

June 22, 2010

## Radiation therapy centre opens in Lethbridge

*Centre part of Radiation Therapy Corridor, bringing cancer care closer to home*

LETHBRIDGE – The availability of radiation therapy in Lethbridge means hundreds of Albertans who are fighting cancer will now have access to care closer to home.

The \$52.3-million upgrade to the Lethbridge Cancer Centre is part of a provincewide strategy to open a corridor of cancer care treatment centres across Alberta – construction of a second radiation treatment facility will soon begin in Red Deer and a third new location will be located in Grande Prairie. Combined with existing facilities in Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta’s Radiation Therapy Corridor will improve access for all Albertans, no matter where they live. Until today, radiation therapy was only provided in Edmonton and Calgary.

“Having loved ones around us when we are fighting cancer is very valuable,” said Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness. “Leaving family and community for cancer treatment is a real hardship – not just financially but emotionally. This centre brings Alberta one step closer to providing readily accessible radiation therapy right across the province.”

“The centre is tangible proof of the commitment by both the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta to improving patient access to health care services,” said Rick Casson, Member of Parliament for Lethbridge, on behalf of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Federal Minister of Health. “I am confident that the important work done here will help Alberta meet its commitment to reducing patient wait times, and that above all, the centre will provide the best in patient care.”

Through a phased-in implementation, the Lethbridge Cancer Centre will provide radiation treatments for a number of different cancers – including breast, prostate, lung and gastrointestinal. The centre will also provide pain management for palliative care patients.

“This is a state-of-the-art facility where AHS will provide top quality care and improve access to treatment,” said Ken Hughes, AHS Board Chair. “Not only will the centre serve the needs of local residents, but it will help reduce pressures at other Alberta cancer facilities and improve access for all Albertans.”

The launch of radiation therapy treatments follows a major renovation to the Lethbridge Cancer Centre, which was completed in April. The space, located on the main floor at Chinook Regional Hospital, was designed to provide more comfort and privacy to chemotherapy patients.

“The new chemotherapy space is great,” said Lethbridge oncologist Dr. David Holland. “We have more privacy for patients and larger treatment areas. The addition of radiation therapy will make a huge difference to our patients and their families.”

Alberta Health Services is building and renewing facilities across the province to provide accessible, sustainable, quality health care to all Albertans. With nearly \$5 billion in provincial funding invested in active construction currently, AHS has more than 1,000 projects in various stages of completion in every zone of the province.

Taking into account the diverse needs of Albertans, AHS is strategically investing in the health system to support patients and communities to stay healthy and manage illness effectively.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 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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**Note to Media:** High-resolution b-roll of the Lethbridge Cancer Centre video is available for download from:

<ftp://70.72.128.172>

username: media  
password: share

Please download the video to your desktop before streaming it. It is a large file so please account for downloading time.

**For media inquiries, contact:**

Janine Ecklund  
Alberta Health Services  
Communications  
Phone: 403-388-6603 Cell: 403-894-6603

Tara Grindle  
Alberta Health Services  
Communications  
Phone: 403-388-6533 Cell: 403-894-6655