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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2008OTPO272-001745  
Nov. 17, 2008

Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Health Services  
Interior Health

### **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW PATIENT CARE TOWER IN VERNON**

VERNON – Premier Gordon Campbell and Health Services Minister George Abbott were joined by hospital officials, staff, community members and health care partners today to celebrate the start of construction for the new Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH) patient care tower, which will include a new ICU, new operating rooms and a new maternity and paediatrics ward.

“The new patient care tower in Vernon will provide modernized patient services and new facilities to help meet the growing demand for health care services,” said Premier Campbell. “The number of patient cases coming through Vernon Jubilee Hospital is projected to increase by more than 25 per cent over the next 11 years, from 12,500 to 15,900 cases by 2020. This expansion will provide new and expanded facilities, as well as create room to further increase health care services in the future.”

At seven storeys high and 181,500 square feet, the new patient care tower will increase capacity and functionality of ambulatory care services, include a new intensive care unit and centralized operating rooms, and a new maternity and paediatrics ward with direct links to operating rooms. Two additional floors that will provide for future patient care beds and a modernized emergency department with expanded facilities and services, add to the impressive list of health care services the new tower will offer.

“The new patient care tower at Vernon Jubilee Hospital will meet the highest environmental and patient service standards,” said Abbott. “We are building better patient care in Vernon to further improve the delivery of safe, quality health care.”

Some building elements of VJH are over 60 years old and the need to build more patient care, improve service efficiency and patient flow, with new state-of-the-art medical facilities is a top priority for the Province and Interior Health.

“As we face a growing and aging population, this expansion represents a significant investment in health care for the North Okanagan,” said Okanagan-Vernon MLA Tom Christensen. “Patients and their families can expect the best patient care possible in a safe, modern building.”

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 phases to ensure construction impacts to patient care services are minimized. The patient care tower will be completed by May 2011.

“This is an exciting time for us as we break ground for the new patient care tower in Vernon,” said Norman Embree, Interior Health board chair. “Once complete, our new facility will allow us to expand programs, recruit new staff and physically improve our delivery of quality healthcare.”

The expansion at VJH and similar expansion underway at Kelowna General Hospital are being completed under a single project management structure as a public-private partnership between Interior Health and 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.

“We are a proud partner in the expansion of Vernon Jubilee Hospital,” said Rhona Martin, chair of North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District. “This new patient care tower will be a great benefit for our residents.”

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 the 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](http://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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