



**B.C.'s Children's Hospital Ambulatory Care Building
Background
February 5, 2003**

History

There is a global health trend towards increased and improved ambulatory care, in which patients receive the care they need during their clinic visit without overnighting at the hospital. Ambulatory care offers an efficient use of health care dollars, while providing quality patient services. It also means that families are not separated because a child (and usually a parent) has to stay in hospital for care.

The population of British Columbia has experienced tremendous growth over the last 20 years, putting further demand on all health care resources.

The ambulatory clinic space in the B.C.'s Children's Hospital had been designed in the 1970s to accommodate 40,000 ambulatory patient visits per year. By 2000, the ambulatory clinics were seeing well over 100,000 visits. The amount of visitors to ambulatory clinics at Children's had far exceeded the number for which the area had been built. Some patients were faced with long waits to receive the care and services they required, while staff struggled with the logistics of the space shortage.

To help alleviate these cramped conditions for patients and staff, Children's applied for funding and rezoning to add a new building dedicated to ambulatory care. Construction began in 2000 and clinics began to be transferred into the new building last year.

Features

The new Children's Ambulatory Care building triples the number of clinic rooms available on site for patients and staff. The 5-storey, 10,555 square metre (113,600 square foot) building houses 24 pediatric specialty medical and surgical clinics.

Prior to construction, the area of the hospital used for children's ambulatory care clinics was only 9,600 square feet (893 square metres). It was inadequate for the volume of ambulatory patients Children's was seeing.

Clinics are grouped into modules to permit highly functional and accessible use of shared space. These modules are colour and number coded, making them easy to locate and identify.

The increase in specialty programs over the years has resulted in more staff with highly specialized training and expertise. The new building provides much needed office space, and enables the many members of multidisciplinary health care teams to share these offices. Within these groupings there are rooms to accommodate trainees who have an important role in managing patients. This adds to the spirit of academic inquiry that is so important at this teaching hospital.

In addition to meeting and clinical conference rooms, the building features a family resource library, a Telehealth communication facility, an expanded outpatient pharmacy, and a specimen collection lab.

Care was taken to provide for the needs of visitors, with lockers on the main level, wheelchair accessible washrooms, and special change stations for neurologically impaired patients. There are mini-kitchens in each module with fridges, sinks and microwaves for families and patients who may be spending mealtime at a clinic, or have blood-sugar concerns. Plans are also in place to develop more amenity space, such as a coffee shop and a gift shop.

Cost

The provincial government provided \$19.6 million for the building and B.C.'s Children's Hospital Foundation \$8 million. The building's total cost was approximately \$28 million.

Energy Savings

Children's received the assistance and guidance of BC Hydro to design an energy-efficient building and obtain a Federal Commercial Building Incentive Grant from Natural Resources Canada. The energy efficiency of the Ambulatory Care building far exceeds that of the older buildings on the Oak Street site, surpassing standards set by the current National Energy Code for a comparable modern building by almost 40 per cent.