
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
Fraser Health
BC Cancer Agency

NEW HOSPITAL AND CANCER CENTRE OPENS IN 100 DAYS

ABBOTSFORD – Residents of the Fraser Valley and health-care professionals are counting down the days until the 300-bed Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre opens its doors to patients, Health Minister George Abbott announced today.

Construction of the facility reached substantial completion on May 6, 2008. Equipment testing and staff orientation are underway to ensure the facility is ready to receive patients on Sunday, Aug. 24.

“The Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre is the first new regional hospital to open in more than 30 years and represents the single largest health-care capital investment in the history of the province,” said Abbott. “The project was completed on time, on budget and within scope – an unprecedented achievement for a health-care project of this size and complexity.”

According to the February 2005 report *Achieving Value for Money: Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre Project*, reviewed by the auditor general, savings of \$39 million are expected, over the life of the agreement, through the public-private partnership model.

On Sunday, Aug. 24, patients at MSA Hospital will be transferred to the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre. During that day, the new emergency department will be open and ambulances will be rerouted to the new hospital. Outpatient services, including cancer care, will be available on Monday, Aug. 25.

“Our care providers are excited to be just 100 days away from greeting patients in a world-class hospital facility that helps us meet the growing needs of our communities,” said Brian Gillespie, member of the board of Fraser Health. “As a regional hospital, this facility will improve access and reduce travel for residents of the eastern Fraser Valley for specialized services such as neonatal intensive care and adolescent psychiatric care.”

Nearly \$84 million of brand new, state-of-the-art technology and equipment has been installed at the new hospital and cancer centre, providing residents of Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley greater access to diagnostic and treatment services such as magnetic resonance imaging and radiation therapy.

“This announcement is very encouraging as it promises the region leading-edge cancer services from prevention and screening to therapy and symptom management to palliative care,” said Dr. Simon Sutcliffe, president of the BC Cancer Agency. “The new Abbotsford Centre will be an integral part of the agency’s provincial cancer control system, providing care and research for the people of B.C.”

The hospital and cancer centre is 60,000 square metres, nearly three times the physical size of the MSA Hospital. The facility has been designed and constructed to minimize the impact on the natural environment and the facility is expected to consume nearly 40 per cent less energy compared to a Model National Energy for Buildings-compliant hospital. The savings in carbon dioxide emissions will be approximately 3,100 tons a year and the energy operating cost savings nearly \$500,000 a year.

“Residents of the Fraser Valley have demonstrated the importance they place on health care by contributing \$71.3 million towards the construction and equipment cost of Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre,” said George Ferguson, chair of the Fraser Valley Regional Hospital District and mayor of the City of Abbotsford. “Their generosity will ensure that residents across the region will benefit from leading-edge technology in a modern facility.”

“The Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre is a flagship project for the province of British Columbia and is the first public-private partnership for an acute care hospital and cancer centre in the history of the province,” said Larry Blain, CEO of Partnerships BC. “The partnership delivery model and the project have served as the foundation for future investments in health-care infrastructure across British Columbia.”

“Access Health Abbotsford is proud to have partnered with over 240 health professionals and clinicians to create an innovative and expertly designed, state-of-the-art health-care facility,” said James Bennett, director, Access Health Abbotsford Ltd. “This is the largest construction project ever seen in Abbotsford or the Fraser Valley and we are proud to have partnered with local sub-contractors and tradespeople in the Fraser Valley to build this facility.”

The Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre is a public-private partnership between the Ministry of Health, Fraser Health, Provincial Health Services Authority/BC Cancer Agency, Fraser Valley Regional Hospital District, Partnerships BC and Access Health Abbotsford Ltd. All health-care services will be provided by the health authorities and Access Health Abbotsford is responsible for providing facilities management services.

For a sneak preview of the new facility, the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre will be open to the public on Saturday, June 14. Residents of Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley are encouraged to attend and walk through the facility before it opens for patients.

2 backgrounder(s) attached.

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