
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

PATIENTS TO BENEFIT FROM AGREEMENT WITH B.C. DOCTORS

VICTORIA – More than 92 per cent of B.C. doctors who voted, accepted a two-year agreement designed to increase access to patient care and improve recruitment and retention of specialists as well as of family physicians in rural and remote communities.

“I thank the BC Medical Association for focusing their efforts on targeted health system improvements that will continue to make British Columbia’s world-class health system even better,” said Minister of Health Services George Abbott. “Whether it is faster access to a consultation with a specialist or better care in an emergency department in a rural community, this deal focuses on the real issues that matter to B.C. patients. The deal represents a continued spirit of collaboration between our government and the province’s doctors to improve patient care.”

The agreement falls in line with the government’s broader fiscal framework and the projected health care budget increases over the next two years. The agreement includes an overall funding increase of approximately \$90 million starting 2010-11 and an additional \$90 million beginning in 2011-12.

Around half the funding will help to further improve access to services for patients, while the other half will be focused on targeted labour market adjustments to improve recruitment and retention.

Highlights of the two-year deal include:

- \$44 million to improve access to primary care.
- \$45 million to enhance access to specialty medical services and to address recruitment challenges for specialists.
- \$20 million to expand access to physician services in rural and remote communities, including emergency care.
- \$30 million to support recruitment and retention by ensuring B.C. remains competitive with other provinces with respect to overhead costs for physicians.

“In these tough economic times, we’re pleased that the emphasis on physician recruitment and retention in B.C. remains a high priority for government,” said Dr. Bill Mackie, president of the BC Medical Association. “This is a good agreement that will help fill the void in many areas of the province that lack GPs and specialists.”

By 2011-12, total provincial health spending will be \$17.5 billion, an increase of 87 per cent since 2000-01.

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