

Business Plan

2023-24

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Saskatchewan! 

Statement from the Ministers



*The Honourable Paul Merriman
Minister of Health*



*The Honourable Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and
Addictions, Seniors, and Rural
and Remote Health*

We are pleased to present the Ministry of Health's 2023-24 Business Plan.

The dedicated employees who deliver our comprehensive health care programs and services are the foundation of Saskatchewan's health system. This year will provide opportunity and areas of growth for individuals and teams, as Saskatchewan continues to launch bold, action-oriented health human resource solutions with a focus on rural and remote areas of the province.

Saskatchewan will build a stronger, more responsive health system for patients by investing in critical and acute care initiatives. We are committing a significant increase to support ambitious efforts to address surgical wait times by adding capacity for thousands of additional procedures in 2023-24.

Acute patient care will receive added permanent beds in Saskatoon and Regina hospitals. This budget will continue to invest in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacity expansion, additional medical imaging capacity and specialized medical service enhancements.

Dedicated efforts to stabilize and enhance emergency medical services will include added support for rural and remote communities and further community paramedicine expansion. Primary and community care will see funding increases for initiatives such as virtual care and HealthLine 811, among others.

This year's budget will improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan's senior citizens living in care with completion of Government's multi-year commitment to add more continuing care assistant positions, add new standard long-term care beds in Regina and address home care demands.

Support for Mental Health and Addictions initiatives continues to be a priority for our government with many Saskatchewan people impacted by these widespread issues. This year's budget will see significant funding for new and ongoing programs that target vulnerable populations, along with children and youth.

Saskatchewan continues to invest in health care infrastructure such as Prince Albert's Victoria Hospital redevelopment, Weyburn General Hospital, and La Ronge's Long Term Care (LTC) project. This year, we are dedicating a record capital health budget to ensure health care facilities and information technology infrastructure are prepared to meet the needs of a growing and thriving province.

We look forward to a productive year where the growth we see happening around us benefits everyone.



2023-24 Budget Highlights

1	The 2023-24 budget investment for the Saskatchewan Health Authority will see an operating increase of \$191.4M or 4.5 per cent, for a total of \$4.4B.
2	Saskatchewan will continue to implement bold, action-oriented health human resource solutions to expand and strengthen our workforce in communities across the province. A \$55.5M Ministry of Health investment as part of Government’s nearly \$100 million commitment will deliver strong results to Recruit, Train, Incentivize and Retain more health care workers and physicians.
3	<p>Saskatchewan will build a stronger, more responsive health system that works for all patients by investing in critical and acute care initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$42.5M increase to address the surgical waitlist and performing thousands of additional procedures, doubling last year’s increase in this priority area; • \$19.8M increase for 64 permanent acute or complex care beds in Royal University Hospital and Pasqua Hospital; • \$7.0M increase for additional specialized medical imaging procedures, including Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans, to reduce the waitlist; and • \$6.0M to support Year 2 of a multi-year Intensive Care Unit (ICU) enhancement strategy to support new ICU beds and improve levels of care.
4	A \$39.0M funding increase dedicated for initiatives to help seniors age within their communities by providing the supports they need and improving long-term care.
5	Mental Health and Addictions will receive a \$12.4M increase in targeted initiatives resulting in a record 2023-24 budget of \$518 million for this high priority area. This year’s increase includes support for children and youth, as well as the implementation of additional addictions treatment spaces.
6	<p>Infrastructure and equipment, including information technology for hospitals and other care facilities, will receive the highest health capital budget investment in history of \$337.6M, an increase of \$181.0M. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$207.1M for ongoing capital projects and planning, including \$98.6M for Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, \$38.0M for Weyburn General Hospital and \$20.0M for La Ronge long-term care; • \$71.5M for health sector maintenance; and • \$59.0M for information technology and equipment infrastructure.
7	Other key budget investments include an additional \$25.7M to help subsidize prescription drug costs, as well as high drug cost protection; an \$8.8M increase to enhance emergency medical services and stabilize services in rural and remote areas; a \$6.6M increase to focus on public health and primary and community care initiatives; and \$5M to fund operating costs for the Regina Urgent Care Centre.

Government Vision and Goals

Saskatchewan's Vision

"...to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

>> Government Goals

A Strong Economy

Strong Communities

Strong Families

Saskatchewan's vision and three goals provide the strategic direction for organizations to align their programs and services to build a strong Saskatchewan.

All organizations will report on progress in their 2023-24 annual reports.

Ministry of Health Overview

Mandate

Through leadership and partnership, the Ministry of Health is dedicated to achieving a responsive, integrated and efficient health system that puts the patient first, and enables people to achieve their best possible health by promoting healthy choices and responsible self-care.

Mission

The Saskatchewan health care system works together with you to achieve your best possible care, experience and health.

Vision



Goal 1: Stronger Health Care System

Build a safe and responsive health system through evidence-informed strategy development supported by policies focused on improving the health and wellbeing of Saskatchewan people.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Improve team-based care in the community

Ensure citizens get the health care they need sooner, in or closer to their homes, thereby reducing visits to emergency departments.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Care is delivered by interdisciplinary teams
 - Optimize collaboration, including care transitions, between primary care providers;
 - Develop a renewed provincial plan for primary health care to guide service delivery and inform future investments; and
 - Improve patients' access to chronic disease care based on best practices.
- Strengthen Promotion, Prevention and Protection Activities in the Community
 - Strengthen capacity and infrastructure for population and public health service delivery; and
 - Enhance home care to better support seniors so they may remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- Stabilize health services in rural and remote communities across Saskatchewan
 - Strengthen collaboration between teams, and between communities, by optimizing the mix of providers who provide care to patients.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Primary Health Care Plan

- By March 31, 2024, a renewed primary health care plan is developed.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Improve team-based care in hospitals

Increase capacity in the acute care system to ensure patients have timely access to medical and specialized services and are transitioned to community alternatives or hospital care when appropriate.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Reduce surgery wait times
 - Implement the provincial plan to achieve 2023-24 wait time and volume targets including actions to increase capacity, load level demand, and improve quality, safety and patient experience.
 - Open a third party orthopedic surgical facility in Regina;
 - Implement central referral intake and pooled referrals for targeted surgical procedures; and
 - Shorten average length of stay for hip and knee replacement surgeries to increase inpatient capacity.

- Increasing hospital capacity
 - Expand acute care services and ICU capacity to meet increasing demands.
 - As part of phase two of the ICU expansion project, begin planning and renovations to add seven new beds at Royal University Hospital (RUH) adult ICU and one new bed at Battlefords Union Hospital adult ICU;
 - Implement actions to reduce demand for and improve patient flow within tertiary hospitals, including reducing alternate level of care days and targeted improvements to reduce length of stay in hospital; and
 - Continue actions to improve access to and responsiveness of emergency medical services across the province.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

First offer of surgery

- By March 31, 2024, 90 per cent of surgical patients receive a first offer of surgery within 10 months and no patients are on the wait list longer than 18 months.
- By March 31, 2024, 90 per cent of urgent cancer surgery patients receive a first offer of surgery within three weeks and no urgent cancer patients on the wait list longer than 5 weeks.

Surgery Volume

- Achieve our pre-COVID wait list target of no more than 25,000 patients on the wait list by March 31, 2024.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Ensure adequate health human resources

Ensure an adequate supply of professionals to support the needs of the health care system in Saskatchewan.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue efforts to recruit and retain 1,000 high priority health care workers to the system.
- Recruit
 - Recruit internationally educated health care professionals;
 - Continue growing the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency (SHRA); and
 - Add Physician Assistants into the Saskatchewan health care system.
- Train
 - Streamline and accelerate the pathway to licensure for internationally educated health care professionals;
 - Support the SHA in advancing connections with Indigenous technical institutions to increase Indigenous representation in health careers;
 - Support four additional post-graduate specialty residency training seats at the College of Medicine and four additional Distributed Medical Education (DME) training seats for family medicine in South East Saskatchewan;
 - Support the implementation and expansion of over 550 training seats in 18 program areas; and
 - Collaborate with communities and partners to recruit students and workers into training seats related to health sector employment.
- Incentivize
 - Continue to offer the Saskatchewan Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive Program of up to \$50K to stabilize health care services in rural and remote areas; and
 - Continue to provide bursary and incentive programs.
- Retain
 - Enhance Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) supports for physicians to improve long-term retention of graduates in the province;
 - Enhance the Rural Physician Incentive Program (RPIP) to retain more physicians in rural and northern communities;
 - Support settlement of internationally educated health care professionals from overseas into the province;
 - Continue to hire and onboard new full-time permanent positions and enhance part-time positions to full time hours in rural and remote communities; and
 - Optimize the scope of practice for key Saskatchewan health professions.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Recruit

- By March 31, 2024, recruit 600 health care workers from the Philippines.

Train

- By March 31, 2024, support 250 internationally educated health care professionals in Saskatchewan to obtain licensure, and connect to opportunities for employment in the health care system.
- By March 31, 2024 the additional eight post-graduate residency seats are posted and matched with candidates.

Retain

- By March 31, 2024 the enhanced RPIP program is in place with more than 50 physicians participating in the program.
- By March 31, 2024, recruit 250 employees in nine high priority classifications to new or enhanced full-time permanent positions in rural and remote locations.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Improve cultural responsiveness

Improve the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to Indigenous peoples, in a manner that preserves their dignity, in order to improve access to services, quality of care, and health outcomes.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Develop and implement actions based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action pertaining to health, including:
 - Ministry of Health, SHA, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA), 3S Health, eHealth Saskatchewan, and Health Quality Council will continue to develop and implement plans that support the TRC Calls to Action. Plans will include:
 - First Nation and Métis recruitment and retention strategies; and
 - Cultural responsiveness training and education initiatives such as cultural conversations, anti-racism and bias awareness training, and Kairos blanket exercises.
 - The SHA and SCA will continue to develop and engage with First Nations and Metis peoples on strategies to utilize and integrate traditional healing practices; and
 - The province will pilot a new partnership approach with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments in the construction and development of a new Urgent Care Centre in Saskatoon.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Cultural Responsiveness Training

- By March 31, 2024, 50 per cent of existing health sector staff will have cultural responsiveness training completed.
- By March 31, 2024, 100 per cent of new health sector staff will have completed cultural responsiveness training within six months of onboarding.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Invest in health care infrastructure

Ensure hospitals, clinics and other health facilities, and information technology infrastructure are in place to provide reliable, safe and effective delivery of health programs and services, and continue to meet the needs of a growing province.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue to progress major capital projects that support high-quality care environments
 - Urgent Care Centre in Regina: complete construction in 2024;
 - Urgent Care Centre in Saskatoon: begin construction under partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments in 2023;
 - Grenfell Long Term Care (LTC): progress to construction, anticipated completion in 2024;
 - La Ronge LTC: complete design and begin construction, anticipated completion in 2027;
 - Prince Albert Victoria Hospital expansion; complete design and begin construction, anticipated completion in 2027;
 - Weyburn General Hospital: complete design and begin construction, anticipated completion in 2025;
 - Regina General Hospital parkade: progress to construction, anticipated completion in 2024;
 - Regina LTC specialized beds: begin design, anticipated completion to be determined; and
 - St. Paul's Hospital front entrance redevelopment: begin construction, anticipated completion in 2024.

- Continue planning activities to advance other priority major capital projects
 - Advance planning on LTC projects in Regina, Estevan and Watson, in addition to the Yorkton Regional Health Centre; and
 - Early planning for acute projects in Rosthern and Esterhazy and a LTC project in Battleford.

- Infrastructure Maintenance Projects
 - Continue investment in building improvements and equipment upgrades to improve health facilities across Saskatchewan.

- Ensure health information is available when needed
 - Continue the development of technology solutions, such as virtual care and MySaskHealthRecord, to enhance information flow and accessibility across the health system, improving the quality and safety of patient care.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Major Capital Projects

- By March 31, 2024, Regina’s Urgent Care Centre is constructed and preparing for operations.

Infrastructure Maintenance Projects

- By March 31, 2024, complete urgent and high priority health facility maintenance projects necessary to maintain operational continuity and safety as identified in the capital spending plans of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and Athabasca Health Authority.

Goal 2: Responsive Mental Health and Addictions Services

Continue to build responsive mental health and addictions services as part of a broader health system.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Improve mental health and addictions services

Continue to support recommendations in the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, ensuring that Saskatchewan residents have improved access to services from the most appropriate mental health and addictions professional at the right location when needed.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Improve Access and continuity of care
 - Establish new addiction treatment spaces for individuals requiring substance use treatment services as part of the government's commitment for 150 new spaces;
 - Establish new initiatives to mitigate overdose deaths and drug poisonings;
 - Mental Health and Addictions Information System will be implemented for all appropriate community mental health and addictions programs including those delivered by service partners;
 - Establish an Integrated Youth Services (IYS) model of care for Saskatchewan youth; and,
 - Pilot new granting program for peer support groups.

- Plan for the Future
 - Develop a new provincial plan for mental health and addictions service to follow the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan whose 10-year term will sunset in 2024.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Patients visiting emergency departments for mental health services where effective treatment does not require admission to a hospital

- By March 31, 2024, the number of mental health presentations to emergency departments in Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon where the patient is not admitted, will be reduced.

30-day readmissions to an inpatient mental health unit

- By March 31, 2024, 30-day inpatient readmissions for individuals admitted with a primary mental health related diagnosis will be reduced.

Self-Harm, including Suicide

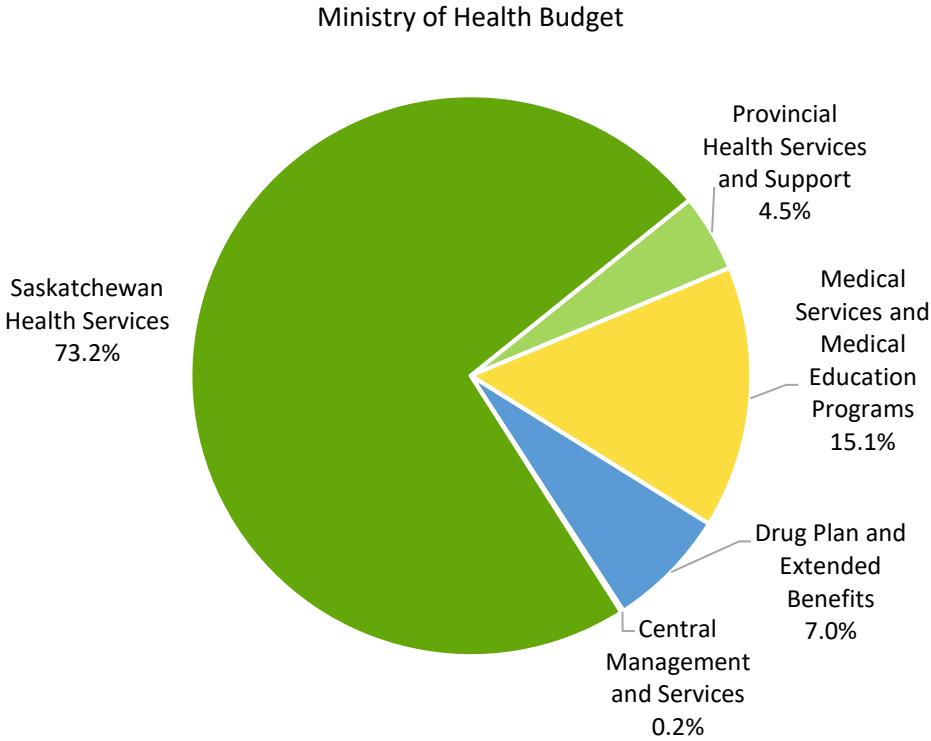
- By March 31, 2024, the rate of hospitalizations or death due to self-harm (per 100,000 population) will be reduced.

Integrated Youth Services

- By March 31, 2024, a minimum of three IYS sites will be operationalized.

Financial Summary

Ministry of Health 2023-24 Estimates (\$6,866 million)	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	10,513
Saskatchewan Health Services	5,028,748
Provincial Health Services and Support	307,724
Medical Services and Medical Education Programs	1,040,221
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits	478,746
Total Appropriation	6,865,952
Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions	765
Plus: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	1,465
Total Expense	6,866,652



Links to More Information

- [Ministry of Health](#)
- [Government of Saskatchewan Budget, Planning and Reporting](#)