
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
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Interior Health

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON KELOWNA HOSPITAL EXPANSION

KELOWNA – Premier Gordon Campbell and Health Services Minister George Abbott led the official groundbreaking today for the new Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) expansion, which will modernize patient care, quadruple the size of the emergency room, and prepare KGH to be a teaching hospital for the Okanagan’s first medical program.

“This expansion is critical to meeting the health care needs of this growing region,” said Premier Campbell. “At Kelowna General Hospital, the number of patient cases is projected to increase by more than 30 per cent to 50,000 cases by 2020 and we want to continue providing Okanagan families with health services that match the needs of the growing and aging population. This new facility will improve patient care, provide room for future expansions, and bring doctor training to KGH.”

At six storeys high and 360,000-square-feet, the new patient care tower will combine and consolidate outpatient services into one facility, increase surgical capacity and provide modern operating rooms, add two extra floors for future patient care beds, a rooftop helipad, a new renal dialysis department, and a new ground floor modern emergency department four times the size of the current ER.

“The new state-of-the-art patient care tower in Kelowna will meet the highest environmental and service standards, and will form the cornerstone for the improvement of patient care in the Southern Interior,” said Abbott. “One of the factors taken into consideration is the growing population, which includes an increase of more than 40 per cent in our senior population in the Okanagan by 2020.

Much of Kelowna General Hospital is currently over 30 years old, including some portions dating back to the 1960s. Building more patient care and improve service efficiency and patient flow with new state-of-the-art medical facilities is a top priority for the Province and Interior Health.

“Combining all outpatient and day care services in the new tower will improve coordination of care and offer opportunities for health improvement,” said Kelowna-Mission MLA Sindi Hawkins. “Building a new emergency department will also free up space in the older part of the hospital for further service enhancements.”

“The extraordinary support of the Province, hospital clinicians and people of our community is making this goal of an expanded hospital a reality,” said Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Al Horning. “This milestone means we’re one step closer to building more patient care closer to home for patients across our region.”

In addition to the new patient care tower at KGH, a 34,000 square metre stand-alone facility will be built to accommodate the hospital's new designation as a clinical academic campus of the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine. The building will include a lecture theater, videoconference suites, clinical examination areas and library study space for medical undergraduates, post-graduate students and residents.

"These expansions will ensure KGH becomes the tertiary teaching hospital in the B.C. Interior and to fulfill its leadership role as the regional hospital for the Okanagan," said Norman Embree, Interior Health board chair.

"The partnership between UBC and Interior Health that resulted in KGH becoming a clinical academic campus is crucial to increasing the supply of doctors and bringing better care to patients in the Interior," said Dr. Gavin Stuart, dean of the UBC Faculty of Medicine. "We are delighted to add B.C.'s Interior to the list of locations in which our future doctors – in ever greater numbers – will be studying."

Construction of the new facilities will take place concurrently with normal day-to-day hospital operations and will be integrated with existing infrastructure. The project will be constructed in two separate phases to ensure construction impacts to patient care services are minimized. The medical school building and new parkade will be completed by December, 2009 and the patient care tower by August 2012.

"This is an historic day for health care in Kelowna," said Robert Hobson, chair of the Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District. "The expansion of KGH will have a significant impact on how health-care services are delivered to residents throughout our region."

The expansion at KGH and similar expansion underway at Vernon Jubilee Hospital are being completed under a single project management structure as a public-private partnership between Interior Health and the private-partner Infusion Health. Infusion Health entered into a fixed-price contract to design, build, finance and maintain the new facilities for 30 years. The total project capital cost is \$432.9 million.

In addition to constructing the new facilities, Infusion Health will be responsible for the building maintenance and project financing over the life of the contract. Clinical, housekeeping and food services will be retained by Interior Health. The fixed-price contract makes certain that Infusion Health assumes all construction (cost and schedule), design, long-term maintenance and operational risks, as well as other costs related to the project.

A project summary entitled "Project Report - Achieving Value for Money" shows that the public-private partnership for the two hospital projects are expected to achieve value for taxpayers' dollars of \$25.4 million compared to a project delivered using traditional procurement. The report is now available on Partnerships BC's website www.partnershipsbc.ca, along with the Project Agreement.

The building will continue to be owned by the health authority. 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.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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