
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 15 2004

Newly expanded ER, ambulatory care, and renal facilities to provide better care for patients at PGRH

Expanded emergency, ambulatory care, and renal services facilities at Prince George Regional Hospital will provide many benefits to patients and care providers. These units will be opening in the days and weeks ahead, as part of the \$50 million PGRH redevelopment project that's modernizing and expanding Northern BC's largest acute care hospital.

"Our government is committed to enhancing health care in the North, so patients can get the care they need, where they need it," said Advanced Education Minister and Prince George Mount Robson MLA Shirley Bond. "This expansion will benefit patients, local health providers, and students in health disciplines. The redevelopment of PGRH is also key to the success of the Northern Medical Program, as we work to nearly double the number of physicians trained in BC every year."

"The redevelopment of Prince George Regional Hospital will firmly establish Prince George as a key regional referral centre and a leading health care provider in British Columbia. Expanding these facilities will ensure that patients in the North have accessible, quality care in a modern facility," said Pat Bell, Minister of State and MLA for Prince George North.

The redevelopment of the emergency, ambulatory care, and renal services departments has been underway since 2003, following the completion of the facility's Patient Care Addition. The Government of British Columbia (60 per cent) and the Fraser Fort George Regional Hospital District (40 per cent) have funded the project.

Key features of the new areas include:

- A doubling of the space available to care for emergency patients, along with specific enhancements to offer the most effective emergency care for patients;
- A consolidation of ambulatory care into one area, to provide an up-to-date area for health providers to perform diagnostic procedures and minor surgery; and
- The addition of six new hemodialysis stations (for a total of 20 chairs), along with a consolidation of renal services (Transplant Clinic, Peritoneal Dialysis Clinic and Chronic Kidney Disease Clinic) into one bright new space very close to the hospital's main entrance.

"There is an exciting new direction in health services in Prince George and the North," said Prince George Mayor and Fraser Fort George Regional Hospital District Chair Colin Kinsley, who recently chaired the UNBC Northern Medical Program Community Action Group. "We're seeing that direction in the completion of this significant upgrade to PGRH, on-going enhancements in medical equipment, and the pending start-up of the Northern Medical Program."

“It is important to enhance hemodialysis care, with the need for dialysis services in BC increasing by eight to ten per cent every year,” said Dr. Adeera Levin, Executive Director of the BC Provincial Renal Agency. “PGRH’s expanded hemodialysis area will provide more effective service to patients with end-stage kidney failure, while acting as a strong base to serve satellite hemodialysis centers in Fort St. John and Terrace.”

“Health professionals at PGRH devoted a great deal of time and energy into planning the renovations and expansion at the hospital,” said Roseline Ferré, a director on Northern Health’s Board. “The redevelopment of the hospital is providing an excellent environment for patients and staff: one that we expect will continue to be a significant magnet as we recruit new doctors, nurses, and paramedical professionals to work in the region’s largest acute care facility.”

Attached:

- Facts about the PGRH ER, Ambulatory Care, and Hemodialysis expansion
- A Growing Epidemic: BC Provincial Renal Agency backgrounder

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BACKGROUND

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Details on the expanded ER, ambulatory care, and renal services facilities at Prince George Regional Hospital

Overall

- These renovations are part of a \$50 million redevelopment project at PGRH, intended to improve patient care, modernize the facility to benefit care providers, and provide more training space in advance of the Northern Medical Program
 - This project is jointly funded by the Ministry of Health Services (60 per cent) and the Fraser Fort George Regional Hospital District (40 per cent)
 - Northern Health has planned and co-ordinated the construction project
 - The Spirit of the North Healthcare Foundation will be providing additional funding when renovations to the paediatrics ward begin
 - Last September, the new Patient Care Addition and atrium at the facility were officially opened to the public

Emergency

- The emergency room renovation has involved expanding the department from 630 square meters to 1,430 square meters (including acute emerg, minor treatment, and the new ambulance garage)
- This expansion will provide the following amenities/benefits:
 - A new ambulance garage, so care providers don't have to brave the elements to treat patients when they first arrive at the hospital.
 - This is the only garage of its type in the province
 - A new decontamination area, immediately available from the new ambulance garage
 - A new trauma resuscitation area that can accommodate four acutely injured patients, helping fulfill the facility's role as a regional trauma centre
 - In the temporary acute emerg area, one or two bays have been used for trauma resuscitation
 - Two new isolation rooms for patients with infectious diseases
 - Two new seclusion rooms for violent patients
 - A much larger communications centre/work area
 - Separate triage and clerk areas, to better maintain patient confidentiality
 - Dedicated waiting space for minor treatment and acute emerg patients, and better separation between those patients
 - More washroom space (up from one washroom for men/one for women, to seven for clients and three for staff)
- Since the emergency room renovation began last August, emergency facilities have occupied what will become the hospital's new intensive care unit and regional cancer care unit
 - The relocation of the ICU and regional cancer care unit into their new permanent space will take place later this year
 - Upon completion of the moves, all critical care services (ICU/CCU, emergency, medical imaging, labour/delivery, and the Operating Room) will be located on the same floor

Renal Services

- The hemodialysis expansion will involve the addition of six new hemodialysis stations, raising the total number of dialysis chairs to 20
 - This is part of an overall expansion of dialysis services provided by the BC Provincial Renal Agency
 - 14 stations will be available for conventional hemodialysis while 6 stations will be devoted to limited hemodialysis care.
- The new renal services area is located in an expanded area that used to house Northern Health's administration offices
 - Hemodialysis space will grow from about 400 square meters to 760 square meters
 - Renal services such as the Transplant Clinic, Peritoneal Dialysis Clinic and Chronic Kidney Disease Clinic currently provided in different areas throughout PGRH will be consolidated into one area
 - The new unit will be much closer to the hospital's new main entrance, providing easier access for patients

Ambulatory Care

- The ambulatory care area will involve an expansion of the physical space used to assess and treat patients on an outpatient basis.
- Ambulatory Care consists of:
 - The procedure suite for endoscopy procedures
 - The minor surgery area
 - IV therapy Program
 - The Plaster room
 - The Ophthalmic Unit
 - Visiting regional clinics
- Ambulatory care services will be consolidated into one area between the new ER and Renal unit, easily accessible from the hospital's new main entrance

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BC Renal Agency
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

BACKGROUND

A Growing Epidemic

- An estimated 145,000 British Columbians may suffer from some degree of kidney disease.
- The need for dialysis services is growing at a rate of 8-10 percent per year.
- The cost for dialysis is between \$25,000 - \$45,000 per patient annually.

Risk Factors for Kidney Disease

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Family history of kidney disease
- Known atherosclerotic disease
- Individuals of Asian and South Asian descent

Early symptoms

Note: Many people do not have symptoms until the disease progresses.

- Foamy or bloody urine
- Headaches
- Frequent night time urination
- Puffy eyes or ankles

Symptoms as the disease progresses

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Puffy eyes or ankles
- Restless legs
- Anorexia
- Polyuria (large volume/increased frequency of urination; seen in diabetes)
- Itching

Kidney Disease and Kidney Failure

As part of the body's waste-removal system, healthy kidneys work primarily to clean the blood of wastes produced through food intake and metabolic function, as well as excess water and acid. Kidneys can fail suddenly due to trauma or critical illness, but more commonly kidney failure is caused by a chronic condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure. There are effective treatments that can help to manage the various stages of kidney disease. If kidney disease is diagnosed and addressed early, certain lifestyle and dietary changes, along with medications, may slow the progression of the disease and prevent complications in other body systems. However, if the kidney function continues to deteriorate to the point of failure, dialysis or transplantation are required for survival.