

Aug. 9, 2006

www.capitalhealth.ca

Capital Health becomes first health region to dial into emergency communication system

Edmonton, Canada – Capital Health is introducing a new communication system that will help the region prepare and respond quicker to large scale emergencies. The Emergency Manager Rapid Notification system is an interactive program that can securely call, e-mail, fax, or text message Capital Health executives, clinical staff and staff at risk in cases of emergencies or disasters. It may also be used in day to day operations to notify emergency rooms to prepare for a mass casualty event.

“Communication is critical during an emergency. This system will enable our emergency management teams to respond quickly to staff to provide the necessary medical treatment to those in need,” says Dr. Gerry Predy, Capital Health's Vice-President for Public Health and Medical Officer of Health. “The notification system allows Capital Health the ability to get a live message or pre-recorded message out to our staff at critical times,” says Dr. Predy.

Capital Health recently selected TELUS to provide the system.

“I commend Capital Health for being the first health authority in Canada to harness the power of geomatics as a communications tool to solve critical issues in health care,” said Joe Natale, president of TELUS Business Solutions. “TELUS’ GeoExplorer will allow Capital Health to more quickly access essential personnel when lives are at stake during the first few critical hours of an emergency.”

Part of the computer software includes a mapping and incident logging component that will be linked into Emergency Management Alberta Operations Centre. It will allow Capital Health’s emergency response team to pinpoint areas on a map and send a message to all those who are affected by an emergency in the area. Information can also be shared to assist in disasters and large scale events such as a possible influenza pandemic. The computer system can make thousands of calls in one hour. It’s the same software used during Alberta’s floods in 2005.

Capital Health’s new system will be in operation by the end of September.

-30-

About Capital Health

Capital Health in Edmonton is Canada's largest health region and is affiliated with the University of Alberta, providing integrated health services to one million residents in Edmonton and the surrounding area. Capital Health acts as a referral centre to central and northern Alberta, the North and the Prairies, providing specialized services such as trauma and burn treatment, organ transplants and high-risk obstetrics.

Contact: Jeannette LaBrie, Public Affairs: Phone (780) 401-2646; Pager (780) 445-7285