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For immediate release

Government investing \$3.7 million over five years for children with complex needs

Health and Wellness

Government will be investing \$3.75 million over five years to increase and enhance services to children with complex health needs says Minister of Health and Wellness Doug Currie.

“We recognize that there is a growing demand for pediatric services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and preschool autism assessment,” said Minister Currie.

“Although we know early access to pediatric health services can be the driving force that helps form a child’s development in areas such as speech, vision, hearing, cognition and mobility, the current wait times are simply not acceptable. With this investment, we expect to see a measurable reduction in wait times right away.”

A multi-year plan has been developed to meet immediate requirements for program enhancements to pediatric health services. The initial investment of \$750,000 per year will enable enhancements to the following services:

- Pediatric occupational and physiotherapy
- School therapy service
- Orthoptics – a specialized service that provides all aspects of orthoptic(eye) examinations on children and adults, including diagnosis and treatment
- Preschool autism assessments
- Speech language pathology and audiology

“I am pleased that government is taking steps to address specific needs for these children,” said Dr. Richard Wedge, CEO for Health PEI. “One of our strategic goals as an organization is to continue to make strides in improving access to health care services for children with complex health needs. Health PEI will be taking immediate action to reduce wait times for these services.”

Minister Currie also announced the creation of a permanent position for a Children with Complex Needs Coordinator.

“We know that early intervention can significantly improve health outcomes for children with complex health needs but navigating the system can often be frustrating for parents,” said Minister Currie. “The new coordinator will help facilitate a more streamlined approach to ensure our children receive the best and most appropriate care possible.”

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