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## More beds to increase health system capacity

ACT Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher, today announced that the 2010-11 ACT Budget would deliver more funding for acute care services and more public hospital beds to increase the overall capacity of our health system.

The new initiatives include \$21.840 million to increase the capacity of Intensive Care Units (ICU) at Canberra Hospital and Calvary Hospital.

“At present, the ACT has 20 ICU beds - 16 at Canberra hospital (TCH) and four at Calvary Public Hospital,” Ms Gallagher said.

“Through this Budget we will spend an additional \$10.459 million in 2010-11 to increase capacity within the ICU at Canberra Hospital to enable the service to flex up to 20 beds and improve management of patients within ward areas.

“The Government has also allocated an additional \$11.381 million in funding for two High Dependency beds at Calvary Hospital, which will facilitate the provision of high quality care to patients with complex needs.

“This increase in bed numbers will complement the additional capacity that will follow the opening of the new ICU unit at Calvary Hospital in 2010-11.

“Since coming to office, our Government has added more than 230 beds to the ACT public hospital system, demonstrating our strong commitment to expanding the capacity of our health system and addressing access block.

“This budget delivers a further \$13 million over four years to meet continued growth in demand for acute care services at ACT public hospitals.

“This funding will allow us to open the new 16-bed Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit (SAPU) and progress Phase 2 Implementation of the Community Acute Post Acute Care (CAPAC) service.

“The SAPU will provide the capacity to quickly transfer surgical patients from the emergency department to a specialist surgical assessment unit.

“This funding follows capital investment of \$4.1 million in the 2009-10 Budget to construct the SAPU which will open later this year.

“This will add a further 16 beds to the public hospital system in 2010-11 and enable our public hospitals to reduce bed occupancy rates towards the optimum rate for maximum efficiency and patient safety of around 85 per cent.

“In addition, the Commonwealth Government is providing \$26 million over four years to increase subacute bed numbers by 22 over that period,” Ms Gallagher said.

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