at our facility will mean we can get our medevac patients into and out of our emergency department much faster and more easily,” said David Matear, site director, Northern Lights Regional Health Centre. “We appreciate the community’s patience. We believe the time and effort taken to ensure that all aspects are considered during the design phase will result in more efficient clinical operations throughout the construction phase and in future operations of the heliport, and be of great benefit to the people of Fort McMurray and surrounding areas.”

Air ambulance services in Fort McMurray will continue to operate out of the Fort McMurray International Airport until the new heliport is complete, and patients will be transported by ambulance from the airport to the hospital.

Locating the heliport at Northern Lights Regional Health Centre will reduce the time patients spend in transit.

“This heliport will be a major advancement for patient care,” said Dr. Gene Vitug, Northern Lights Regional Health Centre’s Co-Facility Medical Director. “Timely emergency medical transport is essential to those living and working in a region with a population and industry that is growing so rapidly.”

Northern Lights Regional Health Centre staff, patients and visitors are expected to notice increased noise as construction on the rooftop heliport begins. The noise will be caused by the welding, cutting and grinding work necessary to reinforce structural supports throughout the facility, and will impact all levels of the facility.

The work will be scheduled at times that will cause the least disruption. Contractors will work as quickly as possible to minimize the impact on patients, visitors and staff.

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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