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Budget funds health services to meet continuing growth in demand

The ACT Government is responding to growing demand for health services, allocating an additional \$177 million over four years in recurrent funding to health services in the 2010-11 Budget.

ACT Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher, said the funding would respond to increasing demand for critical care and acute care services in our public hospitals, as well as delivering more elective surgery, enhanced health services for older Canberrans, and improving health services for cancer sufferers.

“The level of demand for health services for critically ill people continues to grow and additional intensive care capacity is integral to the performance of our public hospitals,” Ms Gallagher said.

“We are focussed on delivering the services most needed by our community and we will continue to invest in health to meet growing demand and strive to deliver better health care for our community.”

The Minister said the Budget would provide the following recurrent funding over the next four years:

- \$41.5 million to cover increases in activity, mainly in the acute and cancer sectors;
- \$26.014 million to provide 22 new sub-acute hospital beds;
- \$15.514 million for National Health Reform;
- \$14.7 million to meet growing demand for elective surgery;
- \$13 million to meet growing demand for acute care services at public hospitals and open the new 16 bed Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit (SAPU);
- \$11.381 million to expand the Calvary Hospital Intensive Care Unit by adding two High Dependency beds;
- \$10.459 million to increase our critical care capacity through additional intensive care beds at Canberra Hospital;
- \$9.622 million for the new ‘Neuro-Suite’ operating costs;
- \$9.468 million to expand Home and Community Care (HACC) services to support frail older people and young people with a disability to remain at home;
- \$8.6 million for increased service demand in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Canberra Hospital;
- \$4.184 million to meet demand for mental health services in the community;
- \$4.184 million to meet continuing growth in cancer service activity;
- \$4.184 million to meet the growing demands for health services by older Canberrans; and
- \$4.184 million to support people in our community suffering from chronic disease, and to implement a range of activities to reduce secondary diseases for people with diabetes.

“The 16-bed Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit at Canberra Hospital will help provide quicker transfer of surgical patients from the emergency department to specialist surgical care, helping to address access block,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The Budget will also deliver on the Government’s commitment to increase access to home based care, thus catering to the growing cohort of people who continue to remain at home with increasingly complex care needs and helping to keep them out of hospital.

“These services will increase the capacity of our hospitals, while providing enhanced access to new types of care.

“The growth funding for surgery builds on the \$67 million already provided over the past seven years to increase access to surgery which has led to record levels of surgery,” Ms Gallagher said.

Ms Gallagher said the funding allocation for older Canberrans would enable the Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service to continue to meet the increasing demand for services as our population ages.

“Health is a top priority for this Government and we will continue to invest in our community and our health infrastructure to build an integrated health care system for the future,” Ms Gallagher said.

“In addition to these new Budget initiatives, we will continue this year to roll out our major capital investment program with the new Women’s and Children’s Hospital, the southern car park and Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit all underway.”

4 May 2010

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