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Minister Applauds Early Success of Urgent Cancer Care Clinic, Cancer Helpline at Cancercare Manitoba

756 Visits in First Five Months, 110 Fewer Visits To Emergency Rooms per Month: Minister Selby

The new Urgent Cancer Care Clinic and Cancer Helpline at CancerCare Manitoba have improved access to care for cancer patients in Manitoba, Health Minister Erin Selby said today.

"We are seeing excellent early results in improving the service we provide to our cancer patients and system-wide," said Minister Selby. "I'm excited to see the new clinic and helpline have made a real difference for patients since they opened last November."

The Urgent Cancer Care Clinic and Cancer Helpline staff with specialized oncology training provide care to patients with cancer and blood disorders to quickly address symptoms related to disease or side effects from treatment. Between November 2013 and March 2014, there were 756 visits to the clinic and 520 calls to the helpline, an average of 160 visits per month and 110 phone calls per month.

Previously, cancer patients with urgent treatment or disease-related concerns had to either present at an emergency department or come to the cancer clinic for an unscheduled appointment. It's estimated there are about 110 fewer visits to emergency departments in Winnipeg per month since the Urgent Cancer Care Clinic opened.

"The staff in the clinic are wonderful and quickly helped me overcome what might have been a serious setback," said Stuart Scott, a patient who was recently treated for an infection at the Urgent Cancer Care Clinic. "I was seen within 15 minutes, was tested and am still being treated, and the level of care I receive is fantastic."

The clinic and Cancer Helpline were launched within existing resources at CancerCare Manitoba, and are complementary to IN SIXTY, the provincial cancer patient journey initiative that aims to connect a patient with cancer care within 60 days of high suspicion of the disease. The initiative aims to reduce wait times for cancer patients by making improvements to cancer services. Along with CancerCare Manitoba, the initiative includes key health-care partners, such as all regional health authorities, Diagnostic Services Manitoba, Manitoba Health and health-care professionals.

"The Urgent Cancer Care Clinic and Cancer Helpline are providing the right care at the right time in the right place," said Dr. Sri Navaratnam, chief executive officer and president of

CancerCare Manitoba. "Together, across Manitoba's health-care system, all of us will continue to work hard to ensure cancer patients can quickly access the care they need."

Information about how to access the new clinic and helpline is given directly to all patients undergoing cancer treatment at CancerCare. Patients are encouraged to first call the Cancer Helpline at 204-787-8900 Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., for an assessment. Urgent Cancer Care Clinic hours are Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A patient survey is underway to ensure patient needs are being met, and to determine if the service should be expanded, the minister added.