

June 26, 2015

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES DIGITAL MAMMOGRAPHY ROLL-OUT

- - -

Comprehensive, Provincewide System will Include Mobile Digital Mammography Screening: Minister Blady

Manitoba patients will benefit from a comprehensive, fully integrated provincial system for digital mammography, Health Minister Sharon Blady announced today.

"As part of our goal to bring even better care closer to home, Manitobans across the province will have access to digital mammography. This will reduce diagnostic wait times and bring new technology into breast cancer detection services," said Minister Blady. "Images captured in one region will be available to radiologists working in another, helping speed up turnaround times and diagnoses that may lead to faster treatment if needed."

The minister noted the contributions of the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, which is supporting the purchase of the new mobile screening vehicles.

With digital mammography, images are viewed on a workstation monitor and stored electronically rather than transferred to film.

"Digital mammography is a significant advancement in our technology for the detection of breast cancer," said Dr. Sri Navaratnam, president and chief executive officer, CancerCare Manitoba. "It's a major improvement in system efficiency that will benefit Manitobans."

Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer among women in Manitoba with almost 900 diagnosed each year. About 90,000 Manitobans have a mammogram every year. Approximately 50,000 are screening mammograms through the CancerCare Manitoba's BreastCheck program.

"Quality images captured in real time eliminate the need to transport film to radiologists for diagnosis and allows radiologists to consult with other health care providers quickly and effectively," said Jim Slater, chief executive officer, Diagnostic Services Manitoba. "This can reduce wait times, especially in cases where there is high suspicion of cancer."

Slater also noted the project steering committee has been working on the competitive bid process and has selected a top-ranked vendor to begin contract negotiations.

Manitoba's co-ordinated plan means all breast screening and diagnostic mammography sites will have the same equipment and technology.

Following negotiations, the timeframe for full provincewide digital mammography operations is approximately 10 months, Minister Blady said. She noted the first provincial site to receive a digital

mammography system will be the Brandon Regional Health Centre in September 2015, adding that other sites will receive digital mammography between October 2015 and April 2016.

The minister noted the strategic investments in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment will build on Manitoba's broader \$40-million strategy to improve the cancer patient journey, first announced in June 2011. The goal of this initiative is to shorten the journey from suspicion of cancer as a diagnosis to treatment in under 60 days.

Many partners are involved in this work including Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, CancerCare Manitoba and the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, regional health authorities, Diagnostic Services Manitoba, Manitoba eHealth, radiologists, primary care physicians and cancer specialists.