



North Okanagan
Columbia Shuswap
Regional Hospital
District



MEDIA RELEASE

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New CT Scanner at Vernon Jubilee Hospital

VERNON – BC Health Services Minister George Abbott officially introduced the new 64-Slice CT Scanner at Vernon Jubilee Hospital that will provide faster, more detailed scans for patients.

“Faster, more detailed scans will allow doctors to accurately detect life threatening illnesses at earlier stages and determine effective treatment options,” said Abbott. “With early diagnosis, many patients are able to receive less invasive treatments with better outcomes possible than with later diagnosis.”

CT scanning allows for non-invasive imaging and the diagnosis of a variety of conditions in less time with greater comfort. The new CT Scanner will allow radiologists and technologists to more efficiently and quickly scan cancer, pediatric, elderly, trauma and respiratory-compromised patients. With increasing demand for CT services, the new scanner will help keep wait times down. VJH currently performs 30 to 40 CT scans per day.

As well, the new scanner allows for more complex scans. That means those patients requiring more detailed scans, such as for neurological tumors, will not have to travel to Kelowna General Hospital for enhanced scanning.

“Faster scans will mean shorter, more pleasant examinations for patients,” said Tom Christensen, Minister of Children and Family Development and MLA for Okanagan Vernon. “Faster scans will also mean more patients can be booked, improving access to diagnostic tests – a major objective in delivering best quality care to the people of the North Okanagan.”

The cost of the scanner was \$2,092,000, funded 60 per cent from the Ministry of Health through Interior Health and 40 per cent from the North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District.

"Working together improves the quality of health care for all." said Rhona Martin, Chairwoman of the Hospital Board. "The new scanner is a boost to patient care in the North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap. Patients will not have to wait as long or travel as far for many of the important scans they need."

The new equipment has already been a draw for new recruits to Vernon. IH has hired radiologists Dr. Graeme Middelkamp, Dr. Rebekah Stewart and Dr. Claire Thurgur and CT technologist Ruan Trott.

"These new additions ensure that we now have the human resource at VJH to sustain the CT department as well as enhance the CT department to provide the necessary service for the emergency room, surgery and the intensive care unit," said Zeno Cescon, IH Program Administrator, Diagnostic Imaging.

The new CT scanner allows radiologists and technicians to better perform CT angiograms, visualize small abnormalities in the chest and perform guided biopsies in all parts of the body in the diagnosis of suspicious looking growths that can potentially be early stages of cancer. The new equipment is also a platform to eventually start coronary CT scans and detailed studies of the heart. VJH technologists Brent McWillis and Lynda Pitura were sent to Japan for advanced training for the new CT scanner.

Since 2001/02, BC has acquired 17 new CT scanners for hospitals for a current total of 48 CT scanners. This is in addition to replacements such as the one in Vernon. Because of better access, the province is performing thousands more CT exams with approximately 420,000 CT exams completed for 2007/08. This is an increase of about 75 per cent from approximately 240,000 in 2001/02.