

NEWS RELEASE

Nova Scotia Health Authority, Valley Hospice Foundation, Department of Health and Wellness thrilled to see construction starting on new 10-bed hospice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Oct. 26 2018

KENTVILLE, N.S. – Nova Scotia Health Authority, the Valley Hospice Foundation and the Department of Health and Wellness are thrilled to be starting construction on the long-awaited new hospice facility for the Annapolis Valley community.

NSHA President and CEO Janet Knox and Valley Hospice Foundation Chair Diana Patterson, alongside Seniors Minister Leo Glavine and several equally enthusiastic board members and community members, gathered Friday afternoon on the Valley Regional Hospital campus for a groundbreaking ceremony that marks a major step forward for ensuring high-quality end-of-life care for area residents, for generations to come.

The new 10-bed hospice facility will be built next to Beacon House on-site at Valley Regional Hospital, with the Valley Hospice Foundation contributing up to \$4 million to pay for construction costs and NSHA operating the facility.

“This is a proud moment for our Annapolis Valley communities,” Valley Hospice Foundation Board Chair Diana Patterson said. “Today celebrates the vision, determination and commitment of all those who have supported hospice for Valley residents and their loved ones to receive the best end of life care, comfort and support.”

NSHA President and CEO Janet Knox agreed that “today is an important milestone in the journey to build our new hospice.”

“This celebration signifies the start of construction of a 10-bed residential hospice here on the grounds we stand today,” Knox said. “Nova Scotians have a range of needs at the end of life. A facility like the one envisioned by the Valley Hospice Foundation will make hospice an option for people in this part of the province – adding a significant resource to address needs within our community. The Valley Hospice will serve our communities well and help establish a strong network of support for those needing this end-of-life care.”

Stand-alone hospices such as the one that will open in the Annapolis Valley offer comfortable, caring settings for people living with terminal illness who are unable to spend their last months or weeks at home. The new facility will offer both medical and emotional support for patients and their families.

“The new Valley Hospice will support many patients and families in the community with compassionate care and support,” Seniors Minister Leo Glavine, who is also the area’s Kings West MLA, said on behalf of Health and Wellness Minister Randy Delorey.

“Together with other hospices planned for the Halifax and Cape Breton areas, this project supports our commitment to providing Nova Scotians with more options for end of life care.”

Currently, almost 60 per cent of Nova Scotians die in hospital. Unlike some other regional hospitals, Valley Regional Hospital does not have a palliative care unit, but that care is provided on other units of the hospital.

Development of the Valley Hospice plays a large role in furthering the vision of the provincial palliative care strategy, which is prioritizing and guiding how it implements the recommendations.

As recommended by the strategy, NSHA has enhanced palliative care teams, allowing more patients and health providers to receive specialist palliative care support when it is needed. Paramedics are now trained to provide palliative symptom management at home, which helps to support after-hours care and avoid hospital visits for those who wish to remain at home. Education is being provided to health providers to increase their comfort and skills in providing a palliative approach. Resource materials for patients and families have been updated, and a model to support primary care providers has been developed to improve access to a palliative approach to care.

For more information on what has been done to date, please visit novascotia.ca/dhw/palliativecare.

For more information on NSHA’s palliative care supports and services, please visit www.nshealth.ca/content/palliative-care.

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About Nova Scotia Health Authority

Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) provides health services to Nova Scotians and a wide array of specialized services to Maritimers and Atlantic Canadians. NSHA operates hospitals, health centres and community-based programs across the province. Our team of health professionals includes employees, doctors, researchers, learners and volunteers. We work in partnership with community groups, schools, governments, foundations and auxiliaries and community health boards. Visit www.nshealth.ca for more.

About Valley Hospice Foundation

The Valley Hospice Foundation is a registered charity in response to a community need to offer dying Valley residents - who for any reason are unable to die at home - and their loved ones a welcoming, quiet and comfortable alternative to hospital-based palliative care. The foundation is a volunteer-led organization and together with the Valley Regional Hospital Foundation and generous donors, raised more than \$8 million to build the hospice and fund projects at Valley Regional Hospital.