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VJH moves one step closer to opening

Infusion Health and Graham Design Builders presented Interior Health with the keys to Vernon Jubilee Hospital's (VJH) Polson Tower at a ceremony May 16.

The ceremonial handover of the keys marks the successful completion of construction of the new seven-storey tower, which is slated to begin receiving patients this fall.

"We are extremely grateful for the hard work and dedication of the skilled team at Graham Design Builders and Stantec Consulting," said Infusion Board Chair Michael Baybutt. "Thanks to their exemplary effort, and that of their sub-trades, we were able to complete this phase of the project ahead of schedule and on budget."

Infusion Health KVH General Partnership is the company selected by Interior Health in 2008 to design, build, finance and maintain new hospital facilities in Vernon and Kelowna. Graham Design Builders was the company hired by Infusion to design and build the new tower. Stantec was in turn hired by Graham to do the design.

"This project was an excellent example of the teamwork at the heart of the Infusion Health partnership," said Dave Corcoran, Graham Design Builders' Project Director. "We are proud to have been part of building what we believe is one of the best health care facilities in the province today."

A key aspect of the partnership between Interior Health and Infusion Health is the agreement to have Infusion Health maintain the facilities at VJH. Their services provider, Black & MacDonald, has been providing facilities maintenance services at VJH and Kelowna General Hospital since July 1, 2009, and will continue to do so until 2042.

"On behalf of the Interior Health Authority, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Infusion Health and Graham Design Builders for the outstanding service they have provided to date," said Norman Embree, Interior Health Board Chair. "This has been a highly productive partnership, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the team at Black & MacDonald in the months and years to come as they ensure the smooth maintenance of these state-of-the-art facilities."

The new Polson Tower adds 231,000 square feet of space to the VJH site. It is more than twice the size of the Wesbild Centre, home of the Vernon Vipers, and will be the tallest building in Vernon. In addition to the clinical space being added in the new building, about 50,000 square feet of space will be freed up for use in the existing hospital.

"Black & MacDonald specializes in providing facilities maintenance services across Canada, and we are dedicated to ensuring Interior Health receives top-of-class service across its hospital campuses, both here in Vernon and in Kelowna," said Charles Saramo, Black & MacDonald's division manager for B.C..

Highlights of the new Polson Tower include:

- a new expanded emergency department four times the size of the old one;
- a new covered ambulance garage with double the parking spaces;
- a new ambulatory care centre, including new cardio-pulmonary clinics space;
- new operating rooms almost double the size of the old ones;
- a new Women's and Children's Health Services floor for maternity and pediatric patients;

- new intensive care and coronary care units;
- full integration with the existing hospital via walkways at ground level and on the second and third floors and a pneumatic tube system.

“Hospitals are more than just four walls,” said Baybutt. “At Infusion Health we understand that this building represents a community space that will provide vital services to families in Vernon and the surrounding area for years to come, and we are honoured to be a continuing part of it.”