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Business case moves ahead for expanded neuro ICU

Project the final phase of University Hospital Foundation's Brain Centre Campaign

EDMONTON — A campaign to advance the world-class brain centre at the University of Alberta Hospital is taking another step forward with the Government of Alberta's plan to advance a business case for an expanded neuro intensive care unit (ICU).

The University Hospital Foundation's Brain Centre Campaign has raised more than \$43 million since launching in 2011. The campaign volunteers are committed to supporting the vision of an expanded neuro ICU with private rooms and access to daylight and quiet spaces for patients and their families in order to create an optimal healing environment. The space will also improve co-ordination of care from diagnosis through treatment and rehabilitation, and add much-needed capacity to U of A Hospital.

Health Minister Sarah Hoffman has asked the Ministry of Infrastructure to proceed with the development of a business case for the neuro ICU, which will determine the timelines and cost of this project.

"Over the years, we've seen the community's generous gifts to the Brain Centre Campaign lead to significant advancements in brain care at the University of Alberta Hospital," says Hoffman.

"I am proud of our partnership with the University Hospital Foundation and Alberta Health Services to improve and save lives of Albertans and patients from across Western Canada."

To date, the Brain Centre Campaign has funded:

- The opening of the Dan & Bunny Widney 3T Intraoperative MRI Suite, a world-class surgical suite. Since opening in 2012, the suite has changed the way brain surgeries are conducted at the University of Alberta Hospital, saving patients from multiple surgeries and opening doors to new research discoveries.
- The city's first clinical 3T MRI unit, a powerful diagnostic tool used in the care of patients with neurological and mental health conditions, including epilepsy, concussion, stroke, and neuro-developmental disorders. The 3T MRI went into operation last year at the new Scott and Brown Families Gamma Knife & Advanced Imaging Centre. The centre will be completed later this year with the arrival of Alberta's first Gamma Knife, which uses precisely aimed beams of radiation as a virtual scalpel.
- Canada's first stroke ambulance, which expedites stroke diagnostics and treatment for patients in rural and remote communities throughout northern Alberta. The Edmonton-based stroke ambulance went into operation in February.
- Leading-edge research for disease prevention and cures by some of the best neurologists and neurosurgeons in the world.

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“The Brain Centre Campaign is a tremendous example of what community support and partnership at its best looks like,” says Guy Scott, Co-Chair of the Brain Centre Campaign Cabinet.

Adds fellow co-chair Jim Brown: “We are grateful that development of a business case for the redeveloped neuro ICU is going ahead. This is a crucial component of our campaign and, when it’s complete, the University of Alberta Hospital will provide seamless, world-class diagnosis, care and treatment for patients with conditions such as epilepsy, stroke, brain tumours, head trauma, Parkinson’s disease, dementia, multiple sclerosis and ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease).”

Dr. Keith Aronyk, Clinical Department Head for Neurosciences with Alberta Health Services (AHS), says the campaign has already led to “tremendous advances” in brain care at the hospital.

“No initiative in Alberta could affect the lives of so many people in such a profound way,” says Dr. Aronyk. “A redeveloped neuro ICU is a key part of this project.”

AHS President and CEO Dr. Verna Yiu agrees.

“As a centre of excellence in acute care, and the only Level 1 trauma centre serving central and northern Alberta, this hospital is essential to the health of millions of Albertans,” she says. “As Alberta’s population expands and average lifespan grows, providing timely access to the highest level of care becomes an even greater challenge. The Brain Centre Campaign is helping the health system meet today’s demands and tomorrow’s challenges.”

Visit www.braincentrecampaign.ca for more information.

The University Hospital Foundation raises funds to support innovation and excellence at the University of Alberta Hospital, Kaye Edmonton Clinic and Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four 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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