

Enhanced EMS care with new nurse triage system set to begin in Regina and Saskatoon

This month, the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is introducing a new Emergency Communication Nurse System (ECNS) to better assess non-emergent patients calling 911 in Regina and Saskatoon.

Through the ECNS, 911 calls received in Regina and Saskatoon requiring emergency medical services (EMS) will continue to be transferred to EMS for appropriate response. EMS dispatchers will transfer callers assessed with non-urgent symptoms to specially trained nurses for further assessment. ECNS nurses will determine if transport to an emergency department is required or if the patient should be directed to an alternate care setting that would better meet their needs.

“The new Emergency Communication Nurse System puts patients first by ensuring they receive timely and effective care while increasing EMS capacity to respond to other emergencies. This will also help to further reduce EMS offload delays at Emergency Departments,” Health Minister Jeremy Cockrill said. “We are thankful to our frontline health care staff for the important work they do to promptly respond to medical emergencies and ensure patients get the care they need.”

This new triaging technology and personnel will improve emergency response and provide patients with alternatives that meet their care needs. Over time, the new system is expected to help ease Emergency Department capacity pressures, prioritize EMS response for patients requiring urgent intervention, improve EMS response to emergencies, and improve alignment between patient needs and care options.

“This new system will help to reduce capacity pressure on emergency departments while also ensuring non-urgent patients are safely connected to the care they need when they need it,” said Rod MacKenzie, Executive Director, Provincial Clinical and Support Services – Community Care. “The Emergency Communication Nurse System will support better outcomes for patients who require emergency medical care while ensuring patients with less urgent needs receive more appropriate treatment in alternate settings.”

The Government of Saskatchewan is investing approximately \$405,000 in one-time funding to establish an ECNS in Regina and Saskatoon along with an estimated \$957,000 in annual operational funding. ECNS RNs will be employed by the SHA in Regina and by Medavie Health Services-West under contract with the SHA in Saskatoon.

“Medavie Health Services West is proud to be part of this important initiative to improve access to care for residents of Saskatoon,” said Angela Sereda, Senior Operations Manager. “By integrating emergency communication nurses into the EMS process within the 911 system, we can better connect patients with the right level of care, ease pressure on our emergency departments, and allow our paramedics to focus on the most urgent emergencies. This is a significant step forward in building a more responsive patient-centred healthcare system across our community.”

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Media Relations

Saskatchewan Health Authority
1-833-766-4392
media@saskhealthauthority.ca