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## **Emergency care capacity to increase in Edmonton**

### ***Expansion of Stollery Children's Hospital emergency department given green light***

*Edmonton...* The Alberta government is investing \$18 million to improve access to the emergency department at the Stollery Children's Hospital. The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation will also commit \$5 million to the \$23 million project.

The project will involve separating and expanding the emergency department shared by the University of Alberta (U of A) Hospital and the Stollery Children's Hospital.

"This government remains committed to improving access to our publicly funded health care system," said Premier Ed Stelmach. "Alberta's growing population and our current baby boom have increased the number of visits through the Stollery emergency department. The expansion of emergency services will help to improve the overall health care experience for all patients."

A review of space at the U of A Hospital that was vacated upon completion of the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute had been considered by Alberta Health Services as an option to increase pediatric patient treatment capacity. However, it was determined that the expansion of the emergency department would be the most efficient way to support services at the site.

"Families with young children will benefit from increased privacy and specialized care in a child-friendly environment designed to meet their needs," said Dr. Bruce Wright, Assistant Director of the Stollery Children's Hospital Emergency Department. "Expanding and separating emergency services for pediatric services will improve access for all."

In 2008/2009, the Stollery Children's Hospital had more than 24,000 visits to its emergency department – more than twice the annual 12,000 estimated visits when the hospital was officially opened in 2001.

The expansion will be funded within Alberta Health Services previously approved capital budget. Work on the project design and tendering will resume, with construction starting shortly after. A temporary tent that was set up in March 2008 outside the Stollery to handle emergency room overflow will be taken down once construction begins.

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