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April 8, 2009

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL

A \$20.5-million redevelopment of the Victoria General Hospital emergency department will provide more space and additional resources for the hospital's medical professionals to meet the urgent health-care needs of their patients, Health Minister Theresa Oswald announced at the official start of construction today.

"This strategic investment will directly support the needs of patients and the dedicated health professionals who provide first-class care in this busy emergency department," said Oswald. "Victoria General Hospital's expanded emergency room will reflect the commitment of the dedicated people who work here and the foundation and community partners who have helped make this project possible."

A new, 12,000-square-foot addition will be added to the existing emergency department which is also being redesigned. Once complete, the emergency department will be double its existing size at over 25,000 square feet and will feature:

- 24 beds, up from 17 in the existing facility, with an emphasis on enhanced patient privacy;
- two new state-of-the-art resuscitation and trauma rooms;
- a new negative pressure isolation room, used in the treatment of communicable diseases;
- an expanded minor treatment area to handle non-urgent medical needs;
- a six-bed reassessment unit for patients who require observation and monitoring;
- an expanded ambulance garage with a decontamination area and work space for emergency

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- medical service personnel;
- a bariatric treatment room; and
- leading-edge environmental design features for a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver designation, expected to cut water use and energy consumption by more than one-third compared to a traditional project.

“Victoria General presents with more than 30,000 patients per year in the emergency department – significantly higher numbers than it originally was built for,” said Jan Currie, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority vice-president and chief nursing officer. “The new renovations and space will enhance our ability to care for patients seeking help.”

The emergency room redevelopment is also being supported by the Victoria General Hospital Foundation which has committed to raising \$9.5 million for three projects at the hospital: the new emergency centre, the recently opened Buhler Cancer Centre and a renovation that will see two operating rooms outfitted with state-of-the art, minimally invasive surgical equipment and technology.

“We are so pleased with the support received from the province and our community through the Victoria General Hospital Foundation and excited about what this support will do to enhance services to patients,” said Kelvin Shepherd, chair of the hospital’s board of trustees. “The expanded emergency department will ensure the Vic’s continued ability to deliver quality health care to the community we serve.”

The province and foundation recently opened the hospital’s state-of-the-art cancer centre which now provides more exam rooms and more chemotherapy spaces in a bright, modern setting.

The redevelopment of the Victoria General Hospital emergency department follows provincial investments to renew and expand emergency rooms across Winnipeg and in a number of Manitoba communities. The province has invested \$1.2 billion to build or improve more than 90 health facilities across Manitoba since 1999.

Oswald noted the new emergency department project builds on the recommendations of the province’s Emergency Care Task Force. The province has made a number of recent investments in emergency care including:

- \$5.2 million in new funding to add additional front-line staff in the busiest emergency rooms in the province,
- the appointment of Dr. Ricardo Lobato de Faria as provincial advisor on emergency patient care,
- ongoing planning for the first mental-health emergency room in Canada, and
- the creation of a new emergency medicine department at the University of Manitoba.