

Questions & Answers Moose Jaw MRI – May 2014

Q1. What is the provincial financial commitment to funding the new MRI?

A1. The provincial financial commitment will be annual operating funding to the Five Hills Health Region. Those costs are anticipated to be \$625,000 in 2015-16, annualizing thereafter at \$2.5 million.

Q2. What will the \$3.3 million in Moose Jaw Health Foundation's capital campaign fundraising cover?

A2. The fundraising will cover the cost of the capital equipment and installation of the new MRI (\$1.2 million for construction of building space and \$2.1 million for the MRI acquisition).

Q3. What benefit will the new MRI bring to southern Saskatchewan patients?

A3. Providing timely and high quality diagnostic imaging services to Saskatchewan patients is a high priority for the government. The new MRI in Moose Jaw will be the sixth in our province, providing closer-to-home service that will reduce wait times for medical diagnosis and treatment for patients.

Q4. Why is an MRI being added to the new Moose Jaw Hospital now?

A4. A state of the art hospital is being constructed in Moose Jaw. The cost of adding the MRI during construction is considerably lower than if it is added once the building is complete. Given this clear financial benefit, combined with the provincial priority to provide timely and high quality diagnostic imaging services to Saskatchewan patients, the timing is right to do this now.

Q5. How much has MRI demand increased in recent years?

A5. Since 2008-09, the number of patients receiving MRI service each year in Saskatchewan has almost doubled from 17,949 patients to an estimated 33,825 patients expected in 2014-15.

Q6. What are the statistics for MRI demand in southern Saskatchewan?

A6. The number of patients receiving MRI service each year in Saskatchewan has almost doubled. To reduce wait times for diagnostics by 50 per cent by March 31, 2019 will require increased capacity in both MRI and CT services across the province. If capacity needs increase, it is important to do so in a manner consistent with patients' desire to receive service as close to home as possible. Closer-to-home service was a strong theme throughout the Patient First Review.

Q7. What are the current wait times for MRI service in the province?

A7. As of March 31, 2014, the wait time for elective MRI service was 136 days in Saskatoon, 70 days in Regina.

It is important to note that the Saskatoon Health Region has been clearing its backlog of long waiting requests for MRI service and its wait times at March 31, 2014 reflect the fact some patients who received service during the period had waited up to 300 days. Future reporting should show a reduction in MRI wait times in Saskatoon, with all four MRIs in Saskatoon focusing on improved patient access.

Q8. What is the wait time target for MRI service in Saskatchewan?

A8. The historic target timeframe for patients to receive elective MRI service has been 90 days. The government has a new target of achieving a 50 per cent decrease in wait time for diagnostics by March 31, 2019. This new MRI in Moose Jaw is an important step to meeting this goal.

Q9. Why a new MRI in Moose Jaw, when Saskatoon has a longer wait time and backlog for MRI services?

A9. The new MRI in Moose Jaw is just one of the steps being taken to reduce wait times for diagnostics. Increased MRI capacity to better serve patients in central and northern Saskatchewan is also a priority. The \$2 million in funding for planning for the renewal of the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert announced in the 2014-15 budget will include MRI service. There are currently four MRIs in Saskatoon serving central and northern Saskatchewan patients.

Q10. Where are the other MRI's in the province?

A10. Saskatchewan currently has six fixed MRIs: four in Saskatoon (two at Royal University Hospital; one each at St. Paul's Hospital and City Hospital), and two in Regina at Regina General Hospital. Regina also has a 3rd MRI, a temporary mobile at Regina General Hospital, that will remain in place until its 3rd party community service is in place.

Q11. Was this approved as part of the province's provincial imaging plan?

A11. 3sHealth is currently working on a business case for a long-term medical imaging strategy for the province. The decision to move forward with an MRI in Moose Jaw while that business case is underway was tied to the current opportunity with the construction of the Moose Jaw Hospital underway and to leverage the ability of the Moose Jaw Hospital Foundation to raise funds for the project.