



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District

Floor plans unveiled for 60 beds at Polson Tower

VERNON – Health Minister Margaret MacDiarmid and Vernon-Monashee MLA Eric Foster today unveiled floor plans that will finish the top two floors of Vernon Jubilee Hospital’s Polson Tower by adding 60 beds at a cost of around \$29.6 million.

“Our government is committed to providing high-quality and accessible health services for all British Columbians, including patients who need hospital care in the Greater Vernon region,” said MacDiarmid. “Finishing the top two floors will greatly improve capacity at the Vernon Jubilee Hospital, while also increasing patient comfort, privacy and safety.”

The 60 beds will be located on two, unfinished floors of the Polson Tower that were set aside with future patient needs in mind. Procurement is expected to begin in the next few weeks with a Request for Qualifications and construction beginning in fall of 2013. It is anticipated the two floors will open in summer 2015.

“Building capacity and increasing bed numbers at Vernon Jubilee Hospital has been my top priority since I was first elected in 2009. Since then, I’ve been working together with the health minister and local residents to help make it happen,” said Foster. “This is great news for patients and families, and it is the result of dedication and hard work.”

Of the 60 beds, 14 will be new and the remaining 46 will be relocated from elsewhere in the hospital. The beds will be used primarily for single-patient rooms. Previously, they were located in four-bed and double-occupancy wards. Today’s announcement will see the total number of beds at the Vernon Jubilee Hospital increase from 140 regular and eight temporary beds (148 total) to 162 beds.

The move to more single-occupancy patient rooms will support enhanced patient privacy and improve infection control. The vacated space provided by relocating beds will be available for future expansion if required.

In April 2012, government announced plans to add beds in Polson Tower and complete the two unfinished floors. Funding to complete the two floors will be shared between the Province, the North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District (NOCSRHD) and the Vernon Jubilee Hospital Foundation. Details of the cost sharing split are being finalized.

“We need to support our community to remain healthy and vibrant, and this includes ensuring we have bed capacity at Vernon Jubilee Hospital when we need it,” said Norman Embree, Interior Health board chair. “It’s about ensuring we have appropriate beds available, so families can feel comfortable and safe accessing care.”

Completed as part of the Vernon Jubilee Hospital Project, Polson Tower now includes expanded emergency, maternity and pediatrics departments, ambulatory care, surgical services, intensive care, and medical device reprocessing. Polson Tower was also recently awarded a LEED Gold certification and is the first building in Vernon to achieve this.

LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It is a benchmark for what constitutes a green building in Canada. Polson Tower’s expanded and modernized facilities provide a better, greener environment for patients and staff.

Polson Tower was officially opened for patients in October 2011. The \$180-million Polson Tower added 16,815 square metres (181,000 square feet) of space to the Vernon Jubilee Hospital site.

“By providing funding for additional beds in Polson Tower at Vernon Jubilee Hospital, we are focused on the future,” said NOCSRHD chair Rhona Martin. “We are ensuring we can meet the growing demand for high-level hospital care and services in our community.”

Since 2001, more than \$7 billion has been invested in health capital projects in British Columbia. British Columbia’s health-care system will benefit from \$2.3 billion in health-sector capital investments over the coming three years, including the Interior Heart & Surgical Centre in Kelowna and today’s announcement of 60 beds added to the Polson Tower.

Media can access high-resolution images of the floor plans at:
<http://www.sendtonews.com?SK=JBvmt9SfDL>

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect