

## **AWAITING THE FUTURE**

### **Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation Advocates for a new Royal Alexandra Hospital**

EDMONTON – The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation wishes to state its support for Alberta Health Services’ official recommendation that the Royal Alexandra Hospital’s aging infrastructure is the number one priority, province-wide, for capital infrastructure investment, following comprehensive needs assessments in 1997, 2012, and 2014.

In the Foundation’s 2013-2014 Report to the Community, Board Chair John Day outlines the cause in a piece entitled “Awaiting the Future.”

“As Chair of the Board of Directors of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation, I represent a group of ambassadors, advocates, and donors who wish to state their support for the Alberta Health Services’ assessments,” writes Day. “We urge the Government of Alberta to accept the multiple recommendations, made by health leaders from across the province, to transform the Royal Alexandra Hospital into a modern facility.”

For almost 120 years, the Royal Alexandra Hospital has served the healthcare needs of Edmonton and northern Alberta. The Royal Alex is a cornerstone of healthcare in Edmonton and carries a large share of this region’s healthcare load. The Royal Alex is home to one of the busiest emergency departments in the country, serving the challenging health needs of our community and, in particular, the needs of Edmonton’s inner-city population. Despite this exceptional volume and demand, physicians and staff at the Royal Alexandra Hospital continue to provide excellent and compassionate patient care to the more than 400,000 patients who pass through its doors every year.

The article goes on to position that aging infrastructure is making this challenging job even more difficult to maintain.

Maintaining a high level of safe care in the major patient care area of the Royal Alexandra Hospital – known as the Active Treatment Centre or ATC – is a growing challenge. Designed in the 1950s and opened in 1963, this large building holds 502, or approximately half of the total inpatient beds of the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Only 16 per cent of the rooms are private. With

more than 137,000 patient stays annually, the building is consistently at over 95 per cent occupancy, and in some busy periods sees over 100 per cent occupancy rates.

The needs assessment by Alberta Health Services identified the ATC as obsolete and unable to meet modern medical standards of care. The crowded four-bed (and at times five-bed) patient rooms create an environment that lacks dignity, is conducive to high infection rates, and unsatisfactory patient experiences.

The Royal Alexandra Hospital – where care is provided to so many – is now awaiting care itself. The time is now to act upon the clear direction that healthcare assessments have shown: a new Royal Alexandra Hospital is essential to Edmonton and essential to northern Alberta.

Andrew Otway, President and CEO of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation, recognizes that the task of revitalizing the Royal Alex is significant but is keen to inform and engage the community about the very real needs of the hospital.

“The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation has worked with the community for many years to bring about better patient care at the Royal Alexandra Hospital,” says Otway. “Our hope is that we can continue to engage the community, Alberta Health Services, the Alberta government and other stakeholders in order to give the Royal Alex the attention it deserves. The time is now to act upon the recommendations from Alberta’s health leaders and bring the Royal Alex into the future.”

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*The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation inspires community support for the Royal Alexandra Hospital and its medical centres of excellence including the Lois Hole Hospital for Women, the CK Hui Heart Centre, the Regional Eye Centre and the Orthopedic Surgery Centre. The Foundation empowers compassionate and innovative patient care through leading-edge education, research, technology and facility enhancements.*

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