
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
Northern Health
Peace River Regional Hospital District

PROVINCE GIVES APPROVAL FOR NEW FORT ST. JOHN HOSPITAL

FORT ST. JOHN – Health Minister George Abbott was joined by Peace River North MLA Richard Neufeld and representatives from Northern Health, the Peace River Regional Hospital District and the City of Fort St. John to announce provincial funding approval to replace and expand Fort St. John Hospital, including a residential care facility.

“A new Fort St. John Hospital will be the first hospital replacement of this size in the North and the first time a hospital and a residential care facility will be built as a single public-private partnership,” said Abbott. “All across our province, we are investing billions of dollars in new health facilities and hospitals to improve access to quality patient care.”

The new 15,000-square-metre, 55-bed hospital will provide 11 more acute care beds for the Fort St. John region and will include a 6,600-square-metre building for centralized food and laundry services. A new 123-bed residential care facility for seniors on the same site will share services with the hospital to increase operational efficiency. Both facilities will be built on 40 acres that was transferred to Northern Health by the City of Fort St. John. Completion is expected in 2011 with construction starting in spring 2009.

“Growing communities like Fort St. John need health services that meet the needs of local patients,” said Neufeld. “The new Fort St. John Hospital is an important component of the overall work we are doing to improve health services in this region.”

Northern Health delivers health-care services in the northeast through a range of facilities and programs, including hospitals in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. Those two hospitals share programs to provide a range of specialized services for area residents. Fort St. John Hospital works with hospitals and health facilities across the northeast and currently serves a population of about 69,000, compared to around 4,000 people when the hospital was built in 1962. The northeast population is projected to increase by 21 per cent to approximately 84,000 by 2028.

“We are very pleased to help fund this project,” said Karen Goodings, chair of the Peace River Regional Hospital District. “A new hospital and residential care facility will benefit patients, health professionals and residents of this region for years to come.”

The initial construction cost of the project is an estimated \$268 million. However, the final cost of the overall project is dependent on the bids that are submitted as result of the request for proposal process and the market conditions throughout the competitive selection process. The Province will be contributing \$179 million for the project, with the remainder identified in the regional hospital districts capital plans. The new facility will be pursued as a public-private partnership.

“Health services demand at Fort St. John Hospital is increasing with a growing population, and our existing 44-bed hospital building needs greater capacity,” said Northern Health board chair Dr. Charles Jago. “A new hospital made more sense than trying to expand the existing hospital, which would have cost more. A new hospital will offer a variety of medical services to meet the current and future needs of our patients while at the same time giving us the space to offer training opportunities for our health-care professionals.”

The new hospital will be a centre for pathology, radiology, clinical support and pharmacy services. It will be linked to Kelowna General Hospital for support in psychiatric consultation, and thoracic and plastic surgery. The new Fort St. John Hospital will also be a training site for medical students in the Northern Medical Program.

“Fort St. John is an amazing place to live, to work and to raise a family, and a new hospital and residential care facility will benefit every member of our population,” said Fort St. John Mayor Jim Eglinski. “We are very pleased that the city could play a part in making this happen.”

The next stage will be posting a request for qualifications (RFQ) to invite private consortiums to participate in the project and to select applicants to progress to the request for proposal (RFP) stage. The RFQ for Fort St. John Hospital is expected to be issued in late spring.

British Columbia's health system will benefit from more investments like Fort St. John over the next three years as part of the Province's \$2.7-billion health sector capital plan.

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