



GENERAL BOARD MEETING
Wednesday January 27, 2010
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Submitted by: Stan Clark

Q

I want to know why Campbell River is 20 years behind the Comox Valley in treating mental illness? Why do we not have access to the psych ward at St. Joseph's? The only significant improvement in mental health services to take place in Campbell River since 1992 is the Beacon Club and had I not been on the scene, Victoria would have cancelled the funding just as happened when the Government was setting up psych wards in the Comox Valley, Powell River, Nanaimo, Duncan and Port Alberni.

A

Historically, many clinical services have been shared between the Comox Valley and Campbell River as the relatively small size of these towns could not sustain separate service provision in both communities. In the case of psychiatry services, St. Joseph's Hospital has been responsible for providing acute psychiatry services for all North Island residents. You will be pleased to hear that as part of VIHA's plans to build two new hospitals in the North Island, VIHA plans to establish a psychiatry unit at the future new Campbell River Hospital. This will further strengthen both community and acute care based psychiatric services in Campbell River.

Campbell River residents have always had, and continue to have, access to in-patient psychiatric services at St. Joseph's Hospital, as this hospital is responsible for providing psychiatric care to all North Island residents. In cases where there are concerns about a lack of access, these can, and are, reviewed by VIHA's Medical Director for Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Finally, there have many significant improvements to mental health and addictions services in Campbell River over the past 20 years. These include: additional mental health and addictions staff (in areas that include short term treatment, case management, rehabilitation, addictions, older adult, intake, housing, psychiatry, psychology, etc); crisis nurses deployed at Campbell River Hospital; a safe room in the Campbell River Hospital Emergency Department; the co-location of mental health and addictions services to allow for more coordinated services; ongoing specialized training for staff; increased availability of Campbell River community psychiatrists; a VIHA-funded six unit apartment building providing subsidized housing for individuals recovering from mental health and addictions issues; increased group support programming; expanded telephone support in outlying regions, which facilitates phone intake and improves access to services; regular mental health clinician services are now provided to Cortes Island, Gold River and Tahsis; the North Island Liver Service has been developed and includes an embedded mental health and addictions clinician; crisis services have been expanded to seven days per week, and also oversee access to detox and crisis stabilization beds; and, finally, eight new (4 male/4 female) Detox/Crisis Stabilization beds have opened in Campbell River.