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**EXPANSION OF VIDEO-CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY
DELIVERS HEALTH CARE CLOSER TO HOME FOR RURAL MANITOBANS: OSWALD**

**Grandview, McCreary
To Join Network**

GRANDVIEW. Expansion of video-conferencing technology that links health-care providers to patients will ensure rural Manitobans will get the care they need closer to home, Health Minister Theresa Oswald announced here today.

Linking people to health-care expertise at a distance reduces their travel time while increasing their access to specialized services,+said Oswald. These communities and the region have worked hard to make this expansion possible to ensure quality services are available for area residents.+

At least 40 clinical specialties can be accessed using the MBTelehealth Network, such as speech language pathology, dermatology, neurology and cardiology.

These new sites will further reduce travel to access a number of clinical health services for residents in Parkland, while expanding access to continuing education and other meetings for physicians and staff across the Parkland,+said Liz Loewen, director of MBTelehealth.

The two new sites brings to six the total number of active MBTelehealth sites in the Parkland region. Two Parkland sites came online in 2002 in Dauphin (central district) and Swan River (northern district). The program was expanded to Ste. Rose (eastern district) in 2005 and Roblin (western district) in 2007.

With the addition of Grandview in the west and McCreary in the east, we have ensured that our region has a great balance in terms of site placement,+said Brenda Slobozian, vice-president of community health services for the Parkland Regional Health Authority. This provides new opportunities for our region as we continue to enhance service delivery and quality of care for our patients, residents and clients.+

The minister noted this expansion resulted from extraordinary community contributions and support. Community organizations from Grandview and McCreary raised the funds needed to purchase the necessary equipment for each new site.

MBTelehealth is part of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's Manitoba eHealth Program. With this expansion, 74 communities and 21 Winnipeg locations now have a MBTelehealth site. This includes 16 First Nations communities, as well as at least one site in each of the province's regional health authorities. More information on MBTelehealth is available at www.mbtelehealth.ca.

The new sites are expected to be operational by late fall in 2009.