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## PROVINCE ELIMINATES FEES FOR DOZENS OF DOCTORS' OFFICE PROCEDURES

### **New Agreement to Eliminate \$1.8 Million in Tray Fees Each Year: Oswald**

Manitobans will no longer pay 'tray fees' out of their own pockets for common procedures provided in doctors' offices such as getting stitches or having a cyst removed, Health Minister Theresa Oswald announced today.

"In partnership with the province's physicians, we are eliminating dozens of tray fees that many Manitobans were routinely required to pay following a procedure at a doctor's office," Oswald said.

The minister said patients will no longer be required to pay up-front fees for disposable supplies when they visit the doctor for common but necessary procedures. Effective today, physicians will claim tray fees directly from the provincial government when a procedure requires disposable items such as suturing materials, sterilized equipment or a local anesthetic.

The province anticipates the elimination of tray fees will save Manitobans approximately \$1.8 million per year in out-of-pocket expenses.

There are three fee categories covering dozens of insured services that will now be payable by the government:

- endoscopic tray fees for 11 types of procedures such as colonoscopies,
- major tray fees for 90 types of procedures such as stitches and skin biopsies, and
- minor tray fees for 33 types of procedures such as treating small cysts and abscesses.

Patients will continue to be billed for disposables used in the provision of uninsured medical services as well as the supply of take-home medical devices such as orthotics, slings, casts and splints, and private facility fees. Patients will also continue to be responsible for the cost of prescription medications.

The elimination of tray fees comes thanks to a landmark agreement between the province and Manitoba doctors.

The minister noted the organization representing the province's physicians, Doctors Manitoba, has had ongoing communication with its members to ensure physicians' compliance in eliminating all current tray fees. A series of enforcement provisions are in place to ensure the fees are no longer levied on Manitoba patients.

