



**Dr. Chris Eagle, President and CEO, Alberta Health Services
Speaking Notes**

***Dr. Chris Eagle
Release of AHS 2013 – 2016 Health Plan and Business Plan
May 29, 2013 -Seventh Street Plaza, Edmonton, AB***

Thank you.

The single most important thing we're doing today at Alberta Health Services is setting the stage for the future.

We are focused on directing health care dollars to priority areas.

As our Chair outlined, we are focused on improving quality of care and finding efficiencies across the health system.

We are taking immediate action, and there are already activities underway in each of the streams mentioned by the Chair. Some examples of that work include:

1. We have begun work on new, community-based service models to address those complex, high-needs individuals and populations.
2. We continue to work with Alberta Health to further strengthen community and primary care through the

development of additional Family Care Clinics and Primary Care Networks.

3. We are expanding and standardizing home care services to ensure the needs of Albertans are being met now and into the future.
4. We are opening additional continuing care beds, and working to reduce the number of patients waiting in acute and sub acute care beds for continuing care placement.
5. We are working to expand our reach and impact in areas of wellness, health promotion and injury and disease prevention through partnerships with schools and community organizations.
6. We are expanding and accelerating the work of our Strategic Clinical Networks and focusing on areas such as a Rural Stroke Action Plan, Cancer Referral and Triage, surgical benchmarks, and seniors care.
7. We are increasing the number of RNs who are full time, and working to ensure health care staff are working to their full scope of practice to better care for our patients.

8. And, as you have heard before, we are containing costs through reducing administrative costs and optimizing support services, among other initiatives.

These are just a few examples of the actions being taken to deliver on the goals outlined in the Health and Business Plan. I can tell you that each action has specific targets and deliverables attached to it. This will guide us, and ensure we deliver on our commitment to Albertans.

Every plan needs financial resources to backstop it. To that end, our

2013/14 Budget provides the financial foundation to do this work.

Specifically:

- Community-based care funding is increasing by \$108 million to almost \$1.2 billion – a 10 per cent increase. That means more continuing care, palliative and hospice beds and services. This supports more appropriate care in your community.
- Home care funding is increasing by \$21 million to \$501 million, a 4.4 per cent increase.

- Facility-based continuing care services are increasing \$39 million to \$919 million, a 4.4 per cent increase.
- The greatest share of our budget is in our hospitals and other acute care facilities. Inpatient acute nursing care funding will increase by \$132 million, or 4.6 per cent, to just over \$3 billion. That will allow us to add capacity in surgical and intensive care, and to improve access to obstetric, pediatric and mental health services.
- Emergency and outpatient services funding is increasing 6.4 per cent, or \$91 million, to \$1.5 billion, to further ease pressures on emergency departments and to reduce wait times, and to help inpatients get discharged sooner and get outpatient care in or near their community.

We'll spend \$245 million to:

Expand facilities and drive innovation, such as additional neonatal intensive care spaces at Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary; the opening of a new cancer centre in Red Deer; and ongoing work by Strategic Clinical Networks. This supports a higher quality health care system.

As noted, we are increasing spending in priority areas. We are working to become more effective and efficient in managing and containing clinical and administrative costs. We are moving resources to where they can make a bigger difference.

You will not find in the Health and Business Plan sweeping reductions in any particular program or area. We are moving staff to areas where we feel they can make a greater difference and closing programs where dollars can be spent more effectively.

Many of these have already been reported and they will continue in the weeks and months ahead as decisions are made.

It will not be easy. However, we will ensure quality of patient care is central to every decision.

Cost-saving initiatives are underway, with decisions being made at the local level. We are planning to save about \$220 million in 2013/14 by eliminating duplication of services; by finding more efficient ways of delivering services and by containing costs. We need to do this for one simple reason – there is an ever-increasing cost to deliver health services.

Year over year, there is an increased demand for services, our Alberta population is growing, the number of visits to our Emergency Departments is up, and there continue to be large

groups of Albertans without regular access to primary care. These are the drivers for change and efficiency.

Finding these savings will make for tough but pivotal decisions to free up the dollars to increase spending in the highest priorities I've just described. This supports sustainability of our health care system.

Under our collective agreements, we are required to issue formal lay-off notices, but these are generally the first step in redeployment into other positions where staff are needed. We currently have 260 open nursing positions across the province. Change is coming and change is necessary to achieve the transformational change we are talking about. The status quo has no place in health care.

If we leave you with one message today, it is that with this Health Plan and Business Plan, Alberta Health Services is shifting into a higher gear.

We are accelerating progress. We are creating a system where patients will have shorter wait times for high-priority procedures and treatment. Where we will provide more and better care closer to where Albertans live. We are taking better care of our vulnerable Albertans, including those at the end of life, and our



youth-at-risk. We are creating a health care system that is there for all Albertans and their families.

Remember, as Mr. Lockwood said, we are looking at three fundamentals focusing on care in the community, achieving better outcomes and making the system truly sustainable.

Thank you.

I'd like to now invite Minister Horne to provide some additional comments before we take your questions.

Minister Horne...