



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2011HLTH0037-000691
June 13, 2011

Ministry of Health
BC Renal Agency
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Patients benefit as Cumberland dialysis unit expands

CUMBERLAND – North Island residents living with chronic kidney failure today have improved access to hemodialysis now that a \$2.25-million project to expand the outpatient Cumberland Community Dialysis Facility is complete.

The expansion project includes a 370-square-metre addition to the existing building and can now accommodate up to 12 dialysis stations, double the six stations prior to the expansion. Currently, nine stations are in operation with capacity to add three additional dialysis stations as demand grows. Dialysis support space at the facility, including the nurses' station, has also been improved.

Funding for the expansion was provided by the Ministry of Health and the BC Renal Agency. The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) staffs and operates the facility. The annual operating cost of \$1.27 million is shared by the VIHA and the BC Renal Agency.

Approximately 38 kidney patients undergo hemodialysis at the Community Dialysis Facility each week. Hemodialysis is a procedure that cleans the blood by removing waste products and excess water, something the patient's kidneys can no longer do. Patients generally need three hemodialysis treatments each week in order to survive. Each treatment takes four hours.

If kidney disease is identified early it can often be managed through diet, medication and lifestyle adjustments, which can postpone or prevent the need for hemodialysis.

In May 2011, the Province launched the comprehensive \$68.7-million Healthy Families BC strategy, which will support British Columbians in managing their own health, reducing chronic disease, including kidney disease, and ensuring that pregnancy and support programs target the province's most vulnerable families.

Quotes:

Health Minister Michael de Jong –

“This newly expanded community dialysis unit is benefiting local families by helping to reduce travel time and improve access to life-saving dialysis services, and it is great news for this growing region that the facility has the capacity to add additional stations to help meet future health-care needs.”

Comox Valley MLA, Don McRae –

"This new unit reflects our commitment to ensure kidney patients have access to dialysis services as close to home as possible. This expanded unit will benefit patients and their families from the Comox Valley and North Island for years to come."

Dr. Adeera Levin, executive director, BC Provincial Renal Agency –

"Expansion projects such as this one in Cumberland ensure that we continue to meet the needs of patients with end stage kidney disease. At the same time, we must focus our efforts on early identification, improved co-ordination of care and empowerment of patients to be active players in the management of their disease."

Don Hubbard, VIHA board chair –

“The need for renal dialysis services is increasing on the North Island and this expansion ensures more people with chronic kidney failure can receive dialysis in a timely manner as close to home as possible.”

Dr. Robert Burns, executive medical director, VIHA Renal Services –

“The number of people diagnosed with kidney disease is growing at an alarming rate. Being aware of the risk factors and warning signs is important for prevention and early detection of kidney disease.”

Quick Facts:

- The VIHA renal program serves approximately 375 dialysis patients on Vancouver Island and over 1,800 patients with early stage kidney disease.
- Currently, 38 patients use the Cumberland Dialysis Facility and 113 early-stage kidney disease patients live on Northern Vancouver Island.
- The Community Dialysis Facility serves patients from Qualicum north, including Texada, Hornby and Cortes Islands, Campbell River and Mt. Waddington.
- Approximately one in 25 British Columbians has some level of kidney disease.
- Many individuals are not aware that they suffer from kidney disease because there are often no early symptoms.
- Risk factors for kidney disease include:
 - Having diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease.

- Having a family history of kidney disease.
- Belonging to specific high-risk ethnic groups (Aboriginal, Pacific Islanders, Asians or of African descent).
- Once a person has severe kidney failure, he or she must receive dialysis to stay alive.

Learn More:

Healthy Families BC: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

BC Renal Agency: www.bcrenalagency.ca

Kidney Foundation of Canada BC Branch: www.kidney.ca

Media Contacts: Ryan Jabs
Media Relations Manager
Ministry of Health
250 952-1887 (media line)

Val Wilson
VIHA Communications
250 739-6303

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect