

Ontario investing in area hospitals

By Sarah Sobanski

The province is investing more than \$3 million in Quinte Health Care.

In a press release the first week of May, Northumberland- Quinte West hospitals announced the province will invest more than \$4 million in the division's hospitals to provide better and faster access to health care and expand crucial services and procedures.

Quinte Health Care will receive \$3,005,495 ? other investments will go to Northumberland Hospital and Campbellford Memorial Hospital.

?We hope, as do all the hospitals in Ontario, that we are going into a more stable environment. Additional funding to our current operating plan will help us stabilize and improve our services and work with our community partners to help ensure that the services will be there when patients need them,? said Doug McGregor, chair of Quinte Health Care's board of directors in the release.

The funding comes from a just over three per cent increase in hospital funding in the 2017 provincial budget. It's meant to directly benefit patients of public hospitals across the province.

On the docket is providing more access to ?cardiac services, critical care, organ/tissue donations and transplants, rare disease care, and bariatric services, as well as support for new and redeveloped hospitals?. Also, ?improv[ing] access and reduce wait times for chemotherapy, stroke treatments, hip and knee replacements, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRIs)? and ?supporting service delivery by hospitals in high-growth communities, as well as small, medium, northern and rural hospitals, and mental health and stand-alone paediatric hospitals.?

All public hospitals in Ontario are seeing a minimum two per cent increase to what the province calls base funding in 2017-'18. It noted funding now has increased 58 per cent from the early 2000s. The total health care budget for the province currently sits at \$53.8 billion this year until next.

Ontario health care will see large sums invested by the province, according to the budget. Last week, in a separate releases, the province announced \$1.3 billion over three years to reduce wait times and a proposal to spend \$9 billion to support the construction of new hospital projects across the province. According to the releases, that's more than \$20 billion to hospital infrastructure over 10 years.