

Children's hospital gets \$200 million commitment

BY LANA HAIGHT, THESTARPHOENIX.COM MARCH 18, 2009



RUH pediatric patients (left to right) Erin Bezaire (8), Ray Sewap (4) and Courtney Charles (4) enjoy a visit from Santa.

Photograph by: Greg Pender, The StarPhoenix

SASKATOON — The Saskatchewan Party government is following through on a commitment originally made by the NDP to build a children’s hospital in Saskatoon.

“We believe that our commitment of \$200 million (over two years) is an appropriate valuation of what the project will cost,” Finance Minister Rod Gantefoer said in an interview on budget day Wednesday.

In 2007, the then-NDP government announced a children’s and maternal hospital would be built adjacent to Royal University Hospital at a cost of between \$100 million and \$200 million. At the time, the government said construction would begin in 2010 and would be completed in 2012.

Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island are the only provinces in Canada without a dedicated children’s hospital. Changing that has been the driving force of the Children’s Health and Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan since its inception in 1992.

“Great things take time,” said Brynn Boback-Lane, president and CEO of the foundation.

“It’s going to make a world of difference in the pediatric health-care environment. It’ll be family focused and about the children and their unique needs.”

Even though the Saskatoon Health Region will begin the next phase of design immediately, it will be another year before construction gets underway.

“We want to get it right. There’s quite a bit of detail to work through and we’ll be consulting with patients and families and the health professionals that will be providing care there and, obviously, the ministry,” said Saskatoon Health Region president and CEO Maura Davies.

Completing the building by 2012 or 2013 is an “aggressive target,” she says.

The government’s commitment of \$200 million will pay for the bricks and mortar for a facility that will serve all of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatoon Health Region, which will require another \$50 million to buy furnishings and equipment, will be turning to the Children’s Health and Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan for funds.

Boback-Lane says the foundation has already raised almost \$7 million toward the project and will be announcing a capital campaign shortly.

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