

September 30, 2004

VCH breaks ground on site of world-class Academic Ambulatory Care Centre

VANCOUVER, BC – A partnership agreement between Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Access Health Vancouver (AHV) for the design, construction and maintenance of a world-class Academic Ambulatory Care Centre (AACC) at the site of Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) will benefit an estimated 600,000 patients annually.

The AACC will coordinate VGH's ambulatory patient care services – including specialty clinics, along with medical education, physician teaching clinics and research – at one site and will enhance patient care, access and scheduling by allowing easier coordination of multiple specialist visits, clinic visits and diagnostic testing for patients.

“This outstanding facility will be a world-class, one-stop access point for patients, built with a vision towards the future in health care,” said Colin Hansen, Minister of Health Services. “Patients will benefit from the latest in enhanced, well-integrated and coordinated health services.”

The agreement will see the construction of an 11-storey building on the corner of Oak Street and West 12th Avenue at an estimated design and construction cost of about \$95 million. VCH will make annual payments over 30 years to lease space as the major tenant. Excavation will take place in the fall of 2004 with construction to be completed in summer 2006.

“This is an exciting, innovative project for Vancouver Coastal Health and the province of British Columbia,” said Ida Goodreau, President and CEO of VCH. “The AACC will provide integrated health services for over 600,000 patients annually, and enable hundreds of students and health professionals to work collaboratively in a leading academic facility.”

The AACC will also be a valuable part of VCH's commitment to medical education. As a centralized facility, the AACC will enable the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Faculty of Medicine students to gain increased interaction between academics, researchers and practising clinicians.

"This facility provides much-needed academic space for the Faculty of Medicine," said Gavin Stuart, Dean of UBC's Faculty of Medicine. "It gives us another resource to enrich learning for students and residents and also provides a forum for faculty members to conduct health services research."

The new AACC building, which will replace several older buildings scheduled for demolition on the VGH site, is the first public-private partnership of its kind for VCH and is being constructed in partnership with the UBC Faculty of Medicine, with the support of the Ministry of Health Services and Partnerships British Columbia.

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By working with a private partner, VCH will be able to proceed with a valuable capital project in a manner that gains innovation and reduces government risk and taxpayer obligations over the life of the project.

The agreement achieves value for money by meeting health service delivery needs, providing a net present value savings to taxpayers of approximately \$15 million compared to a facility built, owned and operated wholly by the public sector, and by delivering economic benefits and innovations such as an expedited timeline for construction.

“Patients will benefit from an innovative, state-of-the art medical facility, while taxpayers are protected from the risk of cost overruns over the life of the project,” said local MLA for Vancouver-Fairview, and Minister of Finance, Gary Collins.

VCH will retain responsibility for the delivery of all health care services at the AACC, and gain access to much needed medical office, clinical and teaching space. VCH will be the major tenant in the building. VCH will retain ownership of both the site and the facility, and responsibility for operations and maintenance will revert to VCH at the end of the agreement. Any commercial or retail space leased – less than five percent - will support the patient care and academic focus of the building.

"The partnership will enable both parties to continue doing what they do best," said Paul Dunstan, Managing Director, of Access Health Vancouver. "We will finance, build and maintain a state-of-the-art facility, while Vancouver Coastal Health will focus on providing quality public health care."

AHV is a team of companies that was selected from the request for proposals (RFP) process because it demonstrated that it could deliver value for money, best practices in innovative design and construction financing, facility management and had world-wide experience in public-private partnership projects.

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is responsible for the delivery of \$1.9 billion in acute, residential and community care to over one million people in communities from Richmond through Vancouver, the North Shore, Sunshine Coast, Sea to Sky area, Powell River, Bella Bella and Bella Coola.

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