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## Colorectal Cancer Screening Program Now Available Province-Wide

All Saskatchewan residents between the ages of 50 and 74 now have access to a potentially life-saving screening program, with today's announcement that the Colorectal Cancer Screening Program has been launched in the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region. Through the program, residents can be screened for colorectal cancer with an easy-to-use in-home test.

"The completion of our expansion of the Colorectal Cancer Screening Program province-wide will make a difference in the lives of patients and families," Health Minister Dustin Duncan said. "Colorectal cancer is the second most diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of death, yet it is 90 per cent preventable and easily treated when found in early stages."

The Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer is a population-based screening program of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. It is estimated that the screening program will cost approximately \$3.6 million annually now that it is available province wide.

"Working closely with the health regions and the ministry to deliver the screening program has been essential to the success of the program," said Scott Livingstone, CEO of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. "Together we are helping save lives. Approximately 70 per cent of the people whose tests come back as abnormal turn out to have cancer, precancerous or benign tumors or polyps detected."

The program uses a fecal immunochemical test (FIT), which looks for blood in the stool that is not visible to the naked eye. There are no dietary or medication restrictions, and only one sample is needed. The test kits are mailed or delivered to eligible residents aged 50-74. Once the in-home test is completed, the participant uses the supplied postage-paid envelope to mail the sample to the Saskatchewan Disease Control Laboratory for analysis.

"Having this screening program available to our residents is another step towards creating healthy people and communities," said Gord Dobrowolsky, chairperson of the Prince Albert Parkland Regional Health Authority. "We fully believe that early detection saves lives. We encourage eligible residents to participate in the program."

Since the program launched in September 2009, more than 132,500 residents have been invited to participate in the screening program and more than 47,000 have participated by using the FIT.

In 2012, approximately 730 new cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed in Saskatchewan and an estimated 280 people died from the disease.

For information on the Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer or the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency visit [www.saskcancer.ca](http://www.saskcancer.ca).

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