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## **SASKATCHEWAN CANCER AGENCY**

### **UPCOMING ENHANCEMENTS TO CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAM**

People in Saskatchewan will soon have access to enhanced cervical cancer screening with upcoming changes to the Screening Program for Cervical Cancer. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA), in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), is pleased to announce the move from conventional Pap testing to liquid based cytology for cervical cancer screening. Work is also underway to revise the current provincial cervical screening guidelines.

These changes are possible thanks to \$300,000 in funding provided by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (the Partnership).

"The SCA is committed to working with the Partnership towards a shared goal of ending cervical cancer in Canada by 2040. Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable and highly curable when found and treated early," said Dr. Jon Tonita, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. "We are grateful to the Partnership for providing the funding to allow us to continue working towards improving health outcomes for Saskatchewan residents."

In 2020, the Partnership released the [\*Action Plan for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer in Canada, 2020-2030\*](#). The plan was created in response to the World Health Organization's call to eliminate cervical cancer around the globe by 2040. The plan includes recommendations for partner agencies across the country to help eliminate cervical cancer in Canada.

"We want to congratulate Saskatchewan's cancer agency and health authority on this progress towards ending cervical cancer in Canada," said Cynthia Morton, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. "The transition to liquid based cytology as a precursor to HPV primary screening advances work towards goals in Canada's Action Plan."

Each year in Saskatchewan, approximately 40 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 10 will die from it. Liquid-based cytology (LBC) provides more accurate testing of detecting abnormal cells that lead to cervical cancer. LBC also reduces the need for repeat testing.

"Advancing women's health programming across the province is a priority for the Saskatchewan Health Authority", stated Carrie Dornstaeder, Executive Director of Women's, Maternal and Children's Provincial Programs with the SHA. "Liquid based cytology allows for high quality testing for cervical cancer within someone's home community. This is an important step to early identification and improved access to women's health programming for Saskatchewan."

"The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to invest in our provincial cancer agency and the screening programs that detect cancers early," Saskatchewan Health Minister Paul Merriman said. "The 2020-21 budget provided more than \$600,000 to support testing in both Regina and Saskatoon. Advancements in cancer care like LBC will save women's lives."

Rollout for these changes is currently underway, with the development of training and support materials for primary health care providers. Liquid-based cytology is expected to be fully implemented in Saskatchewan this summer. The cervical cancer screening guidelines are being revised by the Cancer Agency in partnership with clinicians at the SHA. Implementation of the enhanced cervical screening guidelines are expected later this year.

For more information about the Screening Program for Cervical Cancer call 1-800-667-0017 or visit [saskcancer.ca](http://saskcancer.ca).

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### **About the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency**

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is a provincial healthcare organization with a legislated mandate to provide cancer control for the province of Saskatchewan. The SCA operates prevention and early detection programs, conducts innovative research and provides safe, patient and family-centred care at our two cancer centres in Regina and Saskatoon (Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre) and in rural communities in partnership with hospitals through the Community Oncology Program. The SCA operates two patient lodges in Regina and Saskatoon to provide a home away from home for rural patients who need to travel for treatment. Our more than 800 employees are passionate about their work in the fight against cancer.

### **About the Saskatchewan Health Authority**

The Saskatchewan Health Authority was formed when 12 former regional health authorities in Saskatchewan transitioned into a single provincial health authority. We are the largest organization in Saskatchewan, employing over 44,000 employees and physicians responsible for the delivery of high quality and timely health care for the entire province. We are driven by the commitment to improve frontline patient care for Saskatchewan people, and we are working together to better coordinate health services across the province to ensure patients receive high quality, timely health care, wherever they live in Saskatchewan.

### **About the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer**

As the steward of the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control (the Strategy), the Partnership works with Canada's cancer community to ensure fewer people get cancer, more people survive cancer and those living with the disease have a better quality of life. This work is guided by the Strategy, which was refreshed in 2019, to drive measurable change for all Canadians affected by cancer from 2019 to 2029. The Strategy's eight priorities will tackle the most pressing challenges and include three Peoples-specific and self determined priorities and actions for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, which are represented for the first time in the Strategy, reflecting Canada's commitment to reconciliation. The Partnership will drive forward the priorities collaboratively with organizations and individuals on the front lines of cancer care – the provinces and territories, health-care professionals, people living with cancer, those who care for them, First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments, organizations and communities, and its funder Health Canada. Learn more about the Partnership and the refreshed Strategy at [www.cancerstrategy.ca](http://www.cancerstrategy.ca).

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