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\$29.3 MILLION TO MEET DEMAND FOR RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Radiation oncology services at The Canberra Hospital will receive a boost through Budget initiatives announced today.

\$10.6 million over four years in operating costs and capital of \$18.7 million has been set aside in the 2006-07 Budget to begin the process to purchase and maintain new linear accelerator machines for the Radiation Oncology Department at The Canberra Hospital.

“The majority of services provided by the Radiation Oncology Department are external beam radiation treatments provided by means of linear accelerators,” Health Minister Katy Gallagher said.

“Demand for radiation oncology treatments by linear accelerators has exceeded the capacity of the existing TCH linear accelerators, resulting frequently in unacceptably long patient waiting lists. And demand for these services will continue to grow.

“This project, which will run until the 2009-10 financial year, will expand radiation oncology infrastructure to enable the service to meet projected demand.

“Specifically, the project will increase the number of linear accelerators, from two machines to three machines by 2008 and provide infrastructure to enable the capacity to increase to four machines by 2012.

“The replacement of other significant equipment requirements for radiation oncology is also included in the project, which is an initial stage of a fifteen year plan to enable the service to meet demand.”

Additional recurrent costs associated with the project include staged recruitment of additional staff, training, lease of major equipment, maintenance of new capital, and annual information management system licence costs.

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