

April 26, 2017

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Expanded Peter Lougheed Centre NICU to open next month

CALGARY – A new neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at the Peter Lougheed Centre is scheduled to open next month, providing more space and privacy for the tiniest, most fragile newborns from Calgary and throughout southern Alberta.

The renovation project, which began in 2015, triples the hospital's NICU space to 1,200 square metres, and adds a dedicated isolation room to care for newborns and infants with highly transmissible conditions, such as chickenpox or a respiratory illness.

The new NICU also offers private rooms for both single and multiple births, enabling families to stay with their new arrivals throughout their time in hospital.

“Our government is proud to support projects like these that make life better for families,” says Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health. “This unit means more support for the health teams at the Peter Lougheed NICU that treat babies who need intensive care and more support for their families. We commend everyone who brought this project to completion. Protecting and improving healthcare makes a difference in the lives of Albertans.”

Janice Stewart, Senior Operating Officer at the Peter Lougheed Centre, says the new NICU will continue to offer the high-quality neonatal intensive care that thousands of families have come to expect at the northeast hospital.

“Now this newly-designed space will also ensure that families are able to remain closer together during these critical times in a newborn's life,” Stewart says.

The Peter Lougheed Centre cared for more than 700 neonatal patients last year.

The new NICU is part a \$79.3-million redevelopment project currently underway at the Peter Lougheed Centre. The Calgary Health Trust has contributed \$3.6 million to support the redeveloped Vascular Centre of Excellence, which opened late 2015, and another \$2.1 million to support the NICU and Women's Health project, which aims to provide the best possible care to mothers and their babies through new state-of-the-art technology. This includes a \$100,000 donation from the Forzani Group and a \$550,000 donation from the Red FM Radiothon.

“We are pleased to be part of such a giving community that is trying to transform health outcomes for Albertans and our future,” says Dr. Chris Eagle, Calgary Health Trust CEO. “The long-time support from donors for initiatives such as this is important in advancing health care right here in our local community for our families, our neighbours and our friends.”

The number of births in the Calgary Zone has increased about eight per cent over the last five years, from 17,960 births in 2011 to 19,529 births in 2016. About one in every eight births in Alberta requires some level of intensive neonatal care. There are a total of 126 NICU beds in the Calgary Zone.

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The new NICU is expected to open in mid-May. In recognition of a significant contribution from the South Asian community through the Red FM Radiothon, the two six-bed care rooms are named in honour of Mata Tripta, the mother of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism.

The Calgary Health Trust is a Calgary-based charity focused on fundraising that will transform healthcare in Alberta. The incredible generosity of our donors has helped to raise more than \$412 million for healthcare since 1996. Funds raised benefit the Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus and many community health programs and 12 Carewest care centres in our community.

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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