

MPI to spend \$2M on daycare ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Manitoba Public Insurance is spending \$2 million to transform indoor parking spaces at its cityplace building into a daycare, but the insurer insists the move won't affect the Autopac rates of everyday Manitobans.

A 102-space daycare centre, to be operated by the Provincial Employees Care For Kids Co-op, is set to open in the MPI-owned cityplace office tower in June 2012. MPI is paying to retrofit space for the daycare in a spot currently occupied by 35 revenue-generating indoor parking stalls. The daycare will also have some outdoor space on the rooftop.

MPI has about 700 employees in the building, and 60% of the new daycare's spaces will be reserved for their children. The other 40% are available to the general public.

Colin Craig, Manitoba director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, called the daycare "a pretty big perk" for employees of a Crown corporation with a monopoly on auto insurance.

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Brian Smiley, a spokesman for MPI, said the \$2 million is coming from MPI's competitive lines of business and won't affect its monopoly business.

"It will have zero impact on the basic Autopac ratepayer," Smiley said, adding the lost revenue from the parking stalls should be made up by MPI's nearby outdoor lots, which are not currently operating at full capacity.

The Provincial Employees Care For Kids Co-op is a 26-year-old non-profit group that already operates two daycare centres for employees of the provincial government and its Crown corporations, including MPI. The current centres also reserve a portion of their spaces for the general public.

Irene Semaniuk, the Co-op's executive director, said they've started accepting applications for the new cityplace daycare, and expects demand to be high.

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-reprinted from the Winnipeg Sun

Region: Manitoba ^[2]

Tags: workplace child care ^[3]

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