
NEWS RELEASE

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Interior Health

KELOWNA TO GET HEART CENTRE, MORE BEDS, DR. TRAINING

KELOWNA – Kelowna General Hospital will expand to provide future capacity for more patient beds, the Interior’s first-ever revascularization cardiac centre and a planned fourth site for the UBC Faculty of Medicine, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“We’re expanding on our initial plans to modernize hospitals in Kelowna and Vernon and building upon our goal to further benefit patients throughout the Okanagan now and over the next decade,” said Campbell. “This expansion will bring specialized heart services closer to home, support population growth and train more doctors in the southern Interior.”

The new, enhanced expansion plan builds on the announcement in May 2007 of a new 16,200-square-metre outpatient hospital and quadrupled emergency department at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) and a new 12,000-square-metre diagnostic and treatment building at Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH).

Once completed, two additional floors at Kelowna General Hospital will provide 7,740 square metres of additional in-patient space and accommodate approximately 90 to 150 beds for future patient care needs in the Okanagan. The first additional floor is expected to open by 2013 and the second by 2019.

Open heart surgery and coronary angioplasty, another type of revascularization, are currently provided by four hospitals in British Columbia: Royal Columbian Hospital, Royal Jubilee Hospital, St. Paul’s Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital. The fifth site at Kelowna General Hospital will increase capacity for heart services in B.C. and reduce trips to the Lower Mainland for patients who need advanced cardiac care services. It is expected to be operational by the end of 2012.

“The decision to add a cardiac centre for Kelowna General Hospital is one I’ve looked forward to for some time,” added Dr. Richard Hooper, cardiologist. “This important expansion will give the hospital the footprint it needs for cardiology services for the next 30 years.”

“I have long believed that cardiac care in Kelowna is essential for the growing needs of this community,” said Kelowna-Mission MLA Sindi Hawkins. “I am happy to say this new hospital expansion will now provide the necessary services that our patients deserve.”

“Training new doctors, expanding services and providing more beds to patients, our government is meeting the needs of its citizens,” said Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Al Horning. “The Okanagan is growing and we are investing in our community to build a prosperous future.”

“Building teaching and research capacity at Kelowna General Hospital in partnership with Interior Health will ensure that we can distribute UBC Faculty of Medicine programs and train more health care professionals for the province,” said Dr. Gavin Stuart, Dean of the UBC Faculty of Medicine. “This added capacity will help ensure we can better meet the diverse patient care needs of the region.”

“The added scope of this project clearly demonstrates our commitment to planning for tomorrow while providing quality health care today,” said Interior Health board chair Alan Dolman. “These improvements will not only enhance access to health care services for residents throughout the Interior, but will also demonstrate our support for our health care professionals now and in the years to come.”

“Each one of these new planned expansions will mean better care for Okanagan patients and a vastly improved facility that will attract more health care professionals,” said Robert Hobson, chair of the Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District. “Adding the additional inpatient space makes good planning sense, as it provides room for future expansion in the face of growing demand.”

“PHSA Cardiac Services works with all five regional health authorities to provide a planned and co-ordinated approach to benefit cardiac patients across B.C.,” said Wynne Powell, Provincial Health Services Authority board chair. “Building strong partnerships enhances the health care system as a whole and helps strengthen the case for measures like that announced today, which will further improve cardiac care in this growing region.”

The revised initial cost of the Kelowna and Vernon hospitals project is now estimated to be approximately \$250 million, which includes the additional inpatient floors. However, the final cost of the overall project is dependent on the bids that are submitted as a result of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and the market conditions throughout the competitive selection process.

The Province will contribute \$144 million for the Kelowna and Vernon hospital expansion projects, including the medical school renovations and expansion. The remainder of the funding is identified in the regional hospital districts’ capital plans and will include specified funding for the additional two storeys with the shelled-in space for more hospital beds.

The KGH expansion project is being pursued as a public-private partnership; that is, a private firm will design, build and maintain the facility. The Request for Proposals will be made available shortly to the three qualified proponent teams who were short-listed in June 2007 to participate.

British Columbia’s health system will benefit from investments such as expansion and modernization at Kelowna General Hospital and Vernon Jubilee Hospital over the next three years as part of the \$2.7-billion health sector capital plan.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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