

Saskatchewan

'Cobalt bomb' officially unveiled at Saskatoon museum

CBC News · Posted: Dec 04, 2011 6:43 PM CT | Last Updated: December 4, 2011

The scientific community celebrates the 60th anniversary of the invention of the Cobalt bomb, the first machine to use radiation in the treatment of cancer 3:15

A Saskatoon museum is celebrating its newest addition: the so-called "cobalt bomb," which was created 60 years ago to treat deep-tissue cancer.

Invented in Saskatoon in 1951, the Cobalt-60 Beam Therapy Unit was the first machine to use radiation in the treatment of cancer.

The original machine is now on display at the Western Development Museum. The exhibit officially opened on Sunday.

"It's an incredible example of innovation in Saskatchewan relating to health care," Joan Champ, the museum's executive director, told CBC News.

The machine's well-known nickname was coined by a Canadian magazine during the Cold War, Champ explained.

"The atomic bomb was on everyone's minds and Maclean's magazine did a feature article on the cobalt unit back in the early '50s and they nicknamed it the 'cobalt bomb.' And that nickname kind of stuck," she said.

While the official opening ceremony took place on Sunday, the unit has been on display at the museum for the past couple of months.