

Business Plan

2024-25

Ministry of Health

Saskatchewan! 

Statement from the Minister



*The Honourable Everett Hindley
Minister of Health*



*The Honourable Tim McLeod
Minister of Mental Health and
Addictions, Seniors and Rural
and Remote Health*

We are pleased to present the Ministry of Health’s 2024-25 Business Plan.

Expanding patient access across the health system to meet the care needs of our rapidly growing province is a priority for our government. It is essential for Saskatchewan residents to have a path forward to achieve better health. Whether being able to connect with a physician or Nurse Practitioner for everyday health needs or seeking more urgent attention at the nearest acute care setting, improving access is critical.

This budget delivers on a future with major infrastructure progress. Saskatchewan will soon open a new Urgent Care Centre in Regina, serving as an alternative to Emergency Departments for non-life-threatening illness, injury, and mental health support. As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to future builds including the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redevelopment and the Weyburn General Hospital replacement. Saskatchewan will begin work to establish a Breast Health Centre in Regina to deliver the best available care.

Mental health and addictions will receive a historic boost to support Saskatchewan’s Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions. New funding to expand services and improve care continues to focus on treatment, counselling, and providing wrap-around supports for vulnerable populations including the homeless and individuals with complex needs. This budget will expand mental health capacity building in schools, further build capacity for addictions treatment, and continue the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care for addictions treatment.

This budget provides funding to support and sustain long-term care services as well as support care in the community. In addition, significant increases for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency will ensure patients diagnosed with cancer receive access to the most effective oncology drugs, therapies, and treatments.

Our health workers across Saskatchewan are key to meeting our goals. This budget will broaden capacity and grow the current and future workforce – not only in numbers and quality by attracting the best and brightest physicians, registered nurses, and other care workers – but also by enhancing skills and resilience. We will support, encourage, and incentivize classrooms of students to study within health care fields right here at home, whenever possible.

The future of our health care system is one of ongoing progress and improvement, inclusion, optimism, and a clear vision for a better tomorrow. With each step forward, we will continue building it together.

2024-25 Budget Highlights

<p>1</p>	<p>The 2024-25 record budget investment for the Ministry of Health is a historic record of \$7.6B, which is an increase of \$726.4M or 10.6 per cent. Saskatchewan Health Authority will see an operating increase of \$248.3M or 5.6 per cent, for a total of \$4.7B. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency will receive a \$26.1M increase or 11.7 per cent for a total of \$248.9M.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Patient access to physician care including primary care will be enhanced through significant physician investments to bolster recruitment, training, and retention efforts, and make the province one of the most desirable places for doctors to live and work. Access to Nurse Practitioners, professionals that provide comprehensive primary care such as assessments, diagnosis, treatments, and referrals, will also be significantly enhanced.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Saskatchewan’s Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan will continue stabilizing rural and remote staffing in high priority professions including Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and Nurse Practitioners. The successful Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive will continue into its third year of recruiting employees to dozens of welcoming communities. Enhanced nursing supports will be available 24/7 for nurses practicing in rural and northern locations.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Mental Health and Addictions will receive a historic increase of \$56M, resulting in a record budget of \$574M and 7.6 per cent of Health’s total budget. New funding for mental health and addictions initiatives will support a recovery-oriented system of care and enhance program supports to address homelessness, support individuals with complex care needs, expand mental health capacity programming in schools, expand addictions treatment spaces as well as improve intake and navigation to addictions services.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Patient access to acute care and diagnostics will be better supported through the following investments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5.1M increase for specialized medical imaging service expansions to reduce wait times for Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans. • \$4.5M increase for enhancements to neurology and cardiology services in Regina and Saskatoon to reduce procedure waitlists and improve patient care. • \$3.5M increase to continue reducing the surgical waitlist. • \$1.6M increase for pediatric programs and the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit at the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital to improve access to neonatal care closer to home for patients in Northern Saskatchewan and help enhance newborn and maternal outcomes.
<p>6</p>	<p>The total Health infrastructure budget of \$516.8M reflects significant investments for highly anticipated projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$180M for the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redevelopment project; • \$55M for the Weyburn General Hospital replacement project; • \$27M for the La Ronge Long-Term Care (LTC) project; • \$21.9M for the Regina General Hospital Parkade project; • \$20M for the Regina LTC specialized beds project; and • \$10M for the Grenfell LTC project.

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 2024-25 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.*

Strengthen Primary and Community Care

Citizens have prompt access to their primary care team and receive services from the most appropriate provider, ensuring continuity of care and patient involvement in decisions related to their health.

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

- Expand access to team-based care:
 - Accelerate the integration of Nurse Practitioners and other allied health professionals within primary care; and
 - Continue to pilot Nurse Practitioner-led primary care.
- Consider advice of the Provincial Primary Care Renewal Oversight Committee and commence implementation of approved actions.
- Implement the transitional payment model for family physicians as a step towards blended capitation.
- Take action to improve provincial testing capacity and expand access to testing for sexually transmitted and blood borne infections to prevent further transmission, initiate care and treatment, and provide ongoing care and support.
- Create consistency in funding approaches for long-term care homes operated by third parties under contract with the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

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

Improve Access to Acute Care

Patients have timely access to high-quality emergency and acute care services.

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

- Reduce surgical wait times by improving system efficiency, targeting process improvements in long-waiting surgical categories, improving patient pathways to reduce demand and ensure appropriateness of surgeries, and continued recruitment of needed health care professionals.
- Improve patient access to medical imaging and diagnostics and reduce wait times.
- Establish a Breast Health Centre in Regina and make other improvements to breast cancer care in the province.
- Improve patient safety in Saskatchewan's health care system:
 - Progress implementation of improvements to critical incident reporting, as recommended by the Provincial Auditor, to improve the culture of safety within the health system; and
 - Train staff on monitoring the effectiveness and sustainment of critical incident recommendations.
- Continue to address acute care capacity pressures in Regina and Saskatoon.

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

Address Health Human Resource Needs

Ensure an adequate supply of health care professionals so that services are provided by the right providers in the right place at the right time across the province.

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

- Recruit:
 - Recruit new graduates from health care training programs;
 - Provide opportunities for unlicensed international physicians to obtain roles in the health system as Clinical Associates;
 - Expand seat placements for the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment; and
 - Recruit internationally educated health professionals (IEHP).
- Train:
 - Enhance supports in the Saskatchewan Health Authority for the health training seat expansions;
 - Provide final clinical bursaries to students for occupations that are hard to recruit and in locations of need;
 - Create the Inter-Provincial Agreement Training Incentive to provide funding to support training costs for programs requiring out-of-province training; and
 - Increase funding to the College of Medicine to support an increase in postgraduate residency training seats to 140.
- Incentivize:
 - Continue the Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive in areas at risk or in disruption;
 - Continue the Rural Physician Incentive Program to support recruitment and retention of physicians into eligible rural communities; and
 - Continue to provide bursary and incentive programs.
- Retain:
 - Implement 24/7/365 Nursing Support to provide clinical leadership and support to nurses in rural and northern communities; and
 - Collaborate with communities to support IEHPs in making Saskatchewan home.

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

Improve Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness

Through partnership with Indigenous stakeholders, the health system delivers safe, inclusive care in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner and improves the quality of care and health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

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

- In line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action pertaining to health, improve the health system's ability to provide Indigenous patients and their families with health services that are culturally responsive, appropriate, respectful, and safe:
 - Continue support for health system employees and care providers to deliver culturally responsive care; and
 - Enhance/expand training and recruitment for First Nations and Métis health care providers.

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

Invest in Health Care Infrastructure

Hospitals, clinics, and other facilities provide appropriate space for reliable, safe, efficient, and effective delivery of health programs and services and reflect system priorities and the needs of a growing province.

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

- Continue to deliver major capital projects that support high-quality care environments:
 - Regina Urgent Care Centre (UCC) – complete construction; operational in 2024;
 - Regina General Hospital Parkade – complete construction; operational in 2024;
 - Grenfell Long-Term Care (LTC) – initiate construction; anticipated completion in 2025;
 - Weyburn General Hospital – continue construction; anticipated completion in 2025;
 - St. Paul’s Hospital Front Entrance (Saskatoon) – continue construction; anticipated completion in 2025;
 - La Ronge LTC – continue construction; anticipated completion in 2026;
 - Prince Albert Victoria Hospital – continue construction; anticipated completion in 2028;
 - Saskatoon UCC (partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments) – continue development; anticipated completion date to be determined;
 - Regina LTC Standard Beds – complete procurement of third-party beds in 2024; anticipated completion date to be determined;
 - Regina LTC Specialized Beds – complete procurement and initiate design in 2024;
 - Watson LTC – continue development; anticipated completion date to be determined; and
 - Estevan LTC – continue development; anticipated completion date to be determined.
- Complete planning to support future major capital projects and facilities to deliver high-quality care in the future:
 - Complete business cases in 2024 for: Yorkton Regional Health Centre, Rosthern Hospital; Esterhazy Integrated Facility, and Battleford District Care Centre.
- Continue investment in building improvements and equipment upgrades to improve health facilities across Saskatchewan.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like.*

Primary Care Renewal

- By March 31, 2025, increase the percentage of citizens who report having access to a regular health care provider.

Surgical Wait Time

- By March 31, 2025, 90 per cent of surgical patients receive a first offer of surgery within eight months and no patients wait longer than 12 months.
- By March 31, 2025, 90 per cent of cancer surgery patients receive a first offer of surgery within clinically recommended targets.

Wait Time for Medical Imaging and Diagnostics

- By March 31, 2025, increase CT capacity by over 8,500 additional patients and MRI capacity by over 3,100 additional patients.

Recruit

- By March 31, 2025, recruit to meet the target of 850 IEHPs residing within Canada and internationally.

Train

- By March 31, 2025, 85 per cent of students who receive a final clinical bursary complete their one-year return-in-service.

Retain

- By March 31, 2025, hire six Registered Nurses to expand virtual access to clinical nursing supports.

Cultural Responsiveness Training

- By March 31, 2025, 100 percent of health sector staff have completed cultural responsiveness training within six months of onboarding.

Major Capital Projects

- By March 31, 2025, Regina UCC is operational.
- By March 31, 2025, Regina General Hospital Parkade is operational.

Building Improvements and Equipment Upgrades

- By March 31, 2025, complete urgent and high priority health facility maintenance projects necessary to maintain operational continuity and safety as approved in the capital spending plans.

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

Mental Health and Addictions services are accessible where and when people need them to obtain treatment, recovery supports, and appropriate care to maintain wellness.

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

- Enhance capacity within Mental Health and Addictions Services:
 - Establish new addictions treatment spaces to progress toward the commitment of 500 new spaces in the Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions; and
 - Expand the Mental Health Capacity Building to new school divisions.
- Implement systemic improvements to Mental Health and Addictions Services:
 - Develop and implement a provincial Opioid Agonist Therapy Program to increase access to these addictions supports across the province and better coordinate care for patients; and
 - Plan for a provincial central intake and navigation system for addictions services.
- Take steps to implement a recovery-oriented system of care for addictions treatment.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like.*

Enhance Capacity within Mental Health and Addictions Services

- By March 31, 2025, 150 new spaces under contract with at least 75 in full operation.
- By March 31, 2025, Mental Health Capacity Building in five additional school divisions.

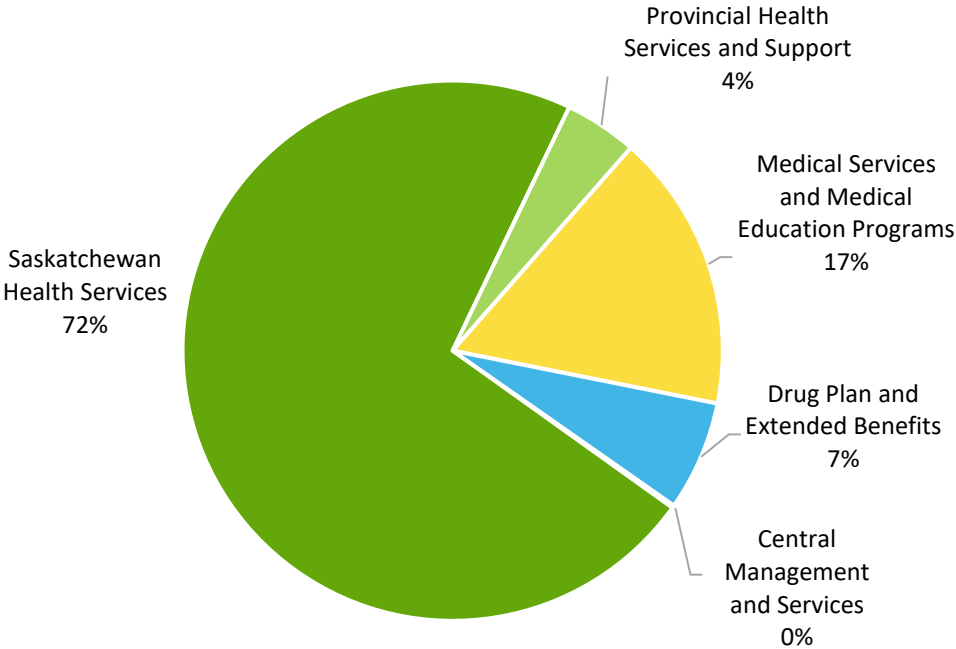
2024-25 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

<p>1</p>	<p>In 2024-25, Saskatchewan will be investing \$1.533M towards developing a Breast Health Centre in Regina, providing timely access to breast health services to residents.</p> <p>This health centre will provide comprehensive services for patients, including diagnosis and assessment, treatment planning and delivery, follow-up care, patient education, and survivorship support. Care will be delivered by a multidisciplinary team collocated in a single space, including access to on-site diagnostic and surgical services, to ensure a seamless patient care experience.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>In the coming year, Saskatchewan will introduce a new compensation model for community-based physicians practicing family medicine in the province. This model blends the existing volume-based payment model with additional funding for family physicians who provide ongoing care to an active patient panel, allowing more time for physicians to deal with complex issues, an increased focus on preventive care, and more team-based care within a patient medical home model.</p> <p>The province is also investing up to \$10 million in an innovation fund in 2024-25 that will increase the amount of team-based care in primary health care settings, resulting in health care providers working to the top of their scope and improving access to primary care in the province.</p> <p>Additionally, the province is making further investments by creating 25 new Nurse Practitioner positions in rural, regional and northern communities, as well as piloting independently operated, publicly funded Nurse Practitioner clinics to improve patients’ access to continuous primary care.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>In 2024-25, we will be implementing a number of technological innovations to support patient access to high-quality and timely surgeries in Saskatchewan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will expand access to Robotic Assisted Surgery, which enables surgeons to carry out a variety of difficult procedures with greater control, precision, and adaptability than conventional methods. This minimally invasive surgery results in shorter hospital stays and improved patient outcomes. In 2024-25, the program will expand to Regina, increasing access to more Saskatchewan residents. • We will move forward with implementing hybrid operating rooms (ORs) in Saskatchewan. Hybrid ORs are advanced surgical theatres equipped with advanced medical imaging, allowing multiple surgeons to work on the same patient, in the same place, at the same time, with all diagnostic and treatment equipment at hand. Patients can undergo both open and image-guided procedures in a single visit, leading to faster recoveries and fewer risks of complications. In 2024-25, planning and assessments for two hybrid ORs will be done at the Regina General Hospital and St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon. • We will introduce Anesthesia Manager[®] software in 10 facilities in 2024-25. This system will modernize patient care, ensuring timely access to complete anesthesia charts and historical data, thereby enhancing patient safety and quality of care. This will increase surgical efficiency related to anesthesia start times, enhance quality and safety, reduce pre-op cancellations and postponements, and improve recruitment and retention of anesthesiologists.

Financial Summary

Health 2024-25 Estimates (\$7.593 billion)	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	\$10,443
Saskatchewan Health Services	\$5,484,520
Provincial Health Services and Support	\$331,313
Medical Services and Medical Education Programs	\$1,265,515
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits	\$499,730
Total Appropriation	\$7,591,521
Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions	\$180
Plus: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	\$1,677
Total Expense	\$7,593,018

Ministry of Health Budget



Links to More Information

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