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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
Interior Health

### **Milestone reached in cardiac surgery 100 open heart surgeries performed in the Interior**

VICTORIA – An important health-care milestone was reached yesterday with the completion of the 100th open heart surgery at Kelowna General Hospital.

“We are improving access to open heart surgery for patients from across the Interior,” said Health Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. “The advent of cardiac surgery in Interior Health means that 100 patients have now received this critical procedure closer to their home and their family, rather than travelling to the Lower Mainland or Victoria.”

Cardiac surgery was previously only performed at four hospitals in British Columbia: Royal Columbian Hospital, Royal Jubilee Hospital, St. Paul’s Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital.

“Today is a great day to reflect on how much work has gone into developing this program and the improvements in care it has brought to people who live throughout the Interior,” said Norman Embree, chair of the Interior Health board. “We look forward to the hundreds of surgeries that will be done in the coming months and years and the positive benefits they will bring to the lives of southern interior patients and their families.”

Dr. Guy Fradet, Dr. Calvin Wan and Dr. Ahmad Poostizadeh have been performing cardiac surgeries at Kelowna General Hospital since Dec. 3, 2012 at a rate of about two per day.

“We’ve done procedures on patients from Trail to Peachland, from Kamloops, the Shuswap and Vernon, and even Prince George, Quesnel and Williams Lake,” said Fradet, medical director of the Interior Health Cardiac Surgery Program. “This is an Interior Health-wide program that is bringing a very patient- and family-centred approach to cardiac care, prevention and health promotion.”

The surgeries are taking place in two renovated operating rooms at Kelowna General Hospital while the Interior Heart and Surgical Centre is being constructed. The centre is scheduled to open in mid 2015. Approximately 600 cardiac surgeries per year are expected to be performed at Kelowna General Hospital, ensuring patients do not have to travel as far from their families to receive care.

“Providing heart surgery out of Kelowna is an historic health-care milestone in the Interior,” said Kelowna-Mission MLA Steve Thomson. “Congratulations to everyone who made this feat possible.”

“Having family and friends close by can help you better prepare, undergo and recover from open heart surgery,” said Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Norm Letnick.

“In the past decade, we’ve seen the transformation of health-care delivery in the Interior with record investments culminating in the first ever heart surgeries in B.C. outside of the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island,” said Westside-Kelowna MLA Ben Stewart.

In 2009, Kelowna General Hospital also became the first hospital outside of the Lower Mainland and Victoria to perform percutaneous coronary interventions, or angioplasties. Since the program started in November 2009, over 3,000 procedures have been performed.

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