

May 5, 2021

Mayor Jackie Clayton and Grande Prairie City Council:

Re: Grande Prairie Regional Hospital Update

Thank you for your April 21 letter. We would like to share an update with you regarding progress at the new Grande Prairie Regional Hospital (GPRH), as we continue to work closely with Alberta Health on the details surrounding opening of the new site.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) took possession of the new hospital last summer, but there is still much work to be done before we are ready to begin providing patient care. We have adjusted hospital opening plans to allow the entire facility to open in one smooth step in late 2021. A precise opening date will be dependent on several different factors and has yet to be determined. Once a firm date has been established we will share that with all our stakeholders.

Opening the facility all at once, rather than phase-by-phase as previously planned, will help to streamline services in one location. Having all inpatient programs under one roof will assist in continuity of care and make it easier for our healthcare teams to provide quality care to all. Inpatients and families will be able to work with the same care team in the same space throughout their stay, rather than transferring between the new hospital and the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII).

We are currently working with Alberta Infrastructure on the second phase of construction underway at the new hospital. Phase two includes the buildout of a 28-bed mental health unit and an additional 32-bed medical unit in space previously set aside in the facility. Construction on this important phase of the project is expected to be completed in the fall. As with the initial phase of new hospital construction, operational planning and commissioning will follow.

In addition, work has begun on two new operating room (OR) suites, supported by the Alberta Surgical Initiative. These two new suites will bring the total number of ORs at the site to eleven, including a dedicated obstetrics OR in the maternity unit.

With all of Grande Prairie's acute clinical programming located at the new hospital, there will be no duplication of services between the two sites. This will also eliminate the need for additional medical transport teams to move patients between the two facilities. Care teams and their patients will remain in one location. The bottom line is, moving all at once is best for our patients and their journey through the healthcare system.

Operational planning and commissioning is underway at GPRH. This stage of the project is essential to ensure the facility, the building and medical systems, and our healthcare teams are all fully prepared to provide safe and quality care to our patients prior to opening. This includes detailed cleaning of the entire building as well as ordering and installation of furniture and equipment. Training our staff to use the new equipment and systems and thorough testing of all

the medical and operational systems is crucial to ensure everything is safe and working properly before we begin providing patient care.

Our furniture and equipment teams have been busy receiving and installing deliveries at the site in recent months. This has included waiting room furniture, staff seating, over-bed tables, overhead patient lifts, exam tables, baby-warming units and more. The first of two new CT scanners has been installed. In the Cancer Centre, commissioning is underway for the linear accelerators used to provide radiation therapy. Only the second of its kind in Canada, parallel analyzers have been installed and commissioned in the lab with staff now being trained to use the new state of the art equipment.

The new hospital will also be equipped with our new Connect Care provincial health information network. Connect Care was implemented in Grande Prairie and other AHS sites in northwestern Alberta on April 10, 2021. This new system allows healthcare providers and patients easy and comprehensive access to up-to-date patient information in one single patient record, another first for our region. Connect Care will gradually be implemented in all healthcare facilities and jurisdictions throughout the province. We are grateful that the new hospital will be Connect Care capable right from the start.

A wide range of healthcare services will be provided at GPRH including surgery, critical care and emergency services. The new hospital is equipped with single inpatient rooms, including medical, surgical and rehabilitation, intensive care, cardiac care, obstetrics, neonatal intensive care and pediatric beds. A state-of-the-art new cancer centre at the new facility has two radiation vaults, bringing radiation therapy services to the community and the surrounding region for the first time. The new hospital parkade includes 1,100 parking stalls for staff, public and students, with an additional 250 surface stalls available onsite.

The building also includes an education facility in partnership with Grande Prairie Regional College, for the training of nurses and other healthcare professionals.

Additional staff will be needed in various departments at the new hospital with new positions to be posted at www.ahs.ca/careers. Specific numbers have yet to be confirmed. Recruitment and training of new staff will be ongoing throughout the commissioning process.

The QEII site will continue to provide healthcare services once the new hospital is operational. The exact scope of services to be offered at the QEII is currently under review. We know that Grande Prairie will have a single Emergency Department located at the new hospital. Some community based ambulatory care, including Allied Health and community respiratory programs, and Mackenzie Place continuing care will continue to operate at the QEII, along with programs that support these services as required.

AHS is currently reviewing all leased space in Grande Prairie alongside a review of current service demands to ensure that services are provided in the most appropriate location and we are making best use of our infrastructure. As the QEII Hospital is clinical service ready, preference would be to continue to use this infrastructure for clinical programs where feasible, while ensuring we aren't duplicating services to be provided at the new hospital. We will provide you with additional information on QEII plans as updates become available.

We appreciate your patience as we continue to work towards making our new hospital the exciting reality we know it will be. We would like to personally thank the commissioning team who are on site right now making sure our facility is prepared and ready for our move. We hope to be able to host members of Grande Prairie City Council and other area stakeholders for tours of the new hospital, once the pandemic allows.

Our latest GPRH capital project update can be found on our website:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/capitalprojects/ahs-cp-gp-update-winter-2020-2021.pdf>

Additional information about progress at the site and engagement opportunities can be found at [Grande Prairie Regional Hospital | Together 4 Health \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca).

Thank you,



Stacy Greening

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