



## NEWS RELEASE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2006

### **NEW ASSISTED LIVING UNITS COMING TO PORT ALBERNI**

VICTORIA – Seniors in Port Alberni will have improved access to local support services when ten additional assisted living units open in 2008.

Rainbow Gardens, which is operated by the West Coast Native Health Care Society, has been awarded a contract to build and operate the ten units in Port Alberni. The assisted living units will be financially supported by BC Housing through the Independent Living BC program (ILBC). In addition, BC Housing is financing a 10-bed private pay residential care component of this project.

"Assisted living gives seniors the ability to lead active and independent lives, while providing the health supports that meet their individual needs," said Health Minister George Abbott. "These new units in Port Alberni are part of the government's commitment to build 5,000 new residential care beds and assisted living units across the province by the end of 2008."

The VIHA RFP issued in January 2006 sought proposals from not-for-profit and private operators to build and operate 1,230 residential care beds and assisted living units throughout the health authority. This included approximately 930 additional net new beds and units by 2010 (727 of those to be completed by December 2008) as well as flexibility for approximately 300 replacement beds in the future.

"VIHA is committed to developing and enhancing services that support our growing and aging population," said Jac Kreut, Board Chair, Vancouver Island Health Authority. "These contracts are the last in a series of projects that will significantly increase our residential care and assisted living capacity, improve access to services for seniors and help reduce pressures on our emergency departments."

In the RFP, VIHA sought proposals for 10 assisted living units in Port Alberni – which have now been awarded to Rainbow Gardens.

VIHA received approximately 50 submissions to the RFP. Contracts have been awarded and development is underway for new residential care facilities in Campbell River, Courtenay, Parksville, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Duncan, Victoria and Sooke.

– 30 –

Contact: Anya Nimmon, Communications, Central Island 740-6980