



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

PROVINCE SUPPORTS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE DENTAL CLINIC

PRINCE GEORGE – A new pain control dental clinic will open in early 2006 to serve Prince George’s most vulnerable individuals, thanks to a one-time \$50,000 capital grant from the B.C. government, Prince George North MLA Pat Bell, Prince George-Mount Robson MLA Shirley Bond and Prince George-Omineca MLA John Rustad announced today.

“This clinic is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of our most vulnerable citizens, and provide them with a comfortable, familiar and convenient setting to access services they require,” said Bell. “This clinic will make a real difference in these people’s lives.”

The Pain Control Dental Clinic, located at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, will provide emergency relief of pain and follow-up dental services. The clinic, a project of the Friendship Centre, the Central Interior Native Health Society, Northern Health and St. Vincent de Paul, will use volunteer dentists, hygienists and assistants in the community.

“As well as providing an important health service to vulnerable citizens, this clinic will serve as an invaluable learning opportunity for student dental assistants,” said Rustad. “This clinic is a great example of what we can accomplish when local groups, institutions and government work together to help those in need.”

According to Dr. Richard Wilczek, one of the volunteer dentists leading the project, “this financial support from the government is crucial to the new clinic’s success.”

Wilczek explained the government’s contribution will be used to buy all of the dental equipment required to provide a modern, fully-equipped facility. He expects the clinic will provide services to about 300 people in its first year of operation.

“The B.C. government, as one of its Five Great Goals, is committed to providing the best system of support in Canada for people most in need,” said Bond. “Community-driven projects such as this clinic are helping all British Columbians receive the services and supports that they require.”

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides emergency dental services for the relief of pain for all income assistance clients, and enhanced services for persons with disabilities and children. Last year, the ministry spent \$32.7 million on dental services for about 128,000 clients.

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