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**PROVINCE INVESTS IN COMPREHENSIVE  
MEDICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

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**Program to Provide Doctors With Information They Need When They Need It  
For Better Care for Manitobans: Oswald**

Health Minister Theresa Oswald today announced comprehensive plans to ensure health care providers across the province have immediate access to a patient's most up-to-date medical information including recent prescriptions or medical treatment received anywhere at any time within the province.

"If someone is hurt or ill and can't communicate, patients and their families deserve the comfort and security of knowing that emergency room staff can access the patient's medical history quickly and efficiently," said Oswald. "It is critical the right information is always available to the right care providers at the right time."

In June 2006, Manitoba Health formed Manitoba eHealth, a new program designed to provide strategic coordination and focus on the development of a provincewide health information and communication technology strategy.

"Being able to access all information on a patient, no matter when or where in the province they have been treated, enhances the way doctors are able to diagnose patients," said Brian Postl, president and CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The Manitoba eHealth program will facilitate the creation of a provincial electronic health record (EHR), a secure and private lifetime record of a patient's health history and care within the health system in Manitoba. The program gives health-care providers information such as test results as soon as the information is put into the system. Once in the system, health care providers will have access to up-to-date information on patients whether they live in Winnipeg, Thompson or remote towns and communities throughout the province. This will help reduce replicated or redundant tests and contribute to efforts to reduce wait times.

"All the systems focus on the needs of doctors and nurses who need accurate information to offer the best care possible for their patients," said Ian Fish, chief information officer of Manitoba eHealth. "These systems improve the ability of health-care professionals to collaborate by providing online, real-time information."

Under the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), only those health-care providers who deal directly with a patient have access to patient information. This will not change with electronic health records. Manitoba eHealth's Primary Data Centre is one of the most secure centres in the country. Only individuals with valid health-care roles can access usernames and passwords needed to enter the system.

"As important as it is for medical staff to have critical and historical information on all their patients, it is equally important this information is protected," said Oswald.

The first phase of the hospital information system project is being launched at St. Boniface General Hospital tomorrow.

Manitoba eHealth plans to implement various components of the provincewide EHR over the next three to five years. It has committed \$150 million to achieve this goal for projects that have recently been implemented, are already underway or will be started this year.

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