
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services
BC Provincial Renal Agency

FUNDING FOR KIDNEY SERVICES TO BENEFIT BC PATIENTS

VICTORIA – Government investment totaling \$15.5 million last year is expanding access to treatments for people with kidney disease, announced Health Minister Colin Hansen today.

“We responded to a growing need for this life support service by providing additional funding to purchase equipment, expand five centres across B.C. and enhance kidney services for patients,” said Hansen. “B.C. is building on its leadership in kidney care in North America. This is one more step towards ensuring our patients get the care they need when and where they need it.”

The \$15.5 million funding increase included \$9.1 million for ongoing operations and \$6.4 million in one-time funding for capital expansion projects. It brought the total renal operating funding from the B.C. government to the Provincial Health Services Authority and the regional health authorities to \$97.4 million in 2003/04. The operating budget increased by over 10 per cent from 2002/03, resulting in a 37 per cent increase in renal stations throughout the province since June 2001. The five centers being expanded are located in the Abbotsford Community Unit, Prince George Regional Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital, Surrey Memorial Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital.

Kidney disease is one of the fastest growing health concerns in B.C., in part due to our aging population. An estimated 145,000 British Columbians have some degree of kidney disease. The need for dialysis services for patients with severe kidney failure is growing at a rate of eight to 10 percent annually with resulting negative impacts on quality of life for patients and significant costs to B.C. taxpayers.

“Patients with kidney failure must receive dialysis to survive,” said Dr. Adeera Levin, Executive Director of the BC Provincial Renal Agency. “It’s critical that we expand services in communities where the number of patients with end-stage kidney disease has increased significantly. As well, we must be more innovative to address the growing incidence of kidney disease, from early identification and improved coordination of care to empowerment of patients to be more active players in the management of their disease.”

The BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA) is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority that plans and coordinates the care of people with kidney disease throughout the province to ensure equitable access to high quality care.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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