

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services
Interior Health

CONTRACT TO BUILD PATIENT CARE IN SOUTHERN INTERIOR

KELOWNA – A construction contract for the expansion of Kelowna and Vernon Hospitals has been awarded to Infusion Health, Health Services Minister George Abbott announced today.

“A tremendous milestone was reached today – a milestone that shows our commitment to building patient care in the Okanagan,” said Abbott. “These hospital expansions are the largest single investment on record in the health system for the Interior. They are a critical part of our government’s plan to renew public health care and improve patient care in communities across the province.”

The new patient care tower at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) will include a new consolidated outpatient department, new emergency department, new operating rooms, a rooftop helipad, two shelled-in floors for inpatient beds, a new renal dialysis department and a clinical academic campus for a University of British Columbia (UBC) faculty of medicine.

The new patient care tower at Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH) will expand and modernize services for patients, including new operating rooms, new emergency room, a new intensive care unit, a new maternity and pediatrics ward, an expanded and consolidated outpatient department and two new shelled-in floors for inpatient beds.

This final contract includes a number of significant enhancements to the original project plans announced in May 2007. The value of the construction project is now \$432.5 million and brings the following added benefits to patient care:

- A new emergency department at KGH, quadruple the size of the current emergency department, now being built into the ground floor of the new patient care tower (the original plan called for renovation and expansion of the existing emergency department).
- A new free-standing 3,200 square-metre (34,000 square-foot) building to support the education and training of additional medical professionals for the Southern Interior in partnership/collaboration with UBC’s Faculty of Medicine.
- Two additional shelled-in floors at both KGH and VJH to build capacity and accommodate future patient beds.
- An increase in size from the original estimated 17,373 square metres (187,000 square feet) to 33,445 square metres (360,000 square feet) in the KGH patient care tower (a 93 per cent increase). The new patient care tower and UBC building taken together are equivalent to the combined size of Kelowna’s Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Rona stores.
- An increase in size from the original estimated 12,542 square metres (135,000 square feet) to 16,862 square metres (181,500 square feet) in the VJH patient care tower (a 34 per cent increase), making the new patient care tower more than twice the size of the Wesbild Centre, home of the BCHL Vernon Vipers.

- \$15.5 million in additional equipment.
- A new multi-level parkade at KGH to accommodate increased visitor and staff demand.

“We have listened to the people of the Okanagan, health care professionals, community leaders and patients,” said Okanagan-Vernon MLA Tom Christensen. “Today we are going above and beyond our original commitment and providing even more health care for our communities today and for decades to come.”

“These new facilities have been designed to be patient-centred and elder-friendly,” said Kelowna-Mission MLA Sindi Hawkins. “They will accommodate the needs of patients and will also provide an extremely supportive working environment for staff, physicians and volunteers.”

Infusion Health entered into a fixed-price contract to design, build, finance and maintain the new facilities over a fixed-term of 30 years. In addition to constructing the new facilities, Infusion Health will be responsible for the building maintenance, lifecycle repair and renewal and project financing over the life of the contract. Clinical, housekeeping and food services will be retained by Interior Health.

“The Kelowna and Vernon expansions have been designed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification as part of our government’s commitment to a greener and more sustainable future,” said Al Horning, MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country. “Green hospital building design helps to create a healing environment for patients, staff and visitors.”

“What these hospital expansions are ultimately about is building better patient care and building capacity for future growth in the Okanagan and Southern Interior,” said Okanagan-Westside MLA Rick Thorpe. “And because of our strong economy we can continue to make these types of investments in communities throughout the southern interior and right across British Columbia.”

“Today’s announcement is an historic day for Interior Health,” said Norman Embree, board chair for Interior Health. “Not only are we seeing the region’s largest ever health care investment, but we are building it through an innovative partnership that has proven itself in other health care projects across British Columbia.”

The fixed-price contract makes certain that Infusion assumes all construction (cost and schedule), design, long-term maintenance and operational risks, as well as other costs related to the project. A Value for Money (VFM) report identifying the benefits derived on this project as a public-private partnership will be posted in the fall of 2008 on Partnerships BC’s website www.partnershipsbc.ca, along with the project agreement.

All clinical health services will be funded by the Province of British Columbia and provided by Interior Health, in keeping with the principles of the Canada Health Act.

An official ground breaking announcement will take place in the weeks ahead when construction on these hospital expansions begins.

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2 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media contact: Michelle Stewart
Communications Director
Ministry of Health Services
250 952-1887 (media line)
250 812-5571 (cell)

Cam McAlpine
Communications Officer
Interior Health
250 862-8209
250 801-1741 (cell)

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