



**GENERAL BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

Submitted by: Betty Frost:

Q Since the announcement in 2006 that VIHA intended to build a regional hospital for the North Island near Dove Creek Road, there has been extensive public support for keeping the two existing acute care facilities for the growing North Island region. This culminated in the recent vote by the Comox-Strathcona Regional Hospital District (CSRHD) of 14-6 to withdraw its prior "general support for the regional hospital concept".

The board also passed a motion to advise the minister of health, VIHA and local MLA's that the CSRHD wishes to invest in upgrades and expansions to its existing hospitals (Campbell River General and St. Joseph's in Comox) as soon as possible.

Given the above, can VIHA formally confirm to this meeting that it will now support the public and CSRHD request to proceed with a plan to strengthen both our existing hospital facilities?

A There have been a number of questions received from members of the public and organizations this month with regards to the proposed North Island Regional Hospital. VIHA is in the process of considering next steps and is not yet in a position to make a decision on what those next steps might be. A recent Opinion-Editorial by VIHA President and CEO Howard Waldner provides additional current information with regards to VIHA's position on this issue. This Opinion-Editorial is attached to this Q&A for your reference.

Submitted by: Joanne Banks, Citizens For Quality Health Care:

Q In a letter dated December 2, 2007 (reference# 5618) about the future of acute care services on the north island, Howard Waldner stated, "Ultimately, the final decision regarding the development of a regional hospital lies with our Provincial Government and they will base that decision on the information put forth in our Business Case."

A a) Has a Business Case been prepared and put forward to the Provincial Government?

Answer: A business case has not been developed due to the ongoing location issues, which require resolution at the RHD level before a business case can be put forward.

b) If so, does the Business Case put forward cost estimates for infrastructure for a specific location or locations (i.e. Dove Creek, Cumberland interchange, and other locations)?

Answer: See above

- c) If the Business Case does not or will not identify a location, how will the costs of the infrastructure be determined?

Answer: Agreement on location is central to the development of the business case. As a result this has not gone forward, as per answers above.

- d) How will the additional infrastructure costs be met by taxpayers on the north island? How will the location determine who pays the additional costs?

Answer: Infrastructure costs are typically cost-shared between the province and regional hospital districts, which raise funds through property taxes. This is voted on by RHD members.

- e) If the Business Case has been prepared, I am requesting a copy on or before March 19, 2008.

Answer: As noted above, no business case exists.

Q In his December 2, 2007 letter, Howard Waldner indicates that a final decision on a regional hospital lies with the Provincial Government. On January 2, 2008, the Courier Islander reported Minister George Abbott as saying that the province may be willing to consider that option [upgrading the two Campbell River and Comox Hospitals instead of building a new regional hospital.] February 25, 2008, Minister George Abbott wrote to Claire Trevena (with copies to many people) stating, "Although the ministry provides overall strategic direction for the British Columbia Health Care System, VIHA is responsible for the consultation and development of new hospital facilities within its jurisdiction." Please confirm which body will make the final decision on acute care services for the north island.

A VIHA would make a recommendation to Government with regards to future models of acute care delivery on the North Island, along with any capital and operational requirements associated with this. Government would review these recommendations and approve/not approve the model and its associated capital and operational funding requirements.

Q In response to questions during the open house portion of the March 2007 VIHA board meeting in Courtenay, several VIHA Board members revealed that they were not aware that the proposal for a new regional hospital would result in no emergency or inpatient beds at St. Joseph's. Nor were they aware that Campbell River would not have any inpatient services or any emergency department (the case at that time.) How can we be assured that all VIHA Board members are fully informed and aware of the downgrading of services that would result from approving the option of one hospital to replace St. Joseph's and Campbell River Hospitals?

A All Board members received detailed information on the plans for the new North Island Regional Hospital and the on-going services that would be provided at Campbell River and St. Joseph's hospitals. As noted above, in light of the recent decision by the Comox-Strathcona Regional

Hospital Board to withdraw support for the regional hospital concept, VIHA is in the process of considering next steps. The full Board, including new Board members, will be discussing this matter, and a review of specific, detailed information will be part of that process as appropriate.

Q In Howard Waldner's February 6, 2008 letter to Fred Bates, he stated that there had been a great deal of concern raised about the original scope of services proposed to remain at the Campbell River & District General Hospital in the event that a new regional hospital is built. He wrote, "... we are committing to a 24/7 Emergency Department staffed with emergency room trained physicians and are *open to discussing an appropriate number of in-patient hospital beds.*" Would this appropriate number of "inpatient beds" mean acute care beds, or simply rehab and transitional beds? What would be the minimum and maximum number of acute care beds you would be "open to discussing" for Campbell River? Please clarify your intent in terms of numbers and types of beds to remain in Campbell River and define your terms for each type of bed.

A In light of the decision by the Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District to rescind its support of a regional hospital for the North Island, VIHA is in the process of considering next steps around this issue. Additional information is provided in the response to the first question in this Question and Answer document. Please see above as well as the Opinion-Editorial, which is attached to this document.

Submitted by: David Ridley:

Q In 2006 VIHA paid a consultant to prepare a report on acute service delivery in north Vancouver Island. Using a points system, that report placed option 4, (upgrading existing facilities), second only to option 1, (a new hospital at a neutral site). Points were given to option 1, because, "It is generally the preferred option of stakeholders consulted." Since then it has become painfully obvious that stakeholders do not support option 1.

Why is VIHA so against public opinion, preferring instead to fall back on a consultant's report, which was based on inaccurate information?

A VIHA has undertaken an unprecedented public process around the proposed North Island regional hospital. The complexities and challenges surrounding this very difficult issue are clearly outlined in the attached Opinion Editorial, which addresses and responds to the question you have raised within the framework that this is a complex challenge and beyond merely a bricks and mortar solution.

Q Discounting procedural votes (minutes, adjournment, etc.), how many board votes have been taken in public and how many In-Camera, over the past two years?

A For the period January 2006 to December 2007 the VIHA Board has approved 7 motions at General Board meetings and 66 motions at In-Camera meetings. The VIHA Board ensures compliance with the Section 8 (3) of the *Health Authorities Act* when determining which business will be conducted In-Camera.