

Media Release

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For immediate release

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Alberta Liberals will fund new cancer centre in Edmonton

Edmonton – Alberta Liberal Leader Kevin Taft committed \$650 million today to renovating and expanding the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton.

“This Tory government made an empty promise in 2005 to expand Alberta’s cancer facilities,” said Taft. “It’s time to follow through on that commitment.”

The Alberta Liberals will support plans for expanding and redeveloping the current Cross Cancer Institute to expand cancer services for Edmonton and northern Alberta. The total project will cost \$650 million over three years.

“The Stelmach government spends more per capita than Ontario, yet in this province people are still waiting days for a bed in the emergency room, and major health facilities like the Cross Cancer Institute are operating over capacity,” said Taft. “Despite all the money that this province spends, our health care system is still in crisis mode.”

“The Alberta Liberals have a plan that will bring concrete, positive change to the health care system.”

“It’s time to recommit to excellent, sustainable, accessible public health care for Albertans, and to a healthier future.”

Funding for the expansion and redevelopment of the Cross Cancer Institute will come from the Sustainability Fund. While it was originally established as a \$2.5 billion fund to cover the cost of emergencies and disasters, the Tories have allowed it to balloon into a \$7.7 billion slush fund.

Today’s commitment is in addition to the funding announcement made last Friday, but still falls within the available surplus in the Sustainability Fund, which has already been set aside from current budgets.

The Alberta Liberal Plan reallocates to Albertans’ priorities, spends already set-aside funds on Albertans’ urgent needs, and increases investment in a resource revenue savings plan.

“It’s time to start spending on the priorities of Albertans, not the priorities of the Tory party,” said Taft. “After 37 years, the Stelmach government has stopped listening to its citizens – it’s time to change that.”

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Under their Action Plan for health, announced earlier in the campaign, the Alberta Liberals will also work with post-secondary institutions to increase training capacity for health care professionals and expand the health care workforce.

“We can’t open more facilities and increase beds without the doctors and nurses to run them,” said Taft. “The Tories laid off a whole generation of nurses in the 1990s. And they let the number of graduating nurses in Alberta fall by half. They created the current crisis in staffing not by neglect, but by slashing and burning an excellent public health system.”

The Alberta Liberals will also reduce waiting times, address overcrowding in emergency rooms and ensure there are enough staff to accommodate patient need through initiatives such as the establishment of Community Health Centres. The centres would give patients convenient access to physicians.

“Nowhere else on the planet do we have such incredible opportunity as in Alberta – yet the Stelmach Tories are letting that opportunity slip through their fingers,” said Taft.

“It’s time for a change to get the job done right.”

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