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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services  
Interior Health  
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### **MEDICAL EDUCATION SERVICE BENEFITS DOCTORS, PATIENTS**

VICTORIA – An innovative service is now providing more B.C. physicians with access to specially-trained pharmacists for detailed information on current drug therapies, Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon announced today.

Interior Health and Vancouver Island Health Authorities (VIHA) are participating in the Provincial Academic Detailing (PAD) service, an initiative of the Ministry of Health Services' Pharmaceutical Services Division and regional health authorities that launched in Fraser Health in October 2008.

“Between the three health authorities, more than 400 physicians will have direct access to the knowledge and expertise of pharmacists to help ensure that patients are receiving medications that best suit their individual needs,” said Falcon. “It is great news that this service will support optimal prescribing by providing physicians with evidence-based information about a variety of drug therapies.”

Through the PAD service, which will begin in both health authorities in July 2009, participating physicians will have one-on-one access to clinical pharmacists to discuss pre-determined drug topics. Pharmacists are also available to answer specific questions about drug therapies and the latest drug prescribing practices.

“Academic Detailing provides family physicians an opportunity to ensure that they are up to date with therapeutic issues common to their practice,” says Ruth Campbell, Interior Health academic detailer. “Evidence-based information is provided in a succinct, conversational format at a time and location which is most convenient to the physician. Ideally it will save physicians time while promoting best practice.”

Drug therapy topics are recommended by an advisory group made up of representatives of the BC Medical Association, the College of Family Physicians, the Continuing Professional Development department and eHealth Strategy Office at the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine, the regional pharmacies from health authorities and the College of Pharmacists of B.C.

The first topic for both Interior Health and VIHA will be the use of anticoagulant drugs to prevent strokes and blood clots in patients with atrial fibrillation (an irregular heart rhythm). The next topic for all regions will focus on antibiotics for common community acquired infections such as respiratory and urinary tract infections.

“We are really pleased to be moving forward with this program,” said Victoria Power, VIHA's director of primary health care and chronic disease management. “VIHA has made significant strides in the area of primary care as an ongoing point of contact for health care services to help patients lead healthier lives. This new program will continue to enhance those efforts and we expect it will improve the health outcomes of our patients through better medication management.”

Participants will also receive the Prescription Pad newsletter several times a year in conjunction with the detailing sessions. The newsletter focuses on current drug therapy topics and provides physicians with evidence-based information to refer to after the session is over. Each issue of the newsletter contains a peer-reviewed article that mirrors the drug topics from the academic detailing sessions, and a commentary written by a regional physician.

“The one-on-one visits, combined with the Prescription Pad newsletter will be very helpful in giving physicians objective drug information,” said Linda Brown, VIHA academic detailer. “I think that physicians will find that this is a very valuable learning tool.”

Physicians who participate in the PAD service may be eligible to receive up to one Maintenance of Proficiency continuing education credit through the College of Family Physicians of B.C.

For more information on the PAD service, physicians may phone 604 660-1978, or e-mail PAD@gov.bc.ca.

The Province has implemented a number of initiatives since 2001 to support physicians in prescribing medications and to increase patient safety by reducing medication-related incidents.

These initiatives include:

- Expanding B.C.'s PharmaNet system to reduce medication errors and adverse reactions by giving authorized health professionals secure access to patient medication histories.
- Extending PharmaNet into physicians' offices to offer increased, and improved, information to assist with prescribing decisions.
- Investing over \$2.3 million to support the provincial implementation of the BC Patient Safety Learning System for improved reporting and response to adverse reactions.
- Implementing Safer Healthcare Now!, a collaborative effort between patients, physicians, pharmacists and nurses that aims to reduce medication-related incidents.

- Creating the BC Patient Safety and Quality Council to reduce adverse drug reactions, promote transparency and identify best practices to improve patient care.

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