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## NEWS RELEASE

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

### **WORK BEGINS TO TRIPLE EMERGENCY ROOM SPACE AT VGH**

VICTORIA – Victoria General Hospital’s new emergency department will accommodate 43,000 annual patient visits – more than triple the capacity of the existing facility, said Premier Gordon Campbell at the groundbreaking for the state-of-the-art facility today. VGH’s new emergency department will also provide more privacy, specialty services to children, and separate care for patients with infectious diseases, as well as improving health services for patients across Vancouver Island.

“The new emergency department at Victoria General Hospital will be triple the size of the current facility and provide emergency, trauma and pediatric care to Vancouver Island patients,” said Campbell. “The new expanded space and diagnostic equipment will also provide a first-class working environment for physicians and health-care providers.”

The building contract was awarded to Campbell Construction Ltd., a local general contracting company that has served Victoria since 1964 when it was first established as W. Campbell Ltd. The \$18.8-million emergency department will be located on the north side of the hospital, closer to the Helmcken Road and Watkiss Way intersection, so that construction will not disrupt current hospital services.

“This new ER is part of our ongoing work to expand health facilities for residents of south Vancouver Island, including the new Royal Jubilee Hospital,” said Oak Bay-Gordon Head MLA Ida Chong. “As the population here continues to grow, it’s important that we make the investments necessary to ensure health-care services match that growth.”

“The new emergency department will strengthen the services Victoria General Hospital can offer patients in its role as the trauma centre for Vancouver Island,” said Saanich North and the Islands MLA Murray Coell. “The particular attention paid to pediatric care in this new facility will also help the youngest patients feel at ease.”

Three separate entrances, rather than a single entrance, have been built into the design: one for patients who can walk, one for patients who arrive by ambulance and a third for patients with infectious diseases who will be placed in one of three new isolation rooms. Also included in the design is a ‘mini pediatric emergency department,’ which features a new pediatric trauma bay, a pediatric isolation room, and a separate waiting area for children. These areas will be staffed by designated pediatric nurses and will host four specialized pediatric stretchers.

In addition, the patient-friendly design will offer separation and increased privacy among different client groups including children, and women who may have been sexually assaulted and are waiting for emergency care.

This project is the first major capital renovation of the emergency department at Victoria General Hospital since it was built in 1983. The project is jointly funded by the Province and the Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) using a 60/40 cost-sharing formula. The Province is providing \$11.3 million and the CRHD is providing \$7.5 million.

“The Capital Regional Hospital District is very pleased to be partnering with the Province on such an important project to improve the capacity of emergency health-care services in our growing region and address future needs,” said Chris Clement, chair of the Capital Regional Hospital District. “The CRHD is extremely proud to be associated with the two most significant health capital investments in our region. The combined CRHD share for the Royal Jubilee Hospital Patient Care Centre and the Victoria General Hospital Emergency Department Expansion is \$115 million.”

The old emergency department was originally designed to accommodate 10,000 patient visits a year. That number has grown over the years to 36,000 annual visits in 2007. The new emergency department will accommodate 43,000 annual patient visits and is part of the Province’s \$2.7-billion health sector capital plan to improve British Columbia’s health system.

“Excitement is mounting within VIHA as staff and patients are now seeing tangible signs of progress on the new emergency department with the kickoff of construction,” said Jac Kreut, Vancouver Island Health Authority board chair.

“The health and safety of our staff is integral to running an effective trauma centre and providing the best care for our patients,” said Dr. Stephen Wheeler, director of emergency services and trauma for VIHA. “The new, larger and more modern emergency department will be built to the latest infection control standards and will offer many enhanced features to reduce the spread of infections.”

The Province announced funding approval for the new emergency department at Victoria General Hospital in December 2007 and expects construction to be completed by December 2009.

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