

Business Plan

2026-27

Ministry of Health

Statement from the Ministers



*The Honourable
Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Health*



*The Honourable Lori Carr
Minister of Mental Health and
Addictions, Seniors and Rural
and Remote Health*

We are pleased to present the Ministry of Health's 2026-27 Business Plan.

A key factor to enjoying a high-quality life is good physical and mental health. When optimal health slowly or rapidly declines, access to primary, urgent, acute or emergency care and other clinical care avenues are essential to restore wellbeing or even save one's life.

Our health-care system will impact nearly every individual during their lifetime. That's why Saskatchewan has dedicated extraordinary levels of investment each year to strengthen and improve health care. A better system will not only grow to better meet patient demand, but enable patients, families, communities and providers to thrive.

Now is the time to protect our multi-year investments and plans, while pushing the dial forward with a reinvigorated approach to improve access to high quality health care for people of all ages. This is the main impetus behind our new Patients First Health Care Plan that puts patients at the centre of every decision and ensuring the right care in the right place at the right time.

By reinforcing our system and looking forward to what's ahead, we will implement innovative Saskatchewan-made initiatives and solutions that clear the path to individualized care; recruit for and retain our valued health care teams; construct modern facilities; embrace the latest medical technologies and remove barriers.

Saskatchewan will continue to put patients first by connecting thousands of people with a primary care provider, such as a physician or nurse practitioner. Saskatchewan is also expanding the scope of practice for frontline health care professionals to improve access and reduce wait times. By empowering nurse practitioners, pharmacists, paramedics and other providers to use the full extent of their training, the province is opening more entry points to health care, easing pressure on emergency rooms and strengthening team-based care across communities.

We are realigning services within Saskatoon City Hospital to mirror what patients say they need by expanding hospital bed capacity. More acute care beds will also open in St. Paul's Hospital and Royal University Hospital.

This coming year we will celebrate a new Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre, in partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments. We will continue to advance surgical and medical imaging services, improve pediatric care, stabilize Emergency Medical Services and support lifesaving access to evolving cancer care treatments and initiatives.

Saskatchewan is protecting seniors and individuals needing complex care with thoughtful, practical ideas to deliver options and supports to remain safely in their homes and communities. Mental Health and Addictions is a top priority for Saskatchewan to expand treatment spaces such as a new youth detox centre, continue transitioning to a recovery-oriented system of care and increase access to resources no matter where clients live.

The Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan will move into a new phase with more training and career opportunities for Saskatchewan people and streamlining health recruitment by strengthening the mandate of the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency.

Saskatchewan will embrace digital tools, technologies and virtual health solutions that modernize and expand access to health care. We will further invest in health infrastructure with exciting new builds and facility upgrades across the province.

The 2026-27 budget delivers on the priorities outlined in our *Patients First Health Care Plan* to ensure everyone receives the right care in the right place at the right time.

We look forward to collaborating with partners across our diverse, innovative and future-focused health system to improve access to care and always put patients first.

2026-27 Budget Highlights

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| <p>1</p> | <p>The 2026-27 budget investment for the Ministry of Health is a record of \$8.47 billion, an increase of \$393.4 million or 4.9 per cent. Saskatchewan Health Authority will receive \$5.15 billion to advance patient-first plans and improve access. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency will receive \$308.6 million.</p> |
| <p>2</p> | <p>Primary and Preventative Care areas will continue transformative work to connect thousands more Saskatchewan residents with a primary care provider, such as a physician or nurse practitioner (NP). New funding will expand independent NP contracts and significantly enhance primary care capacity, to fulfill Saskatchewan’s commitment to ensure every resident has a primary care provider by the end of 2028.</p> |
| <p>3</p> | <p>Saskatchewan will dedicate a significant increase this year for the ambitious multi-year Saskatoon Capacity Pressure Action Plan to better realign services within Saskatoon hospitals and the community. Sixty new permanent inpatient beds will be divided between Royal University Hospital and St. Paul’s Hospital; Saskatoon City Hospital will continue fast tracking an unprecedented 109 total acute care beds to stabilize patient flow</p> |
| <p>4</p> | <p>The 2026-27 budget will support seniors and complex-care individuals to strengthen long-term care (LTC) services, improve home care services and fund more localized programs.</p> |
| <p>5</p> | <p>The HHR Action Plan will move into a new phase with more career opportunities for Saskatchewan people. The College of Medicine will add more seats to train future physicians and also expand postgraduate medical residency seats. New funding will introduce a new career laddering program to support Saskatchewan registered nurses to become nurse practitioners.</p> |
| <p>6</p> | <p>The 2026-27 Budget provides over \$23 million for targeted investments that will create about 200 more addictions recovery spaces, expand resource access to mental health and addictions supports and continue the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care.</p> |
| <p>7</p> | <p>Saskatchewan will continue investing heavily in capital builds and modernizing existing facilities across the province with a budget dedicated to constructing hospitals, long term care homes and urgent care centres.</p> |

Government Vision and Goals

Saskatchewan's Vision

“...to be the best place in Canada—to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life.”

>> Government Goals

A Strong Economy

Strong Communities

Strong Families

Saskatchewan's vision and three goals provide the strategic direction for organizations to align their programs and services to build a strong Saskatchewan.

All organizations will report on progress in their 2026-27 Annual Reports.

Ministry of Health Overview

Overview

Through leadership and partnership, the Ministry of Health is dedicated to achieving a responsive, integrated and efficient health system that puts the patient first and enables people to achieve their best possible health by promoting healthy choices and responsible self-care.



Goal 1: Better Access to Care

Build a responsive health care system so that Saskatchewan people have timely access to the care they need, in the way that best supports them.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Expand Access to Primary and Preventative Care:

Saskatchewan people are supported to achieve good health through policies, programs and services that aim to promote wellness, prevent illness, treat concerns, manage disease and connect residents to additional supports in the system when needed.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Implement a pilot program offering virtual primary care for unattached patients to reduce unnecessary visits, prevent unnecessary travel and provide access to care.
- Expand the Virtual Physician Program.
- Continue work toward the goal that every person in Saskatchewan has access to a primary health provider – a doctor or a nurse practitioner – by the end of 2028.
 - Expand contract opportunities for nurse practitioners (NPs) to deliver public funded primary care to a panel of patients.
- Use technology to reduce administrative burden for primary care team members:
 - Establish an administrative burden task team.
 - Implement digital tools with a focus on artificial intelligence.
- Deliver the Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections (STBBI) multi-year action plan.
 - Provincial STBBI testing policy is implemented.
 - Strengthen initiatives to prevent perinatal (from mother to baby) transmission of STBBIs.
- Enhance efforts to prevent cancer and promote early diagnosis through screening.
 - Lower age eligibility for breast cancer screening to age 40 while ensuring that patients have access to screening diagnostics within appropriate wait times.
 - Implement a primary screening and patient-self-sampling program for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) as part of a screening program for cervical cancer.
- Expand and optimize the scope of healthcare professionals to ensure that they can work to the full extent of their training and Saskatchewan citizens have timely access to care by the right provider, at the right time.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Increase Access to Acute Care and Emergency Services:

Emergency and acute care services are accessible by patients within appropriate wait times.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Reduce wait times for surgery:
 - Enhance pre-operative optimization.
 - Increase the proportion of hip and knee arthroplasty performed as day surgery.
 - Continue to contract with third-party providers for high volume, low complexity surgical procedures that are publicly funded and privately delivered.

- Reduce medical imaging and diagnostics wait times:
 - Increase MRI, CT and PET volumes to achieve patient wait time targets.
 - Implement centralized intake and pooled referrals to reduce wait times.
- Increase access to specialist services to support wait times:
 - Develop and implement an automated provincial referral system that streamlines referral processes.
- Improve access to emergency/urgent care and prevent emergency department disruptions:
 - Open Urgent Care Centre in Saskatoon in partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments.
 - Advance planning and construction for the five additional Urgent Care Centres.
 - Ensure acute stroke care meets Canadian Stroke Best Practice benchmarks for rapid diagnosis, evidence-based treatment and timely access to care.
 - Implement stroke AI technology.
 - Strengthen existing care pathways.
- Increase acute care in-patient capacity:
 - Expand staffing capacity for acute in-patient care with focus on Saskatoon by adding incremental inpatient bed capacity at Royal University Hospital, Jim Pattison Children's Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital.
 - Advance construction of the adult intensive care unit in Royal University Hospital to increase bed capacity (Phase Two of the Provincial Intensive Care Unit Expansion).

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Increase Access to Mental Health and Addictions Recovery Supports:

Mental Health and Addictions services support Saskatchewan people through meaningful partnerships, integration across service lines and ensuring that the right providers and services are available where and when they are needed.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Build capacity:
 - Continue to work toward adding new addiction recovery spaces toward the target of 500 total.
 - Add Complex Needs Facility (CNF) spaces in new locations.
- Improve the system:
 - Expand Virtual Access to Addictions Medicine (VAAM) and the provincial Opioid Agonist Therapy program supports to additional sites.
 - Continue implementation of a new model for central intake and navigation.
- Move toward a Recovery Oriented System of Care:
 - Establish involuntary addiction treatment processes and care, starting with a phased approach in the North Battleford area and expanding provincially thereafter.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Enhance Continuing Care:

Individuals are supported to live independently at home and in their communities. When community-based supports can no longer meet their needs, high quality and safe options are available.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Capacity:
 - Enhance the system with the resources, workforce and flexibility to deliver the right care at the right time.
 - Fill new full-time-equivalent (FTE) home care positions, including assessor/coordinators, social workers and nurses.
- Access:
 - Expand options to support people to receive care in their homes and communities, reducing reliance on facility-based services.
 - Increase the number of LTC beds within the province.
- Responsive, Safe and Quality Services:
 - Continuously improving services to support individuals to have choice while maintaining high quality.
 - Implement a new home-care information system.
 - Complete the phased implementation of transitioning to paperless charts and care planning in Long Term Care.
- Engagement and Partnerships:
 - Fostering strong partnerships among communities, families and care providers.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Expand Access to Primary and Preventative Care

- By March 31, 2027, 90% of people in Saskatchewan report having access to a regular health care provider.
- At least 66% of pregnant syphilis cases are treated 30 days or more prior to date of delivery.
- By March 31, 2027, report 100% of transmissions of perinatal Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infection (STBBI) as critical incidents.
- By March 31, 2027, lower the screening age for breast cancer screening to 40.
- By March 31, 2027, fully implement HPV primary screening and self-testing.
- By March 31, 2027, expand the scope of practice for Pharmacy Technicians in Saskatchewan.
- By March 31, 2027, expand the number of pharmacies delivering both strep throat and ear infection assessment services by 82% (from 22 to 40) and ear infection assessment services only by 317% (from 24 to 100).

Increase Access to Acute Care and Emergency Services

- By March 31, 2027, 90% of surgeries are performed or offered within six months and no patients wait longer than nine months for surgery.
- By March 31, 2027, increase MRI and CT volumes to achieve the 60-day wait time target by 2027-28.
- By March 31, 2027, achieve 90th percentile targets for stroke best-practice guidelines in each stroke centre.
- By early 2027, the Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre.

Increase Access to Mental Health and Addictions Recovery Supports

- By March 31, 2027, all the 500 new addictions recovery spaces are operational.
- By March 31, 2027, the complex needs facility in North Battleford is operational.
- By March 31, 2027, an assessment centre and in-patient treatment centre are operational in the North Battleford area under the guidelines of compassionate intervention.

Enhance Continuing Care

- By June 30, 2027, increase access to long-term care beds in the province with at least 70 net-new beds opened.
- By September 30, 2026, fill new full-time-equivalent (FTE) home care positions, including assessor/coordinators, social workers and nurses.
- By December 31, 2026, home care information system is operational.

Goal 2: Improved Patient Care

Deliver the foundational elements that focus on improving health outcomes, quality of care and patient experience.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Grow and Support Health Human Resources:

Have the right healthcare professionals to provide effective patient care across the province.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Recruit:
 - Provide conditional job offers to new graduates.
 - Continue to source qualified healthcare professionals nationally and internationally to staff capital projects.
 - Implement cohesive branding for the Saskatchewan health sector, including a dedicated recruitment website.
 - Increase nurse practitioner positions in emergency rooms and urgent care centres to reduce wait times and improve patient flow.
- Train:
 - Expand earn-while-you-learn opportunities for in-demand training programs, such as Continuing Care Assistants.
 - Ensure sufficient clinical placements are available to Saskatchewan students.
 - Increase the number of undergraduate and postgraduate medical training seats at the College of Medicine.
- Incentivize:
 - Provide incentives to family physicians and specialists and evaluate effectiveness of existing incentives.
 - To encourage registered nurses to become nurse practitioners over a two-year window, targeted incentives and supports will be offered.
- Retain:
 - Continue implementation of staffing stabilization initiatives across areas of need.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Better Quality, Results and Patient Experience:

Patient engagement and partnership drive planning and improvement across the system.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Elevate the patient voice across our work:
 - Implement the collection of people-centred measures.
- Patients and families feel safe in our care:
 - Improve timely responsiveness to Critical Incidents.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Leverage Infrastructure, Technology and Innovation:

Patients receive high-quality health care in a system that is integrated, modernized and uses health infrastructure, digital transformation and a focus on innovation to improve patient care and health outcomes.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue to deliver infrastructure projects that support high-quality care environments:
 - Prince Albert Victoria Hospital Acute Care Tower: continue construction,
 - Regina 240-bed Specialized Beds facility: continue construction,
 - Weyburn General Hospital: complete construction and open facility,
 - La Ronge Long-term Care (LTC) facility: continue construction,
 - Grenfell LTC facility: continue construction,
 - Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre (UCC): complete development in partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments and
 - Saskatoon City Hospital acute care expansion (109 beds): complete renovations.
- Continue to advance ongoing projects, including:
 - Royal University Hospital Intensive Care Unit Expansion,
 - Additional Urgent Care Centres,
 - Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Saskatoon Patient Lodge,
 - Yorkton Regional Health Centre,
 - Rosthern Hospital,
 - Esterhazy Integrated Facility and
 - Long Term Care projects in several communities including the Battlefords, Watson and Estevan.
- Continue investment in new systems and technologies to improve health facilities and services across Saskatchewan.
 - Replace HealthLine 811 call centre platform to improve reliability and support virtual care programs.
- Ensure the provincial virtual care approach has integrated navigation across virtual and in-person care to connect patients, providers and services through virtual tools and shared clinical supports.
- Targeted investments will develop infrastructure that is modern, energy efficient and supports high quality care.
 - Use the Digital Health Strategy to support modern technology solutions, streamlined access to clinical information and administrative efficiencies for healthcare providers.
- Strengthen the use of data, research and innovation to inform patient-centred care and system improvements.
 - Enable responsible use of health data, analytics and artificial intelligence to support evidence-informed decision making, clinical quality improvement and innovation across the health system.
 - Continue to look at improving online access to personal health information on MySaskHealthRecord.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Improve the Health of Indigenous Peoples:

Through partnership with Indigenous communities and people, we deliver care in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner for Indigenous peoples that is safe and inclusive and that improves health outcomes and quality of care.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Provide and increase access to culturally safe and equitable health care services.
- Provide cultural responsiveness training to all health sector employees.
- Enhance and expand Indigenous recruitment, retention and career advancement.
 - Increase the number of Indigenous people trained and working in health care occupations in the province.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Advance Health Equity:

The system actively works to reduce health inequities arising from social, economic and environmental factors.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Collaborate with sector partners to initiate the development of a health equity learning and development framework for the health system.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Grow and Support Healthcare Human Resources

- Recruit:
 - By March 31, 2027, 70% of new graduates from Saskatchewan-based health training programs receive conditional job offers.
 - By March 31, 2027, 100% of students from the first cohort in the Physician Assistant training program receive conditional job offers.
 - By March 31, 2027, 80% of recruitment needs are met.
- Train:
 - By March 31, 2027, clinical placements in Saskatchewan are available to at least 80% of students in high-priority health training programs.
- Retain:
 - Ensure newly created positions remain filled as of December 31, 2026, to alleviate stress and workload for existing workers.
 - By March 31, 2027, complete an evaluation of the 24/7/365 Clinical Nursing Support pilot initiative.

Better Quality, Results and Patient Experience

- By March 31, 2027, submit 100% of critical incident notifications within 3 business days.
- By March 31, 2027, submit 80% of critical incident final reports within 60 days (or within 180 days when an extension is granted).
- By March 31, 2027, complete 100% of patient-centred reporting for identified services.

Leverage Infrastructure, Technology and Innovation

- By March 31, 2027, the following major capital projects will be completed:
 - Weyburn General Hospital
 - Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre
 - Saskatoon City Hospital acute care expansion (109 beds)
- By March 31, 2027, facility maintenance on urgent and high-priority projects is completed as scheduled in order to support operational continuity and safety.
- By March 31, 2027, complete replacement of the HealthLine 811 call centre platform.
- By March 31, 2027, deliver year one priorities of the five-year Digital Health Strategy.

Improve the Health of Indigenous Peoples

- By March 31, 2027, 100% of health sector staff receive cultural responsiveness training within the first six months of hiring.
- By March 31, 2027, increase the percentage of self-declared Indigenous healthcare workers employed by the SHA from 5% to 15%.

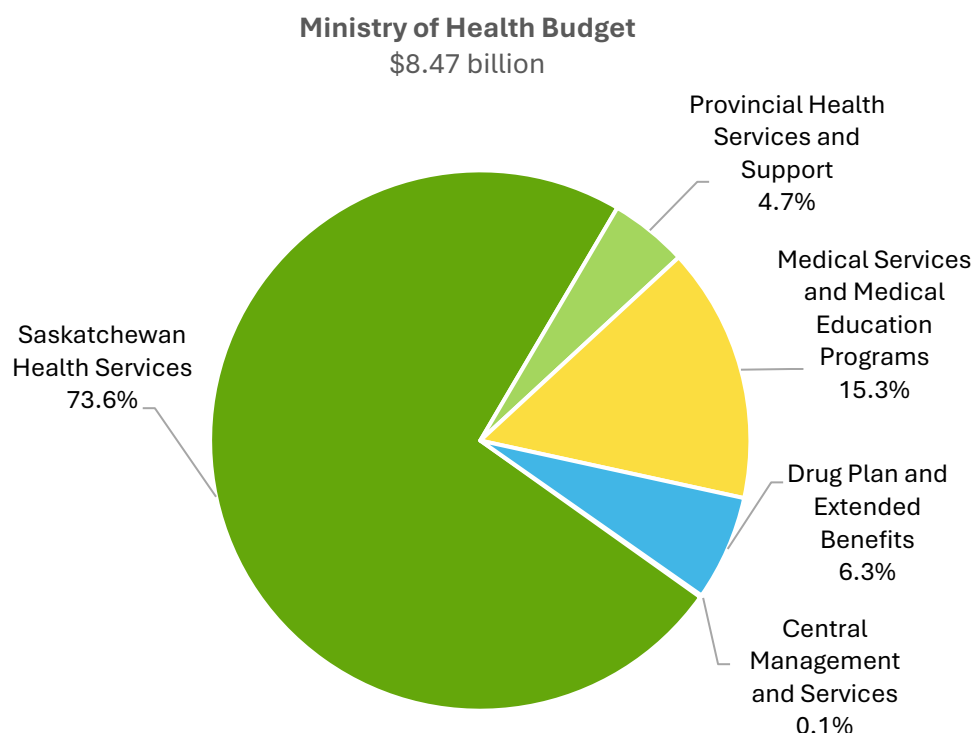
2026-27 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

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|-----------------|---|
| <p>1</p> | <p>Increasing Access to Specialist Services to Achieve Wait Times</p> <p>The Ministry of Health is working towards the development and implementation of an automated provincial referral system with referral pooling capabilities.</p> <p>The Provincial Central Intake and eReferral Solution is a multi-year project to align health system priorities with the goal to streamline referral intake processes, enhance patient care, reduce patient wait times, eliminate faxing and reduce administrative burden.</p> <p>This system will reduce wait times for specialist services, increasing access for people across Saskatchewan.</p> |
| <p>2</p> | <p>Acute Stroke Care</p> <p>The Ministry of Health is committed to ensuring that acute stroke care in Saskatchewan meets the Canadian Stroke Best Practice benchmarks for rapid diagnosis, evidence-based treatment and timely access to care.</p> <p>To accomplish this, Saskatchewan will be implementing stroke AI technology. This technology improves diagnosis times following a patient having a CT scan by flagging possible blood vessel occlusions and notifying the physician provider rapidly.</p> <p>This ensures we will move towards national best practice benchmarks for stroke care which is 30 minutes from “door to needle”.</p> |
| <p>3</p> | <p>Improving Access to Primary Care Providers</p> <p>Administrative burden is cited by primary care providers as a major driver of burnout and a barrier to retention. The Ministry of Health is committed to taking action to alleviate the burden of non-clinical tasks. The Ministry will establish an administrative burden task team to identify appropriate tools and eliminate wasteful tasks. We will introduce new digital tools to reduce provider workload and create more capacity for providers to spend on direct patient care.</p> |

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| <p>4</p> | <p>Addictions Central Intake and Navigation</p> <p>A key action under Improving the System in the <i>Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions 2023-2028</i> is to create a central intake for patients to self-refer for mental health and addictions services, with the initial focus on addiction services. Intake and navigation services help people find and connect to services, reduce barriers, provide timely support and empower clients and their families in their own health management.</p> <p>In 2025-26, we invested \$2M to advance work toward the development of this system that will enhance communication across the province and provide a more accurate understanding of the current number of individuals awaiting addictions treatment. We are on track to begin implementation of the central intake and navigation system through a phased approach beginning in 2026.</p> |
| <p>5</p> | <p>Compassionate Intervention</p> <p>Addiction is an illness that if left untreated can worsen and eventually cause a person to lose their ability to make sound decisions regarding their health and well-being.</p> <p><i>The Compassionate Intervention Act</i> will create a new framework for involuntary substance use withdrawal management, stabilization and treatment in Saskatchewan. It is focused on supporting those with severe substance use disorders who do not seek or are not capable of seeking help despite life-threatening risks. Investment into Compassionate Intervention will begin in 2026-27 with the first phase of implementation targeted for fall 2026.</p> |
| <p>6</p> | <p>Expansion of Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Contracts</p> <p>The introduction of nurse practitioner (NP) contracts in 2025-26 will be expanded in 2026-27, creating more access to primary care. Nurse practitioners are recognized as valuable primary care providers who can provide advanced assessments, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illness, order diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, perform medical procedures and refer patients to specialist services. Saskatchewan is creating more opportunities for NPs to provide primary care to patients, with the expansion of Primary Care NP Contracts, each supporting a panel of at least 800 patients.</p> <p>Scopes of practice are optimized and expanded to ensure Saskatchewan maximizes the skills of our healthcare professionals.</p> |

Financial Summary

| Ministry of Health 2026-27 Estimates | (in thousands of dollars) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Central Management and Services | 10,761 |
| Saskatchewan Health Services | 6,242,375 |
| Provincial Health Services and Support | 395,187 |
| Medical Services and Medical Education Programs | 1,296,176 |
| Drug Plan and Extended Benefits | 534,318 |
| Total Appropriation | 8,478,817 |
| Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions | 12,716 |
| Plus: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment | 1,907 |
| Total Expense | 8,468,008 |



Links to more information

- [Ministry of Health](#)
- [Government of Saskatchewan Budget, Planning and reporting](#)
- [Patients First Health Care Plan](#)