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Ministry of Health Services

**FUNDING WILL BOOST FAMILY PRACTICES**

VICTORIA – Over the next four years, \$74 million will be targeted for primary health care renewal to strengthen family practice and provide teams of care to reduce pressure on the acute care system, Sindi Hawkins, minister of health planning, announced today. The program is a joint federal/provincial initiative.

"We believe that strengthening primary care is a key part of renewing patient care in British Columbia," said Hawkins. "Primary care is the first point of contact a patient has with the health care system. It's the place where the majority of illnesses are treated."

"Strengthening these services makes good sense for patients because it will give them a wider range of options for accessing services at the local level, and will result in better patient outcomes."

"Primary health care renewal will focus health care delivery on keeping people healthy through early diagnosis and early intervention," said Hawkins. "This will also help reduce health care costs because patients receiving a continuum of care are less likely to wind up in crisis or with complications that require specialized high-cost services."

Primary health care renewal will provide alternatives for patients to access health care. Patients will have access to interdisciplinary teams of health care professionals, which may include physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians and other health care providers.

This initiative will further the provincial government's New Era commitment to provide high quality, public health care services that meet patients' needs where they live and when they need them.

"We will be working with health authorities to identify health care professionals who are interested in pursuing different primary care delivery models, and providing them with the tools they will need to improve patient care," said Hawkins.

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Contact:  
Communications Branch, Ministry of Health Planning, 250 952-1887  
News Release Internet Address: [www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca](http://www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca)

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