

**Thursday, Aug. 18, 2016**

HEALTH/WELLNESS--New Hospice in Annapolis Valley  
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There will be a new residential hospice in Annapolis Valley.

The new facility will have up to 10 beds and will be located on the grounds of the Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville.

Under a new agreement signed between the Valley Hospice Foundation and Nova Scotia Health Authority, the foundation will contribute up to \$3.3 million to pay for construction costs. Nova Scotia Health Authority will pay an estimated \$1.7 million per year to maintain and operate it.

Construction will begin in 2017, as soon as the design phase is complete. The hospice is expected to open by 2019.

"Residents of the Annapolis Valley have been working tirelessly on this project for over a decade, and soon their dedication will pay off," said Premier Stephen McNeil. "Our government is committed to this delivery of end-of-life care, and we look forward to working with hospice societies and other partners across the province as we plan the future of palliative care in Nova Scotia."

A stand-alone hospice offers a homelike setting for people with a terminal illness who are unable to spend their last months or weeks at home. For example, families can cook meals together in a hospice, pets can visit, and spouses can stay overnight.

"There is overwhelming support from our local communities and foundations. It is clear that this venture is one we all have imagined. At the end, we all would like the opportunity to die with dignity, surrounded by family, friends and a caring palliative care team," said Diana Patterson, chair, Valley Hospice Foundation. "We are thrilled that our vision for hospice will soon become a reality in the Annapolis Valley."

Right now, almost 60 per cent of Nova Scotians die in hospital. Unlike some other regional hospitals, the Valley Regional Hospital does not currently have a palliative care unit, but care is provided in other areas of the hospital.

"This agreement helps further the vision of the 2014 provincial

palliative care strategy, that all Nova Scotians can access integrated, culturally competent, quality palliative care," said Tricia Cochrane, vice-president, integrated health services program, Nova Scotia Health Authority. "Nova Scotians have a range of needs at the end of life. This hospice will be a significant resource to support the needs of residents in the Annapolis Valley."

This is the second standalone hospice announced in the province this year. Hospice Halifax plans to open a 10-bed facility in December 2017.

Palliative care support is also offered in people's homes across the province, by palliative care teams and paramedics.

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FOR BROADCAST USE

Premier Stephen McNeil announced today that construction will begin next year on a new hospice for the Annapolis Valley.

The Valley Hospice Foundation will pay three-point-two million dollars to build the facility on the grounds of the Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville.

Nova Scotia Health Authority will pay an estimated one-point-seven million dollars a year to operate it.

Premier McNeil says the hospice wouldn't be possible without the work of dedicated volunteers from the Valley Hospice Foundation.

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