

**Immediate Release
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\$3.2M Campaign Launched to Expand Breast Cancer Screening Capacity Across Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, SK – The Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan (CFS) is launching a \$3.2M fundraising campaign to help expand the capacity of breast cancer screening services across Saskatchewan. The launch of the campaign coincides with October’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The campaign was initiated to help ensure that women aged 40 to 49 years of age, will be able to access screening services, when they become eligible in 2025.

The Government of Saskatchewan has lowered the age that women are eligible for the services from age 50 to 40, effective January 2025. The expansion of the screening program will take effect through a phased approach that will gradually reduce the age eligibility to 40, to allow opportunity to recruit the necessary resources.

“We remain committed to ensuring Saskatchewan women have access to safe, high quality and timely breast care,” Health Minister Everett Hindley said. “Our government is investing in several breast cancer care and screening initiatives to support substantial detection and treatment enhancements, including a new Breast Health Centre in Regina. Thank you to the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan for their fundraising efforts to support the expansion of provincial breast cancer screening eligibility.”

In 2023, the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan completed a \$2 million fundraising campaign for the replacement of the province’s 22-year-old breast screening bus. That new mobile mammography unit is expected to be operational in 2025.

Now, the CFS is focused on raising \$3.2M for the purchase of:

- a second mobile unit containing a new digital mammography machine that will travel in rural Saskatchewan,
- two new digital mammography machines to be added at the permanent screening program sites in Regina and Saskatoon, and
- a sport utility vehicle to transport staff to the site of the mobile unit.

“This expansion of screening services to women under 50 is good news, and will further support early detection, which can save lives. But it also means there will be a significant increase in demand for breast cancer screening services in the very near future. The goal of this campaign is to make sure the equipment needed is in place to meet this increased demand for breast screening,” said Nora Yeates, CEO, Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan.

“As we increase the eligibility for breast screening to women over 40, we are expecting an increase in demand for this service. Having the right equipment in place will be essential to providing this service in a timely way to women across the province. The addition of a second mobile mammography unit will allow SHA teams to provide mammography screening services annually to 42 rural and northern communities across Saskatchewan. The SHA is very grateful for the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan and the critical role they are playing to make this equipment available for women in all parts of Saskatchewan,” said Bryan Witt, Vice President, Provincial Clinical and Support Services, Saskatchewan Health Authority.

This new equipment will play a major role in enabling the delivery of breast cancer screening services to all eligible women in Saskatchewan.

“We are committed to ensuring that all women aged 40 and older, whether they live in urban, rural, or northern Saskatchewan, have access to essential breast cancer screening services,” said Deb Bulych, President and CEO of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. “The additional screening equipment funded through this campaign will help improve our capacity to meet increased demand. With more resources, we can reduce wait times, reach more women, and ultimately save more lives.”

The Medical Director at the Breast Health Centre at Saskatoon City Hospital applauds the lowering of the eligibility age for mammograms. She says screening for breast cancer is vitally important to helping prevent severe outcomes from breast cancer.

“The screening mammogram can be lifesaving because it checks for early-stage breast cancer in women who often have no signs or symptoms of the disease. This can provide the patient with more treatment options and better outcomes,” said Dr. Carolyn Flegg, Medical Director of Breast Imaging, Saskatchewan Health Authority.

An estimated 780 Saskatchewan women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2024, and 180 will die from the disease. Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer in women and the second leading cause of their death.

The new equipment, once funded, will play a vital role in enabling access to mammograms for those currently eligible and the many new individuals who will become eligible in 2025.

Those interested in donating to the CFS campaign for breast cancer screening equipment can visit <https://www.cancerfoundationsask.ca/donate/>. For more information about the campaign, please call the Foundation office at 1- 844-735-5590 or email info@cancerfoundationsask.ca.

Background

The Expanded Screening Program for Breast Cancer provides screening mammograms to Saskatchewan women who:

- are 40 years of age or older,
- do not have symptoms of breast cancer such as lumps, bloody nipple discharge or skin changes,
- do not have breast implants,
- are not on active follow-up for breast cancer, and,
- have been cancer free for five years.

Screening mammograms are available at permanent Saskatchewan Cancer Agency centres in Regina and Saskatoon, and at satellite centres in Lloydminster, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Swift Current and Yorkton.

The mobile breast cancer screening program currently provides screening services to women in nearly 40 rural and remote communities across Saskatchewan.

Sources: Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (<https://saskcancer.ca/prevention-screening/screening/screening-program-breast-cancer>)

Video and photos of mammography machines for media use can be found [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/1lom49bud4z6nncw0s0o2/AHabulBoAi8sX7I6Qc5rDJU?rlkey=j8o128vtlrplpsyc217iodgaf&e=1&st=8jp4uy9t&dl=0).
(<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/1lom49bud4z6nncw0s0o2/AHabulBoAi8sX7I6Qc5rDJU?rlkey=j8o128vtlrplpsyc217iodgaf&e=1&st=8jp4uy9t&dl=0>).

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