

September 15, 2014

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## Work begins to upgrade Brooks Health Centre heliport

**BROOKS** – Construction has begun on a new and improved helicopter landing pad at the Brooks Health Centre.

The upgraded heliport will accommodate STARS air ambulance's newest and fastest helicopter, the AgustaWestland AW139, and provide better access to emergency care for local and area patients. The project costs about \$475,000 and will take six weeks to complete.

"Brooks Emergency physicians and staff already provide excellent care," says Dr. Vanessa Maclean, Medical Director for the South Zone of Alberta Health Services (AHS). "This upgrade will help us to get the most critical patients to a higher level of care more quickly, even when poor weather conditions might limit the use of other helicopters."

The new AW139 helicopter offers faster response times and greater service range; a larger interior with space for two stretchers; a powerful twin engine for greater lift capacity and safety during takeoff and landings; and de-icing capability that will enable STARS to respond during adverse weather conditions.

During construction, medevac helicopters will land and take off from the Brooks airport. Patients will be transferred there by ground ambulance.

STARS made 27 flights to the Brooks Health Centre last year.

Brooks is one of 14 AHS facilities that are receiving upgraded heliports. AHS received \$25 million from the Government of Alberta last year to complete the project over a three-year period.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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**For media inquiries, contact:**

James Frey  
AHS Communications  
403-388-6313