



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY IN DUNCAN**

DUNCAN – The construction of a new \$38.7 million facility with 160 residential care beds and 50 assisted living units is one step closer to becoming a reality with the official groundbreaking ceremony for the project being held on the building site of the future Sunridge Estate community of care in Duncan today.

Health Minister George Abbott, along with representatives from the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), BC Housing, and Jones Development were on hand to participate in the ceremony.

“The new facility will add 210 publicly funded residential care beds and assisted living units in Duncan and that means Cowichan Valley residents will soon have more options when planning for their long term care needs,” said Minister Abbott. “Facilities like Sunridge Estate bring together two levels of care, allowing seniors to age in one place, staying in the same location even as their care needs change over time. These beds and units in Duncan further our commitment to build 5,000 net-new beds and units by the end of 2008.”

The Province, through BC Housing, will provide a housing and hospitality subsidy of up to \$277,200 annually for 15 of the 50 assisted living units, under the Independent Living BC (ILBC) program. ILBC is an innovative housing-for-health program that meets the needs of lower-income seniors and people with disabilities by providing a middle option between home support and residential care. Assisted living units are self-contained apartments where residents receive meals, housekeeping and laundry services, a 24-hour response system, and assistance with medications.

“This new facility is great news for seniors who require some assistance, but still wish to live independently” said Rich Coleman, Minister of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing. “Through our ILBC program, Duncan seniors have will now have more access to quality, affordable housing to meet their specific needs.”

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Vancouver Island Health Authority is providing approximately \$9.75 million annually to fund all 160 residential care beds and rent and hospitality services for 35 of the assisted living units. BC Housing is providing rent supplements and hospitality services for the remaining 15 assisted living units. The residential care component of the new facility will offer private rooms and provide 24/7 health care services for individuals with complex care needs.

“This facility, as well as others under development as a result of a number of agreements reached on Vancouver Island over the past year, is intended to give seniors more choices and opportunities to retain their independence,” said VIHA Board Chair Jac Kreut. “Projects like this one will significantly increase our residential care and assisted living capacity, improve access to services for seniors and help reduce pressures on emergency departments and busy hospitals such as the Cowichan District Hospital.”

“We’re so pleased to be able to offer another option that will allow seniors in the Cowichan Valley to continue living in their community with dignity while also having access to high quality healthcare,” said Mike Conroy, VIHA Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. “VIHA’s commitment to supporting seniors and developing innovative care options allows people to move through various levels within the same community of care, thereby ensuring a continuum of housing and care needs for Vancouver Island seniors.”

The contract to build and operate the facility, located at Bundock Street and Trunk Road in Duncan, was awarded in June 2006 to Jones Development, a private operator that has designed and built a number of housing projects and currently provides over 800 senior’s housing units in British Columbia.

“Sunridge Estate will provide multi-level care to Cowichan Valley seniors, while they continue to enjoy the benefits of their former lifestyle,” said Norman Jones, President of Jones Development Corporation. “Our residents will be provided with full meal services, health care, exercise and entertainment activities, social inter-action, quiet walks, landscaped courtyards, and numerous other amenities located nearby.”

The new beds and units are part of the government’s commitment to build 5,000 net-new beds and units across British Columbia by the end of 2008. To date, 8,102 new and replacement residential care beds, assisted living units and supportive housing with home support units have been built, with 2,984 of those net-new.

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