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For Immediate Release

NEW RESIDENTIAL CARE BEDS COMING TO COURTENAY

COURTENAY – Seniors in Courtenay/Comox will have improved access to local support services when a new facility with 90 residential care beds and 60 assisted living units opens in 2008.

Retirement Concepts, a well-established seniors' care provider with facilities throughout B.C., has been awarded a contract to build and operate the facility. The assisted living units will be funded by BC Housing through the Independent Living BC program (ILBC).

The facility will be located on a 4.5 acre site on Headquarters Road near Dingwall Road in Courtenay. Retirement Concepts operates numerous seniors' facilities throughout British Columbia and is an affiliated service provider for the Vancouver Island Health Authority, operating care facilities in Victoria and Nanaimo. The new facility is slated to open June 30, 2008.

"Across the province the government is investing in beds and units, facilities and health care professionals to improve health care for British Columbians," said Health Minister George Abbott. "This new facility contributes towards government fulfilling our commitment to build 5,000 new residential care beds and assisted living units in British Columbia."

"Seniors continue to choose the Comox Valley and government continues to provide them with more care options," said Comox Valley MLA Stan Hagen. "This facility helps fulfill one of my key promises to Valley residents to increase the number of residential care beds and assisted living units in the Comox Valley."

The Retirement Concepts project is the latest in a series of successful bids to be announced as part of a Request For Proposal (RFP) issued by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) on January 31. New Horizons in Campbell River, Jones Development in Duncan, Good Samaritan in Nanaimo and the Ahmon Group in Parksville and Victoria will build and operate new facilities in those communities. The health authority continues to evaluate proposals and conduct discussions with potential developers in Sooke and Port Alberni.

"VIHA is committed to developing and enhancing services that support our growing and aging population," said Jac Kreut, Board Chair, Vancouver Island Health Authority. "This contract award is part of a series of projects that will significantly increase our residential care and assisted living capacity, improve access to services for seniors and make it easier to access emergency departments."

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The VIHA RFP sought proposals from not-for-profit and private operators to build and operate 1,230 residential care beds and assisted living units throughout the health authority. This included approximately 930 additional net new beds and units by 2010 (727 of those to be completed by December 2008), as well as flexibility for approximately 300 replacement beds in the future.

VIHA received approximately 50 submissions to the RFP.

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