
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Health Services

\$19M FOR HOUSING AND DAYCARE BENEFITS SENIORS, CHILDREN

NEW WESTMINSTER – The \$19.4-million Victoria Heights officially opens today, providing 59 assisted living units for seniors, a child-care centre, a geriatric medical clinic, and a respiratory and diabetes education centre, thanks to a partnership between provincial and municipal governments.

“We are providing a wide range of housing options for British Columbians,” said Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development. “Victoria Heights sets a new standard in meeting a full range of housing and care needs for young children and seniors.”

The Province provided \$5.9 million through the Independent Living BC program for seniors and a \$1.3-million grant through the Ministry of Children and Family Development to create a 62-space licensed child-care centre. The Province is also providing housing subsidies and funding in the form of a mortgage.

“Here at Victoria Heights, we have generations coming together in one space and all will benefit,” said Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid. “Our partnership with BC Housing allows us to accomplish more with our child-care dollars by sharing resources and building on what already exists in our communities.

“Victoria Heights is another wonderful example of integrating services and increasing the range of choices for families.”

The new assisted living units are in addition to the provincial government’s commitment to provide 5,000 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units, supportive housing and home support, which was met in 2008.

“Integrated health and housing solutions for seniors are a priority for our government,” said George Abbott, Minister of Health Services. “Seniors are living longer, healthier lives and by including a seniors’ health clinic, we are promoting their independence through affordable housing options.”

Fraser Health is providing a 60-year lease for the land and will provide funding for the personal care and hospitality services offered to tenants at an annual cost of \$907,558. The City of New Westminster provided a reduction of levies.

“These new assisted living units are a strong complement to our existing residential care beds in New Westminster,” said Barbara Korabek, vice-president of Primary Care & Community Health Network, Fraser Health. “In this era of substantial growth within Fraser Health, we are committed to ensuring that seniors receive the care they need, when they need it, and where they need it.”

“The City of New Westminster is proud to work with the provincial government and other partners to help provide housing solutions for seniors and quality care for children,” said City of New Westminster Mayor Wayne Wright. “We are especially grateful that the development integrates many different programs which address our city’s diverse and growing needs.”

The Good Samaritan Society owns and operates the 59 assisted living units and will provide health and personal care services to the tenants. The assisted living units are self-contained apartments where residents receive hospitality and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and assistance with medications. Residents can also participate in recreational and social activities. Each unit is wheelchair accessible, includes a spacious kitchen and ample storage space and is equipped with a 24-hour response system.

“Victoria Heights provides seniors with a variety of services and care levels to enrich their quality of life even as their needs change,” said Carla Gregor, president and CEO of the Good Samaritan Society. “The development is innovative and will bring mutual benefits to residents and staff, in addition to the families who will be using it, and we are very pleased to be in partnership with the Province and Fraser Health.”

Victoria Heights was built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards and is currently registered for certification and waiting final approval. The development minimizes energy use, reduces water use, improves indoor air quality and thermal comfort, reduces site impacts, and incorporates resource efficient materials. BC Hydro contributed \$43,600 in PowerSmart energy efficiency incentives towards designing the building to meet the energy efficiency requirements of the LEED certification program.

The Province of British Columbia is committed to providing more than 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments for B.C. seniors and people with disabilities. To date, more than 3,900 units have been allocated in communities across the province. Through Housing Matters BC, the Province is investing more than \$400 million in shelters and affordable housing this year, more than three times as much as in 2001.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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