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THOMSON CENTRE TO RE-OPEN

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers today announced that the Thomson Centre will re-open for use as a continuing care facility.

“I am pleased to announce that this government will be opening 44 beds in the Thomson Centre, including palliative care beds,” Cathers said. “This will address the wait list for Yukoners who need residential care support, and alleviate the situation that has developed over the past few months at the hospital where acute care beds are used for continuing care.” The minister said the facility is targeted to re-open six months from now.

Improvements and upgrades will be required prior to the facility’s opening. This includes upgrading the nurse call system and purchasing beds and equipment. In addition, the facility will have to be staffed.

“Reopening Thomson Centre as a long term care facility will allow us to address our immediate needs and give us time to address our future needs,” Cathers said. He added the department will begin a process next year to work with seniors and Yukoners with disabilities on planning for continuing care requirements down the road.

Thomson Centre will also include a palliative care unit. Funding has been approved under the Territorial Health Access Fund (THAF) for a palliative care coordinator and a palliative care volunteer coordinator. These two positions will work with continuing care staff in designing the palliative care unit.

Elvira Knaack, acting chief executive officer of Whitehorse General Hospital, said there was support from the hospital for today’s announcement.

“We have many pressures within the health community and reopening Thomson Centre as a continuing care facility is the best fit for the most pressing need,” she said. Knaack added she was looking forward to working with the department on the reopening of Thomson Centre, and to addressing other health pressures within the hospital, including placement of mental health beds and changes to the Emergency Department.

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