



NEWS RELEASE

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VIHA INVITES FAMILY DOCTORS TO PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICIAN NETWORKS

VICTORIA – From funding provided by the Provincial Government’s \$100 million Health Innovation Fund, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) today issued two Expressions of Interest (EOIs), inviting family physicians in Victoria and Campbell River to participate in physician “networks” where they can learn how to provide optimal care for seniors and other patients with multiple chronic illnesses.

“The development of physician and primary care networks are one of the cornerstones of a vibrant and innovative primary care system that will better address the challenges of patients with complex and multiple chronic diseases such as diabetes and congestive heart failure,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “VIHA’s physician networks will assist in designing care strategies and providing specialized training to ensure that we can provide the highest quality care to patients with multiple chronic conditions.”

Family doctors who are selected to participate in VIHA’s physician networks will engage in training and education sessions to help develop optimal systems for treating seniors and patients living with multiple chronic diseases. The family doctors will also have the opportunity to meet and consult with specialists on a regular basis, which will help them develop appropriate, effective care plans for their complex patients.

“Physician networks are part of the health authority’s comprehensive strategy to improve the way chronic diseases are managed on Vancouver Island,” said VIHA Board representative Dr. Don Carlow. “Our ultimate goal is to improve health outcomes and the quality of life for island residents who live with multiple chronic illnesses and reduce their risk of hospitalization and unexpected visits to emergency rooms for treatment.”

To be eligible for inclusion in VIHA’s physician networks, family doctors must:

- Have experience or an interest in using the chronic disease management toolkit and patient registries;

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Page 1 of 2

- Have hospital privileges or be interested in applying for hospital privileges;
- Have a minimum of 40 patients identified as having two or more chronic co-morbidities (such as diabetes, chronic renal failure, and congestive heart failure);
- Have an interest in participating in the development of interdisciplinary network teams to support best practices for co-morbid populations;
- Have an interest in innovation and quality improvement in their practice;
- Have an interest in focusing some practice time in a “shared care” model with specialists, such as cardiologists, nephrologists, endocrinologists and/or geriatricians and geriatric psychiatrists.

VIHA hopes to enroll 30 family doctors from the Greater Victoria area and 10 from Campbell River in the physician networks. The health authority expects to have 97 family doctors and their office staff involved in integrated health networks across the island by December 31, 2007.

Doctors who are interested in participating must apply by October 1, 2007. Successful applicants will be contacted by October 15, 2007.

These physician networks form part of several Health Innovation Fund projects designed to develop integrated primary health care networks in Victoria, Sooke, Nanaimo, Port-Alberni, Parksville-Qualicum and Campbell River. This project will partner general practitioners, health authority staff and community agencies to provide services and resources to people in these communities who are living with multiple chronic diseases.

In Budget 2007, government announced the creation of a one-time \$100-million Health Innovation Fund, open to health authorities for innovative proposals to promote innovation and facilitate improvements in patient care within the public health-care system. The fund is assisting health authorities in implementing best practices, restructuring service delivery systems and eliminating key information bottlenecks and is part of government’s Pacific Leadership Agenda to improve the health of citizens and renew the public health system.

The EOIs are posted at www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca. (Document ID#: **Physician Network**).

-- 30 --

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