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BRANDON REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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## Manitoba's newest stroke prevention clinic opens in Brandon

BRANDON -- The Brandon Regional Health Authority in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba (HSFM) opens a stroke prevention clinic in Brandon today.

**An official opening, tour and reception will take place at 12:30 p.m. at the Brandon Regional Health Centre, 150 McTavish Avenue East, Brandon, Manitoba, where the clinic is operating.**

"The clinic is expected to provide local residents with the best medical care available to prevent stroke," says Stroke Neurologist Dr. Arturo Tamayo, who is heading the Brandon Stroke Prevention Clinic. "This represents a huge step forward in stroke care. People who are at risk of having a stroke or those who have had a previous stroke or a mini-stroke – called a TIA – will be seen the same week that the symptoms arise but, most important of all, prevention will be encouraged."

Stroke prevention clinics address the needs of patients at high risk for stroke through evidence-based stroke protocols, improved management and referral services. These services include rapid assessment and accelerated care through a series of diagnostic tests and immediate preventative medication if necessary.

"Research has shown that treatment of high-risk patients in stroke prevention clinics reduces their chances of suffering a stroke by up to 80 per cent," says Dr. Kevin Willis, Director of Partnerships for the Canadian Stroke Network.

Funding by the Canadian Stroke Network in partnership with Merck Frosst has allowed HSFM to provide the clinic with \$95,000 per year for the first two years. These funds were used to hire a nurse case manager and clerical staff support.

"Establishing this clinic is a great example of how organizations can work together to decrease the impact of stroke," says Dr. Willis.

"For Merck Frosst, patients come first. We believe that the Brandon Stroke Prevention Clinic will provide the best care for preventing future strokes", says Norma Sebestyen, Merck Frosst's Director, Policy and Reimbursement, for Western Canada. "We are proud to be associated with such an initiative and hope that the Clinic will serve as a best practice across Canada".

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Canada and a stroke survivor has a 20% chance of having another stroke within 2 years. People who have had a TIA are five times more likely to have a stroke over the next two years than the general population.

“We appreciate the support from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba to develop this clinic,” says Carmel Olson, CEO of the Brandon Regional Health Authority. “This partnership will give patients who come through the Emergency Department with symptoms of stroke access to enhanced stroke care.”

It is estimated that stroke costs the Canadian economy \$2.7 billion a year in healthcare and related costs. A recent Calgary study proves that coordinated stroke care could save lives, reduce disability due to stroke and save the Canadian economy \$240 million in reduced length of hospital stays.

“The provincial government is committed to providing the best stroke care to all Manitobans,” says Healthy Living Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross. “The implementation of a stroke prevention clinic at the Brandon Regional Health Centre, is an important step towards the continual improvement of stroke care for citizens living in western Manitoba.”

The opening of these clinics does not require a large investment, but rather reorganization of existing resources. This method of organized stroke care can significantly reduce stroke mortality, hospital stays and long-term care costs.

“It is crucial that our province increase the number of stroke prevention clinics throughout Manitoba. We know the damaging effects of stroke are preventable. Too many times we’ve seen individuals suffer permanent serious damage or dying unnecessarily because they didn’t receive the timely preventative care they required. We hope the clinic will result in a lower number of strokes occurring in the Brandon area, effectively saving the lives of families, friends and loved ones who are at risk,” says Debbie Brown, CEO of HSFM.

*The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba, a volunteer-based health charity, leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke and reducing their impact through the advancement of research and its application, the promotion of healthy living and advocacy.*

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