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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services  
Vancouver Island Health Authority

### **PATIENTS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW RENAL UNIT IN NANAIMO**

NANAIMO – Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon today officially opened the \$9.4-million renal unit at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH), a facility that will benefit kidney patients across Central and Northern Vancouver Island.

“We are committed to ensuring patients have access to the services they need as close to home as possible, and it is great news that residents of this region with advanced kidney disease will no longer need to travel to Victoria if they need hemodialysis services, said Falcon. “At the same time, by promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle and prevention, we are proud to be making significant strides in the early detection and treatment of renal disease.”

The cost of the new facility was shared between the Province, the Nanaimo Regional Hospital District and the Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation. The project was announced in April 2009, and was completed on time and on budget.

“We are proud of government’s commitment to increase dialysis service in communities across the province, including this new renal unit at NRGH, which will benefit residents of Central and Northern Vancouver Island for years to come,” said Comox Valley MLA, Don McRae.

The 1,100-square-metre renal centre will begin taking patients on Sept. 20, 2010, and is the only in-patient dialysis unit on Vancouver Island outside of Victoria. The centre will provide improved access to hemodialysis services for patients who need inpatient or outpatient kidney dialysis care.

The centre is located on the first floor of the \$16.5-million perinatal unit that opened in September 2007. The unit houses 18 hemodialysis stations in an airy, spacious setting, and a professional facility for home dialysis. As well, there are two negative pressure rooms in the in-patient area for infection control.

“Patients not able to dialyse at a community facility, or those who require hospital admission, would have needed to travel to Victoria,” said Jac Kreut, Vancouver Island Health Authority board chair. “The new facility will reduce travel time and thereby be less disruptive to patients’ lives.”

The VIHA renal program serves approximately 140 dialysis patients and 450 patients with early-stage kidney disease who live in the Central and North Island region. Any of these patients may need the services of the NRGH renal unit at some point and some will receive care at this site on a regular basis.

“Over the past ten years, I have needed to travel to Victoria regularly for hemodialysis-related issues and many hospitalizations,” said Campbell River resident and kidney patient Gary Pollock. “Having this new facility so close to home will reduce a lot of stress and travel time for me and my family.”

“Our new in-hospital dialysis unit features state-of-the-art design and equipment. In addition to being an attractive, light-filled space for patients to come for dialysis treatments, it will also support NRGH physicians and surgeons in other specialties in caring for more critically ill hospital patients locally,” said Dr. Rachel Carson, nephrologist.

Over the life of the project, the building of the new renal centre provided more than 60 construction jobs. Additionally, the project is providing continued support to the medical community with the hiring of two new nephrologists, for a total of four in the community.

“With the new renal unit we are continuing to establish NRGH as a full-service health-care facility where residents can quickly get the care they need,” said Joe Stanhope, chair, Regional Hospital District of Nanaimo. “It is wonderful that we can now address the need for kidney and dialysis treatment in our growing communities of central and northern Vancouver Island.”

“Our Central Island communities have shown their generous support of the foundation’s goal to purchase dialysis equipment for the new renal unit,” said Leslie Sundby, board chair of the Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation. “We are already more than 60-per cent towards our target of \$540,000.”

The B.C. Provincial Renal Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, plans and monitors the delivery of provincewide kidney-care services.

The provincial government is making record investments in health-care facilities throughout the province. Over the next three years, British Columbia’s health-care system will benefit from investments such as new medical equipment and modernized health facilities as part of a \$2.6-billion, health-sector capital plan.

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