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## **Nanaimo pediatric care facilities get boost from Child Health BC**

August 29, 2007 - Nanaimo, BC – Children and families in Nanaimo and Central and Northern Vancouver Island will soon have better access to specialized pediatric medical care closer to home, according to plans announced today by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, Provincial Health Services Authority, Child Health BC and the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital.

Nanaimo Regional General Hospital will construct a pediatric ambulatory care unit to house diagnostic and treatment clinics for children and youth in areas such as Gastrointestinal, Endocrinology (diabetes) and Neurology. Child Health BC will provide up to \$1.5 million to fund the facilities. 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 was initiated by BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

“This unique partnership is about families – supporting parents who care for often very ill youngsters by bringing the expertise of BC Children's Hospital to them,” said Minister of State for Childcare Linda Reid. “Traveling with youngsters is stressful – imagine the gift of receiving care closer to where you live.”

The clinics will be located adjacent to the hospital's pediatric inpatient ward, which will also be relocated and reconfigured as part of this project. The new space is expected to open in early 2008.

“When the new clinics open, many Nanaimo and central and northern Vancouver Island families will be spared the cost and inconvenience of a trip to Vancouver for specialized pediatric care,” said Dr. Wilma Arruda, Department Head of Pediatrics, Vancouver Island Health Authority. “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.”

More than 2,500 children from Vancouver Island make a total of over 6,500 trips to BC Children's Hospital for care each year.

“New pediatric hospital clinics are great news for children and their families in Nanaimo and throughout central and northern Vancouver Island,” said Nanaimo-Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon. “It means that more children will be able to get the treatment and care closer to where they live without having to travel to BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver.”

“The common vision of BC Children's Hospital and the PHSA is for Child Health BC to become one of the agents that helps make the expertise and knowledge of the province's finest pediatric centre more readily

available across B.C.,” said Lynda Cranston, president and CEO of PHSA. “By bringing together partners from around the province who share a commitment to excellence in pediatric care, Child Health BC will help increase the province’s overall capacity for treating children no matter where they live.”

The Nanaimo pediatric ambulatory care unit will be one of the first facilities in BC outside the Lower Mainland to be co-branded under the banner of a regional facility and Child Health BC, which was launched in January after receiving a \$20-million pledge from the Overwaitea Food Group.

“Child Health BC has made steady progress in expanding services across BC in the past year,” said Child Health BC Director Dr. Robert Peterson. “Establishing permanent pediatric care facilities in different BC 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, to local caregivers.”

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

BC Children’s Hospital Foundation is raising the total of \$50 million needed to support the implementation of Child Health BC. The donation from the Overwaitea Food Group, a longtime supporter of BC Children’s Hospital, made the immediate launch of the initiative possible.

“For more than two decades, we’ve focused our community support efforts at the Overwaitea Food Group where we have real impact: kids & their families. Our recent \$20-million pledge to support Child Health BC is a demonstration of the strength of this commitment,” said Steve van der Leest, president of the Overwaitea Food Group. “We are very proud to see the first Child Health BC facility becoming a reality for Vancouver Island.”

Child Health BC is a collaborative network of the Provincial Health Services Authority involving all of the province’s regional health authorities, including Fraser Health, Interior Health, Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

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