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## NEWS RELEASE

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Northern Health

### **Countdown is on to better patient care in Fort St. John**

FORT ST. JOHN – The countdown is on at the site of the new Fort St. John Hospital and Residential Care (FSJHRC) project. Less than three months remain until the new acute care and residential care buildings open.

Peace River North MLA Pat Pimm, and representatives from Northern Health and Peace River Regional Hospital District and other dignitaries joined physicians, staff, volunteers and community members today in Fort St. John to unveil a special clock that will count down the days until the new hospital and residential care buildings open. The hospital will open on Thursday, June 21 and the Peace Villa residential care facility will open on Sunday, June 24.

“The new hospital and residential care project marks an investment of \$301.8 million in the health and well-being of British Columbians,” said Pimm, on behalf of Michael de Jong, Minister of Health. “In less than three month’s time, patients, seniors, staff, and visitors of these facilities will experience firsthand the highest standards in health care design, infection prevention and control, and medical technology.”

Construction on the new hospital and residential care facilities began back in June 2009, and is proceeding on schedule for opening day. Over the past two years, more than 360 dedicated construction workers and contractors, along with approximately 20 local construction companies have helped to build the new facilities.

“The new health care facilities are a commitment to our future and will go a long way to supporting growing health care demands in the Peace River region,” said Senator Richard Neufeld. “The facility will be a shining example of not only state-of-the-art medical equipment and patient care, but will also lend itself to uphold the province’s goal of a greener and more sustainable future.”

Replacing the original hospital built in the 1960’s, the two-storey hospital will be approximately 23,000 square metres in size with 55 acute-care beds, of which 85 per cent will be single patient rooms.

“It’s an exciting time at this stage of the project as we see the finishing line approach. Health care services will be delivered in a modern facility that focuses on patient safety and fully supports staff in their delivery of care,” said Laurie Blade, Vice-President of HCP Canada. “We now have less than 90 days until the hospital and residential care buildings open. This is an amazing legacy for the community.”

The modern facility will deliver new and enhanced services to improve health care service delivery and improve patient outcomes. Highlights include an expanded emergency room and ambulatory care department, an intensive care unit, larger operating rooms, endoscopy suite, a birthing centre. Significant academic space to support the University of Northern B.C.’s Northern Medical Program is also included.

“The new facilities will take a holistic, patient-centered approach to care. It is wonderful to see these facilities receive the support and recognition of leaders in our community,” said Karen Goodings, chair of the Peace River Regional Hospital District, which is contributing \$98.0 million in funding to the hospital facilities.

The Peace Villa residential care facility is broken down into two housing units which together represents approximately 7,500 square metres of new space for 124 residential care beds, with palliative and special care units. The buildings will each have easy access to outdoor courtyards and patios, with shared living and dining space. The residential care facility is connected to the acute care hospital through an indoor hallway for convenient access by residents, hospital staff and visitors.

“The acute care building was designed with a patient-centred focus that included extensive input from clinical staff,” said Cathy Ulrich, President and CEO of Northern Health. “I’m very impressed with the attention to detail, the elder-friendly environment in the residential care facility and the benefits to patients, residents, family members and visitors.”

The FSJHRC project is a public-private partnership between Northern Health and ISL Health. ISL Health is responsible for the design, building, partially financing and maintaining the facilities. Northern Health will retain ownership of the building and provide all health and medical services.

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