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Planning underway for surgical expansion and additional beds at RIH

Interior Health is pleased to announce that work is progressing in identifying strategies to increase capacity and improve patient care at Royal Inland Hospital.

“As a major trauma centre and the tertiary referral centre for the Thompson Nicola, Cariboo and Shuswap regions, we recognize how essential it is that Royal Inland has the capacity to respond appropriately to future demand,” says Interior Health President & CEO Dr. Robert Halpenny.

On May 21st, Interior Health posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the expansion of surgical services at Royal Inland Hospital.

“Based on recommendations following last year’s external review of Surgical Services, we are committed to increasing surgical capacity,” says Susan Brown, VP Acute Services for Interior Health. “Although the Master Site Plan completed in 2011 recommends the eventual development of a new surgical care tower, this expansion of surgical services will help us continue to meet more immediate needs.”

The RFP for surgical services expansion invites proposals to develop plans for the conversion of space on the OR unit into an additional Operating Room. Consultants will also consider services required to support the expansion of surgery, including additional post-operative surgical beds and staffing. Project timelines will be developed following final design and budget estimate completion.

At the same time, Interior Health is undertaking preliminary planning for the introduction of a 20-bed inpatient unit on 4 North at Royal Inland. The Medical Device Reprocessing project had temporarily used 4 North for storage. The final phase of that project is now coming to a close.

“Once 4 North is empty we’ll have the opportunity to return it to a patient care area. This, in addition to several other steps we are taking, will help increase capacity at RIH,” explains Marg Brown, Health Services Administrator for Royal Inland Hospital.

Other measures to help Royal Inland continue to meet demand for inpatient beds include ongoing work to improve patient flow and the discharge process. For example, the Transitions in Care initiative focuses on identifying barriers in communications between health care professionals, patients, families and caregivers during transition from hospital to residential care or home.

As well this spring the Alternate Level of Care (ALC) Support Team has been collaborating with staff and leaders across the continuum of care to examine the patient journey. Their goal is to improve systems and practices to streamline access and patient flow, and ensure the most appropriate care is provided in the most appropriate setting.

New initiatives underway in the community, such as Home First, Breathe Well, and King Street primary mental health services, are also designed to help take pressure off the acute system.

– 30 –