



MEDIA RELEASE

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More Support for Children with Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions

VERNON – Families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and other complex developmental behavioral conditions will now have better access to the services and support their children need with the opening of Child Health BC's telehealth services in the North Okanagan Neurological Association's (NONA) Child Development Centre.

Minister of Children and Family Development and Okanagan-Vernon MLA Tom Christensen joined representatives of Interior Health, Child Health BC and NONA to officially kick off Child Health BC's telehealth project. Telehealth videoconferencing technology helps to overcome barriers of geography, transportation infrastructure, or socio-economic disparity by enabling clinical consultation, continuing professional education, and healthcare management.

"Telehealth services save children and their families days of travel and related expenses, since they can access health specialists from their own community rather than traveling to larger centres across the province," said Christensen. "Telehealth videoconferencing technology is now in place in more than 100 communities in BC compared to 11 communities in 2001, part of this government's commitment to improve rural and remote residents' access to health services and specialists."

Now that telehealth services have been established in the NONA Child Development Centre, assessment and diagnostic services for children with suspect developmental delays will be more readily available within Interior Health.

"Improving access to high quality services for children and youth across BC is what Child Health BC is all about," said Dr. Robert Peterson, Director Child Health BC. "This project not only connects services, resources and expertise within Interior Health – it also expands the network of care and knowledge supported by BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children – benefiting children and their families in remote and rural communities as well as supporting their local healthcare providers."

The overall project has involved establishing a dedicated area on the third floor of the NONA Child Development Centre to accommodate: clinical assessments for children; a family interview space; a teaching area for Nursing, Psychology, Speech Language, Pediatrics and Psychiatry; telehealth for clinical

