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For Immediate Release

NEW RESIDENTIAL CARE BEDS COMING TO PARKSVILLE

PARKSVILLE – Seniors on Central Vancouver Island will have improved access to local support services when a new facility with 140 residential care beds and 30 assisted living units opens June 30, 2008.

Ahmon Group, a private seniors' care provider, has been awarded a contract to build and operate the new facility, which will provide 140 publicly funded residential care beds and 30 publicly funded assisted living units. The facility will be located at 250 Craig Street in Parksville. This property is currently vacant land owned by the Vancouver Island Health Authority. It was purchased in 2001 with health care-related construction in mind. The Ahmon Group has operated seniors' care facilities in the Lower Mainland for over 30 years, including several facilities under contract with the Fraser Health Authority.

"Our government is steadily progressing towards realizing our goal of creating 5,000 new residential care beds and assisted living units for B.C. seniors," said Health Minister George Abbott. "We are actively planning for the current and future needs of our growing population and moving forward on the government's commitment to strengthen health care in British Columbia."

"This facility is good news for the Parksville community," said Nanaimo/Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon. "Residents can remain in the community, receiving the support they need to retain their independence while also having access to more intensive care as their health care needs change. One of my top priorities as the local government representative is to work with VIHA to make sure that we have enough high-quality care beds available to my constituents."

The Ahmon Group 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) January 31. New Horizons in Campbell River, Jones Development in Duncan, Good Samaritan in Nanaimo and the Ahmon Group in Victoria will build and operate new facilities in those communities. The VIHA RFP sought proposals from not-for-profit and private operators to build and operate 1,230 residential care beds and assisted living spaces throughout the health authority. This included approximately 930 additional net new beds and spaces by 2010 (727 of those to be completed by December 2008) as well as flexibility for approximately 300 replacement beds in the future.

"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, which will improve access to services for seniors and help reduce pressures on our emergency departments."

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VIHA received approximately 50 submissions to the RFP. The health authority continues to evaluate proposals and conduct discussions with potential developers in Port Alberni, Sooke and Comox/Courtenay. Announcements regarding future developments and successful bidders in these communities will be made as contracts are finalized and signed.

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