
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

B.C. TO INVEST \$46.3M IN PATIENT CARE IN NANAIMO

NANAIMO – Health Services Minister George Abbott and Nanaimo-Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon announced \$46.3 million to double the size of the emergency department, build more treatment rooms and add a renal dialysis centre at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, creating over 270 jobs.

“Investments in modernizing and upgrading hospitals and facilities across the province are building a strong public health-care system, while helping to stimulate the economy and create jobs,” said Abbott. “An enhanced emergency department and renal dialysis centre will benefit patients for years to come on central Vancouver Island.”

The construction at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital will expand and relocate the existing emergency department. Work on the emergency department is expected to begin in June 2009 and cost \$36.9 million.

“The creation of more jobs in Nanaimo is good news – and central and north island residents will benefit from improved and expanded emergency care and also kidney dialysis care closer to home,” said Cantelon. “Since 2001, we have invested more than \$40 million in building patient care including surgical, palliative care unit renovations, pediatric outpatient clinic and perinatal expansion to ensure Nanaimo Regional General Hospital delivers the best patient care possible for patients for many years.”

The emergency department expansion will more than double the size of the existing emergency department from 963 square metres (10,365 square feet) to 2,300 square metres (24,600 square feet) increasing treatment rooms from 24 to 41. The expansion will ensure the hospital can keep up with demand, currently seeing 48,000 patients a year, projected to increase to 56,000 by 2021 compared to 15,000 when it was first built.

“The expansion will improve emergency care for Nanaimo’s growing population,” said Jac Kreut, VIHA’s board chair. “A new emergency department aligns with the significant improvements that have been made at NRGH in recent years, including new ORs and a maternal wing, while also supporting our commitment to enhanced psychiatric services at NRGH.”

The full-service renal dialysis centre on the first floor of the new perinatal wing will see the completion of shelled-in space to serve residents of central and north Vancouver Island who have advanced kidney disease and require either inpatient or outpatient care. Work on the 1,100-square-metre (12,000-square-foot) renal dialysis centre is expected to begin in July 2009.

The provincial share of the \$36.9 million for the emergency department is \$20.1 million with the remaining funding coming from other sources, including the Nanaimo Regional Hospital District (NRHD) and the Nanaimo and District Hospital Foundation.

“The Nanaimo and District Hospital Foundation is proud to be a partner in these important projects,” said Ian Thompson, foundation chair. “We look forward to working with the generous community of Nanaimo to raise funds to support the improved patient care the new emergency department and renal unit will bring.”

The renovations for the dialysis centre will cost around \$9.4 million and will be split 60 / 40 between the Province and NRHD and includes \$1.5 million for renal equipment. The first phase was completed in 2008 and cost \$4.3 million to prepare the site for the centre completion.

“The Renal Centre at the hospital will improve access to hemodialysis services for kidney patients through an in-centre Renal Dialysis Unit and a Home Dialysis Clinic,” said Dr. Rachel Carson, nephrologist at NRGH. “Patients and families will benefit from a reduction in travel cost and disruption to their lives as currently dialysis patients who are not able to dialyse in a community facility or are admitted to hospital need to travel to Victoria.”

“Continued expansion of services at our hospital will not only support our citizens today, but for years to come,” said NRHD chair Joe Stanhope. “We are pleased to be a partner in building patient care for a new emergency department and a renal centre.”

The emergency department renovations will be designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification as part of the Province’s commitment to a greener and more sustainable future.

Nanaimo Regional General Hospital’s new emergency department and renal centre is part of an overall, three-year, \$14-billion capital infrastructure program, which includes \$2.5 billion for capital spending in the health sector, supported by the Province, which will create up to 88,000 jobs and help build vital public infrastructure in every region of B.C. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/infrastructure for more information.

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