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## New mammography unit open at Shuswap Lake General Hospital

**SALMON ARM** – A new mammography unit has opened at Shuswap Lake General Hospital to serve the Shuswap region. The site provides free screening mammograms for [eligible people](#) and diagnostic mammograms for those needing further testing, allowing patients to access year-round care closer to home.

"Increased access to mammography screening is an important part of supporting women in monitoring their breast health," said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. "B.C.'s provincial breast cancer screening program, which is the first of its kind in the country, has enabled more than 500,000 to have breast screenings in the last two years across the province, and this new unit will further increase access for people in the Shuswap area."

Historically, screening mammograms in the Shuswap have been provided through BC Cancer's mobile coaches, offering over 1,500 screenings annually. Starting this fall, BC Cancer's essential breast screening services will be delivered in a dedicated mammography unit right within Shuswap Lake General Hospital in Salmon Arm.

"The new mammography unit means patients can access screening and diagnostic services at Shuswap Lake General Hospital and eliminates the need to travel to other communities like Kamloops or Vernon for this service. This is a significant step in the ongoing effort to improve access to rural health care," said Susan Brown, Interior Health president and CEO. "Early detection is key in the fight against breast cancer, and this initiative underscores the commitment of all involved agencies to the well-being of people in the Shuswap."

"It's never been easier to make mammograms a part of your regular routine," said Dr. Kim Chi, chief medical officer, BC Cancer. "Screening mammograms can help to find breast cancer when lumps are still too small to feel, before the cancer spreads and when there is the best chance of a cure. For the one in eight women who will develop breast cancer in their lifetimes, screening mammography can be lifesaving."

The mammography unit project cost \$2.3 million and is a collaborative effort between the Shuswap Hospital Foundation, North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District, Interior Health, BC Cancer / Provincial Health Services Authority.

"Our top priority is to enhance health-care access and deliver exceptional services tailored to the specific needs of our community," said Dr. Darren Lorenz, president, Shuswap Hospital Foundation. "This

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Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tsilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

development is a testament to the dedication and commitment of our local funding partners, who share our vision of improving health-care accessibility for all."

As part of their fundraising campaign, the Shuswap Hospital Foundation also contributed to a new CT scanner that cost \$2.1 million, replacing the existing CT scanner that was installed in 2010. The new, premium CT scanner has been in operation since November 2021 and has been an essential diagnostic tool that allows health-care workers to see detailed images of organs, bones, soft tissues and blood vessels. Since being opened to patients, approximately 11,500 scans have been completed.

In total, the Shuswap Hospital Foundation contributed \$3.3 million and the regional hospital district contributed \$1.1 million between the two projects.

"Our foremost mission has always been to enhance health-care facilities and accessibility for our community and region," said Kevin Acton, North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District chair. "We are proud to support this initiative and look forward with optimism to further enhancements and improvements in health care for our community."

Upon opening, the site will prioritize diagnostic mammography to address community and regional waitlists. Screening mammograms will be offered at the site beginning Nov. 6, with eligible patients being able to book appointments through BC Cancer's Breast Screening Program by calling 1-800-663-9203.

Determine if screening mammogram is right for you by using the [Breast Cancer Screening Decision Aid](#).

- 30 -