



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services
Vancouver Island Health Authority
Child Health BC

NANAIMO CHILDREN GET PEDIATRIC HEALTH CLINIC

NANAIMO – Central and northern Vancouver Island children can now access specialized pediatric care closer to home with the opening of the new Paediatric Ambulatory Health Clinic at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH).

“Vancouver Island children and families make thousands of trips to BC Children’s Hospital for care each year. This new service will enhance the current quality pediatric programs at NRGH and allow many Nanaimo and central and northern Vancouver Island families to receive specialized pediatric care closer to their homes and families, sparing them a trip to Vancouver or Victoria,” said Linda Reid, Minister of State for Childcare.

Reid and Nanaimo-Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon were joined by representatives from the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and Child Health BC to officially open the clinic, which will provide diagnostic and treatment programs for children and youth, such as gastrointestinal, endocrinology (diabetes), and neurology services. More than 2,500 children from Vancouver Island make a total of over 6,500 trips to BC Children’s Hospital annually.

“Providing children needing special care and their families with enhanced services is great news,” said Cantelon. “This clinic will build on the exceptional work being done at BC Children’s Hospital, and will improve the quality of life for those families that need these services.”

Child Health BC, an initiative of BC Children’s Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provided \$1.9 million for renovations to create the clinic. Child Health BC’s support of this project, and others around the province, is possible thanks to a \$20 million pledge from the Overwaitea Food Group. Operating funding will be provided by VIHA.

“Local medical professionals, regional specialists and visiting specialists from BC Children’s Hospital will provide children from the region with world-class pediatric care closer to home,” said Dr. Wilma Arruda, medical director for pediatric programs with VIHA.

The clinic is located adjacent to the hospital’s pediatric inpatient ward, which has also been relocated and reconfigured as part of this project.

“We’ve made steady progress in expanding services across B.C. in the past year,” said Child Health BC director Dr. Robert Peterson. “Establishing permanent pediatric care facilities in different B.C. communities is one important component of the work we’re doing, along with the provision of training and workshops on different aspects of pediatric care, and other activities.”

“Child Health BC’s contribution to Nanaimo Regional General Hospital will help us meet the needs of children who come to the hospital as day patients or for overnight stays,” said Maeve O’Byrne, CEO of the Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation.

The Child Health BC network was established to facilitate a province-wide, consistent standard of care for children and youth in British Columbia. It is committed to improved access to care, reduced travel time for families, and greater efficiency and collaboration among professionals and agencies involved in child health throughout the province. The Overwaitea Food Group is the lead benefactor for Child Health BC.

“We’ve been serving Vancouver Island since 1918, and we’re proud of our long history of supporting the communities that support us,” said Steve van der Leest, president of the Overwaitea Food Group. “We’re grateful for the support of our team members and customers who’ve helped us raise the funds that helped make this Child Health BC clinic a reality.”

This clinic, and other improvements in child health in central and north Island, will make it easier for children to get the services they need closer to their homes and families.

Child Health BC is a network of health authorities and health-care providers dedicated to excellence in the care of infants, children and youth in British Columbia. In January 2007, the Overwaitea Food Group became the lead benefactor for Child Health BC with a \$20-million pledge of support to the BC Children’s Hospital Foundation. The Foundation is continuing to raise funds to support Child Health BC, ensuring all B.C. children have access to a consistent standard of pediatric care no matter where in the province they live.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUND

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NRGH PAEDIATRIC AMBULATORY HEALTH CLINIC

- The new Paediatric Ambulatory Health Clinic, funded through Child Health BC, is in a 4,000-square-foot space located adjacent to the pediatric unit at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH).
- The clinic has five cubicles and three examination rooms, designated patient and family waiting areas, and a conference room.
- The clinic is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- New clinics that will be offered include neurology, complex respiratory (non-ventilated patients), and cardiology.
- Current areas of care within the NRGH pediatric unit include surgical daycare, acute care/urgent referrals, ambulatory service for patients with chronic health issues, endocrinology (diabetes), and gastrointestinal programs.
- Local pediatricians, sub-specialists from Victoria General Hospital, and BC Children's Hospital, will provide services to patients from north and central Vancouver Island.
- In addition to pediatric specialists, staff providing services to patients at the clinic currently include a nurse clinician, a diabetic educator, a dietician, and a child life specialist.
- The number of projected visits to the Paediatric Ambulatory Health Clinic for 2009-2010 is 1,645.

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