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## Nova Scotia premier asks Trudeau for funding for trouble plagued hospital



HALIFAX – Nova Scotia's premier says he has asked Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for funding to replace Halifax's trouble-plagued Victoria General hospital.

Stephen McNeil said he spoke with Trudeau about the hospital during a one-on-one meeting Saturday

at the provincial Liberal party's annual general meeting in Halifax.

McNeil said he told Trudeau that the hospital is Atlantic Canada's largest cancer treatment facility and a major health-care provider in the region.

"We know that this is the hub. This is where specialized services are delivered," said McNeil just after his meeting at a hotel in downtown Halifax.

"But there's also lots of room for the federal government on innovation. When it comes to cancer treatment and other specialized treatments that we have here, the federal government could play a role in helping us make sure that we secure and can deliver the high-quality public health care that Nova Scotians have come to expect."

Public pressure has been building to replace the aging structure, which has been plagued by a series of problems including floods, heating issues and an infestation of bedbugs.

The provincial government set aside \$26.5 million for hospital improvements and equipment purchases in its 2016-17 capital budget announced earlier this year, which includes \$1.5 million for planning around the relocation of services from the Victoria General.

McNeil said he and Trudeau also discussed immigration issues on Saturday.

McNeil, who has long urged Ottawa to increase or axe the provincial cap on immigrants for Nova Scotia, said he told the prime minister the province can handle more citizens.

"Our population is at an all-time high this year, which is a wonderful thing, and that's through immigration," he said.

The government has been negotiating increases in its cap for immigrants coming to the province. In 2015, Ottawa agreed to raise the cap by 300, from 1,050 to 1,350.

"It's our expectation that we'll see a change in that number in the fall," said McNeil, hinting at a further increase on the cap for 2016.

In a brief statement to media during a photo opportunity after the meeting, Trudeau commended McNeil's government for its role in welcoming Syrian refugees to Canada.



 Aly Thomson – Canadian Press / April 2, 2016 /

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