



NEWS RELEASE

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BC Children's Hospital Foundation

NORTHERN FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM PAEDIATRIC CARE CLINIC

PRINCE GEORGE – Children living in the North who need specialized paediatric health services can now access care closer to home, thanks to an expanded clinic that recently opened at Prince George Regional Hospital.

Representatives from the Province, Northern Health and Child Health BC were on hand today to celebrate the opening of the expanded clinic, which offers highly specialized services such as rheumatology (arthritis), nephrology (kidney), respiratory (asthma and cystic fibrosis), endocrinology and diabetes.

“When your child is sick, the last thing that you want to have to think about is travelling away from your home to get them the care they need,” said Pat Bell, MLA for Prince George-Mackenzie, on behalf of Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon. “Child Health BC, through innovative initiatives like this clinic, is helping to remove that burden by providing specialized care for children and their families closer to home.”

The expansion of the clinic was the result of an \$854,650 injection of funding from Child Health BC, an initiative of BC Children's Hospital, and enables families to access important specialized services closer to their homes and in a timely fashion. The funding helped to expand and equip the existing paediatric ambulatory space at PGRH and will cover operating expenses for the first two years. Ongoing operating funding will be provided by the Province, through Northern Health, starting in 2011.

“The purpose of Child Health BC is to strengthen the existing local expertise of family practitioners, paediatricians and other health professionals who care for children across the province,” said Larry Gold, president of BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children. “This clinic is one of several projects that Child Health BC has funded in the past year that are helping families access an enhanced level of care closer to home, that wasn't available in the past.”

“There is an excellent calibre of health professionals in the northern health region,” said Michael Leisinger, VP Health Services, Northern Health. “This clinic helps us to connect local care providers with paediatric specialists in other regions, and build stronger health-care teams to enhance the quality of care for families right here in the north.”

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“By providing examination space close to the paediatric ward, paediatricians can now see out-patients while remaining available to the paediatric floor and delivery room for emergencies,” said paediatrician Dr. William Abelson. “This allows better co-ordination of care with other child-health expertise such as nutrition and physiotherapy, creating less waiting time. Parents will benefit as they will spend less time away from work and receive better care for their children.”

Child Health BC’s activities are donor-funded, primarily by a \$20-million pledge of support from the Overwaitea Food Group, through BC Children’s Hospital Foundation.

“We’ve been serving Prince George since 1934, and we’re proud of our long history of supporting the community that supports us,” said Mike Olson, vice-president, Save-On-Foods Operations. “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 facility a reality.”

The paediatric ambulatory care clinic builds on a number of developments in paediatric care in the northern health region, including the opening of a new paediatric inpatient unit, and a new neonatal intensive care unit, both of which opened in 2007 at Prince George Regional Hospital.

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. It is an initiative of BC Children’s Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. 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 (www.bcchf.ca). The foundation is continuing to raise funds to support Child Health BC, ensuring all BC children have access to a consistent standard of paediatric care, no matter where in the province they live.

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