

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VIHA SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL CARE BEDS AND ASSISTED LIVING UNITS

VICTORIA – The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will be investing up to \$45 million annually to provide approximately 930 additional, new residential care beds and assisted living units by 2010 to help seniors who need publicly funded housing and support services. This includes 727 additional beds targeted for completion by December 2008.

“The new beds and units will go towards fulfilling the province’s commitment to develop 5,000 new beds and units throughout BC by 2008,” said George Abbott, Minister of Health. “These new services will provide options that support and encourage independence while also providing more intensive care if health care needs change – and will help keep seniors on Vancouver Island healthy long into the future.”

As outlined in its draft Five Year Strategic Plan (www.viha.ca), VIHA will build the new beds and units to meet the growing and aging population according to growth projections for specific geographic areas.

As part of this, VIHA has issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) seeking proposals from not-for-profit and other private operators to build and operate 1,230 residential care beds and assisted living spaces. This includes the approximately 930 additional net new beds and spaces as well as flexibility for approximately 300 replacement beds in the future. Locations, with up to the following number of beds and spaces, are outlined in the RFP:

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| Greater Victoria: | 185 residential care beds and 95 assisted living units |
| Sooke: | 30 residential care beds and 15 assisted living units |
| Cowichan/Duncan: | 180 residential care beds and 50 assisted living units |
| Nanaimo: | 135 residential care beds and 80 assisted living units |
| Parksville/Qualicum: | 160 residential care beds and 60 assisted living units |
| Port Alberni: | 10 assisted living units |
| Comox/Courtenay: | 90 residential care beds and 60 assisted living units |
| Campbell River: | 80 residential care beds. |

A further approximately 28 net new beds and spaces planned for the Gulf Islands, Mount Waddington and Ladysmith will be developed outside this RFP process.

(more)

“VIHA is committed to supporting seniors and developing innovative care options that promote a high quality of life and allow people to move through care levels within the same community of care,” said Mike Conroy, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority. “This process will ensure the availability of new beds and units to meet future needs – which will play an integral role in the continuum of care available throughout the health authority.”

In addition to the beds and units being sought through the RFP, VIHA also plans to work with its existing service providers to upgrade or replace over 850 complex care beds that are aging and no longer meet modern care needs. Changes include converting multi-occupancy accommodation to semi-private rooms with bathrooms and wheelchair accessibility and providing transitional care capacity outside hospitals.

VIHA provides 4,900 publicly funded beds and units throughout the health authority; 565 additional beds and units are already approved, planned or under construction and will open by the end of this year.

Proponents will have until March 28, 2006 to submit proposals. VIHA expects to award contracts by May/June.

The RFP is available at <http://www.partnershipsbc.ca/> or www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca

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