

Inside Healthcare

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The Medicine Hat & District Health Foundation Board of Trustees and staff wish you a Happy New Year! As you have noticed, the chinook wind of change is starting to blow strong in Medicine Hat.

You may have heard the new wing of the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital is complete and the keys have now been turned over to Alberta Health Services. There is still much to be completed before departments can start moving in. There are many deficiencies that need to be repaired, the space needs to be cleaned to hospital standards and the departments need to be comfortable with their new space. It's very important that the staff are comfortable with their new surroundings including where all the equipment and supplies are.

The very first department that is going to move is a department you will never see - Medical Device Reprocessing (MDR). This is the department that cleans all of the hospital's medical devices and equipment. Without MDR, the hospital wouldn't be performing surgeries or procedures.

They are a vital department tucked within the first floor of the hospital. You will never see them because it is a very controlled environment, however, MDR has some interesting equipment. One piece, looks and functions like a walk-in dishwasher. There's another which looks like a big washing machine that is used to clean all the different types of scopes. Staff in MDR work hard making sure that every millimeter of equipment is spotless and sterilized. Sometimes this even involves using a toothbrush to get in the tiniest of spaces.

Behind the scenes, equipment and medical devices that require cleaning and sterilizing are delivered on carts contained in plastic bins. However, once in their expanded space they will have an improved medical device transport elevator. The elevator moves equipment from the Surgical Suite to MDR without anyone ever leaving the department. Departments such as Endoscopy will have their own cleaning area within the department reducing the need to transport the equipment altogether.

There are many exciting changes coming to the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. It is going to be a busy year full of change. Please remember to thank all these hardworking professionals who are making it happen.

Heather Bach is the executive director of the Medicine Hat & District Health Foundation. The Health Foundation supports all AHS related equipment and programs within Medicine Hat and area. If you would like to support any of the current needs please call the Health Foundation at 403 528 8133 or visit www.myhealthfoundation.ca