

For Immediate Release | March 1, 2016

## Contract agreement reached for laundry services

Interior Health's Board of Directors announced today that the health authority has reached a 20-year agreement with Ecotex Healthcare Linen Service Inc. to provide the majority of linen and laundry services through a centralized facility based in the Okanagan, supported by regional distribution centres.

"A clear case exists to proceed with outsourcing laundry services at our major facilities," said Board Chair Erwin Malzer. "With an anticipated savings of about \$35 million over the life of the contract we will be able to increase our investment in facilities and equipment to support direct patient care, including necessary upgrades and expansions of our emergency departments and operating rooms."

The following Interior Health facilities where laundry services are currently provided will be affected: Kelowna General Hospital, Kootenay Lake Hospital in Nelson, Penticton Regional Hospital, Vernon Jubilee Hospital, and Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops. A total of approximately 93 full-time equivalent positions will be impacted by the decision. Interior Health will work closely with the affected employees and the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) to ensure a smooth transition of the service to Ecotex by Summer 2017.

Ecotex is an experienced British Columbia based laundry service company and has provided laundry and laundry services for Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health, Provincial Health Services, and Providence Health Care among other clients.

"Interior Health laundry employees have delivered high quality service to our patients for many years, and I understand they may feel disappointed with this decision," continued Malzer. "While there will be job displacement within our sites, we believe the commitment by Ecotex to build a facility in the Southern Interior and hire residents from our region will offset some of the impact felt. We will also work with the HEU to support laundry employees as they consider options for the future, whether that is through accessing vacancies or retraining."

It is anticipated that the carbon footprint of the service will be minimally impacted. Increased freight will be largely offset by a consolidated, more energy-efficient centralized facility. For example, reducing the demand to produce and expand steam capability at the five major Interior Health laundry sites in Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton, and Nelson will positively impact the carbon footprint.

On-premise, small laundry sites in Interior Health facilities in Ashcroft, Lillooet, Golden, Princeton, 100 Mile House, and Williams Lake are not part of the agreement, and will continue to be operated by Interior Health with IH employees.