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## NEWS RELEASE

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2008HEALTH0073-001112  
July 31, 2008

Ministry of Health Services  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
BC Children's Hospital

### **PEDIATRIC ICU RENOVATIONS BENEFIT B.C. CHILDREN & YOUTH**

VANCOUVER – Children receiving care in BC Children's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) will benefit from the completion of a \$4.4-million renovation project to enhance family and staff areas and improve the unit's capacity to care for children who require strict isolation.

“Patients in BC Children's PICU are some of the most vulnerable in the province and require urgent care of the best quality,” said Health Services Minister George Abbott. “The improvement will help to ensure that these children who come from across British Columbia get the best care possible and help their families as well.”

These renovations will enable BC Children's Hospital to continue to provide safe pediatric intensive care while the campaign to plan and build a new acute care building continues.

Each year, more than 1,200 children and youth receive care in the PICU. As the only dedicated PICU in British Columbia, the unit serves the entire province for critical care of children and youth who have experienced trauma, or require advanced life support and the highest level of intensive care due to complex medical conditions or surgery.

Among the many outcomes of these renovations was the improvement of family waiting areas – families of children in the PICU are often under considerable stress and in crisis. Having dedicated, restful waiting areas is very important and in keeping with the BC Children's Hospital commitment to family-centred care.

“This renovation project, while short-term, addresses many of the ever-increasing pressures placed on the PICU so that we can better serve our patients and families,” said Wynne Powell, PHSA board chair. “From improved infection control, better communication systems and lighting, to additional space and amenities for staff and families, these improvements will help us make the best possible use of this 26-year-old facility until the new acute care facility is constructed.”

Other improvements included the construction of a 300-square-metre addition outside the previous footprint of the PICU. The addition accommodates storage for respiratory equipment, on-call rooms, offices and staff areas. Renovations within the unit include reconfiguring two existing isolation rooms to include anterooms and better meet current standards; updated family waiting areas; a small playroom; upgrades at bedsides to accommodate newer technology; upgrades to the utility rooms; an improved central work station and satellite pharmacy space. While no additional beds have been added, available patient space has been maximized.

“We greatly appreciate the support of the provincial government and the PHSA in making this project happen,” said Larry Gold, president, BC Children’s Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children. “The project was executed with minimal patient disruption under the combined program and project leaders and we are thankful to the program physicians, staff, volunteers and families for their patience throughout the process.”

The province’s only specialized pediatric facility, BC Children’s Hospital is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. BC Children’s Hospital provides highly specialized services that are not available elsewhere in the province for many of British Columbia’s most seriously ill or injured children.

In March 2008, Premier Gordon Campbell announced plans to rebuild BC Children’s Hospital following up on a government commitment from the 2008 speech from the throne to upgrade and expand BC Children’s Hospital.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **PEDIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE UNIT RENOVATION**

Planning for the PICU's renovation began in May 2005, and took place in multiple phases to limit the impact to patient care. The PICU remained open throughout the renovation process. The renovation was identified as necessary for a variety of reasons, some of which are outlined below:

The PICU space is 26 years old. Over this time, technology has changed and the standards for specialized isolation facilities have increased. Technological advances in the equipment required to support critically ill children include extracorporeal life support (ECLS), extracorporeal renal (kidney) support, respiratory support and monitoring as well as pharmacological delivery devices. This advanced technology and equipment requires sufficient space for bedside use and proper storage facilities. As BC Children's cares for children and youth of all ages and sizes, there is a requirement for storage of various sizes of similar equipment to accommodate the range of patient sizes.

Overall acuity of patients has increased as has the range of patients requiring critical and intensive care. As BC Children's Hospital is an academic health sciences centre and responsible for training and educating health care providers from every discipline, these renovations also improve its capacity to train and educate critical care providers.

The PICU is the only ICU in the province that specializes in pediatric medicine. Using a family-centered approach, care is given to infants and children from newborn to 17 years old that have urgent needs due to life-threatening disease, injury, or following surgery, such as cardiac or brain surgery.

Currently, between 17 and 22 beds may be in use depending on patient acuity, patient mix and staffing levels. The majority of beds are bed bays within a single large room. Bed bays are separated by curtains and are open to the large room. There are five isolation rooms, including two with newly added anterooms that reflect increased standards for infection control.

The multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses and allied health care professionals provide timely assessments and treatments with the goal of achieving the best possible outcomes for critically ill children. The program also provides leadership in research and education about critically ill children.

In the PICU, the critical care team engages in intensive monitoring, observation, and interventions to support children during their recovery, to restore health, and to prevent complications. Ongoing improvements in intensive care have resulted in improved survival and decreased length of stay for children. The critical care team is committed to providing the safest and best care for all critically ill children and their families.

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