
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Health Services
Vancouver Island Health Authority, Capital Regional Hospital
District

NEW ER OPENS AT VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL

VICTORIA – Premier Gordon Campbell and Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon celebrated a milestone in the delivery of trauma care on Vancouver Island today, as they officially opened the new, three-times larger \$18.8-million emergency department at Victoria General Hospital.

“This new emergency department means better, faster treatment with more privacy for patients,” said Premier Campbell. “There are 75 per cent more treatment bays than there were before, and with the new specialized rooms for pediatric care, patients will receive top-quality care in modern, state-of-the-art settings.”

The new emergency department has a total of 35 treatment bays (up from 20), and a patient-friendly design, which offers separation and increased privacy for different patient groups, including a separate pediatric waiting room. The increase in capacity will accommodate the increase in patient visits – from 10,000 to about 36,000 – since it was built in 1983.

“This new emergency department will provide patients on Vancouver Island with the highest level of trauma care,” said Minister Falcon. “It will also help to provide improved access for patients. With an internal waiting area and treatment rooms for ambulatory patients, the layout should significantly reduce waiting time for patients.”

The \$18.8-million project was funded by the Province, through Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), the Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) and the Victoria Hospitals Foundation, which has played an important role by contributing funding to support new equipment in the emergency department.

“The Capital Regional Hospital District is proud to join together with the Province, VIHA and the Victoria Hospitals Foundation, to celebrate the opening of the new, state-of-the-art emergency department,” said Graham Hill, chair of the CRHD. “This significant investment will tremendously expand the capacity of emergency health care services in our region and will directly support the needs of patients, and our physicians and nurses who provide first-class care in this busy department”.

At 1,660 square metres (about 17,868 square feet) it is three times the size of the old ER, and has been built with pediatric patients in mind, with many pediatric-specific areas within the main department. It also allows for more specialized trauma equipment and staff.

“As the pediatric centre for Vancouver Island, the new emergency also provides a trauma room complete with the latest specialized equipment needed to care for our smallest patients,” said VIHA board member Brenda Nunns Shoemaker. “There is also a separate waiting room for children, to help make a visit to the hospital a little less scary for kids.”

Dr. Stephen Wheeler, VGH trauma director, has been working on plans for the new department for many years, and said patients are the big winners. “I would like to thank the Victoria Hospitals Foundation for their tireless fundraising efforts to provide the best equipment available – including new LED examination lights, video cameras to help insert breathing tubes, and high-resolution computer screens for reading x-rays,” said Dr. Wheeler.

Other features of the VGH emergency department include:

- Three separate entrances – one for walk-in patients and visitors, one for ambulances and police, and an isolation entrance for patients who arrive with an infectious disease or contamination.
- Enhanced facilities for decontamination of patients who may have been exposed to hazardous materials, including three isolation rooms.
- A secure room for pediatric and adult psychiatric emergencies.
- A new helipad with direct access to the new emergency department.
- Expanded space and upgraded diagnostic equipment to provide a first-class working environment for physicians and health-care providers.

The completed emergency department at VGH is one of the ways the province is building better health care on southern Vancouver Island, including the new \$350 million Royal Jubilee Hospital patient care tower. Over the next three years, the Province’s health-care system will benefit from \$2.9 billion in capital services investment.

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BACKGROUND

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THE NEW VGH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- The new \$18.8-million project is jointly funded by the Province, through VIHA, the Capital Regional Hospital District, and the Victoria Hospitals Foundation contribution toward the purchase of equipment and furnishings.
- The new VGH emergency department is 40m by 40m – triple the size of the old emergency.
- Some features of the new department include:
 - State-of-the-art equipment for trauma and pediatric patients.
 - More patient treatment spaces with greater patient privacy.
 - Separate waiting and treatment areas for ambulatory patients, to improve patient flow through the department and reduce “door to doctor” waiting time.
 - Three separate entrances to better accommodate walk-in patients, patients arriving by ambulance and patients with infectious diseases who require isolation.
 - Separate pediatric waiting room, pediatric resuscitation room (which can also be used for adult trauma if required), specialized pediatric trauma equipment, a pediatric isolation room, and a “secure room” for pediatric and adult psychiatric emergencies.
 - The latest infection control standards.
 - Three new isolation rooms.
 - An improved working environment for health-care workers.
- VGH is the Vancouver Island trauma centre.
- The original VGH emergency department was built in 1983 to accommodate 10,000 annual patient visits. Currently the emergency department receives 36,000 annual patient visits.
- The new emergency department will accommodate 43,000 annual patient visits.
- VIHA serves a current population of 757,480. That is expected to increase by four per cent by 2012, to 790,124 residents.

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