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## Work begins today on Crowsnest Pass helipad upgrades

BLAIRMORE – Construction begins today on a new and improved helicopter landing pad at the Crowsnest Pass Health Centre. The project costs about \$914,000 and will take eight weeks to complete.

The upgraded helipad will accommodate both helicopters operated by STARS – the BK117 and the new AW139 – and provide better access to emergency care for local and area patients.

“Crowsnest Pass emergency physicians and staff already provide excellent care,” says Sean Chilton, Chief Zone Officer for the South Zone of Alberta Health Services (AHS). “This upgrade will help us to get the most critical patients to a higher level of care more quickly, even when poor weather conditions might limit the use of other helicopters.”

During construction, medevac helicopters will land and take off from the Alberta Transportation weigh scale at Burmis (about 10 minutes away). Patients will be transferred there by ground ambulance.

The AW139 helicopter offers faster response times and greater service range; a larger interior with space for two stretchers; a powerful twin engine for greater lift capacity and safety during takeoff and landing; and de-icing capability that will enable STARS to respond during adverse weather conditions.

STARS made 24 flights to the Crowsnest Pass last year. STARS helicopters are more than an ambulance in the air; they are a sophisticated medical environment brought directly to the patient. On board, a full array of medications and equipment is at the disposal of the air medical crew. STARS personnel are able to administer life-saving drugs, defibrillate a patient’s heart, transfuse blood, or even peer inside a patient using portable ultrasound technology.

Crowsnest Pass Health Centre is one of 13 Alberta Health Services facilities that are receiving upgraded helipads. AHS received \$25 million from the Government of Alberta last year to complete the project over a three-year period.

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.

STARS provides specialized emergency medical care and transportation for critically ill and injured patients. Its physicians, nurses, paramedics and pilots work with a team of dedicated support staff and community partners to save lives. STARS has bases in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

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