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## BACKGROUND

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Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Health

### MILESTONES IN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

#### 1946 – 1954:

- 1946 – British Columbians' average life expectancy is about 67 years.
- 1947 – Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas introduces North America's first universal and compulsory hospital insurance program.
- 1947 – Health department expenditures are \$4.6 million, 1.2 per cent of the total provincial budget.
- 1950 – British Columbia's population is 1.1 million, and the average life expectancy is about 68 years.
- 1952 – First total hip replacement operation performed in B.C.
- 1954 – First cataract operation performed in B.C. First total knee replacement operation performed in B.C.

#### 1955 – 1964:

- 1955 – Health department expenditures are \$45.8 million, 21 per cent of the total provincial budget.
- 1955 – British Columbia's population is 1.3 million.
- 1957 – National Hospital Insurance and Diagnostics Act passed, providing free acute hospital care and laboratory and radiological diagnostic services to Canadians.
- 1958 – Hospital Insurance Program begins in B.C., which provides people with publicly funded coverage for hospital stays.
- 1962 – First hemodialysis procedure for chronic renal disease and kidney failure performed in B.C.
- 1964 – First open heart surgery performed in B.C.

#### 1965 – 1974:

- 1965 – Health department expenditures are \$123.2 million, 19 per cent of the total provincial budget.
- 1965 – British Columbia's population is 1.8 million. The average life expectancy is 72.1 years.
- 1965 – BC Medical Plan begins, insuring individuals regardless of age or physical condition.
- 1968 – The federal government implements the Medical Care Act – and B.C. implements the provincial Medical Care Act on July 1, 1968 (one of only two provinces in Canada to do so) ensuring British Columbians have access to necessary medical care based on comprehensive coverage, universal availability, portability, and public administration.
- 1972 – Provincial Pharmacare program begins with the creation of the Prescription Drug Subsidy Program. Cost for the first year is \$887,000.
- 1974 – Provincial Cancer Control Agency of British Columbia is created (later changed to BC Cancer Agency in 1990).

**1975 – 1984:**

- 1975 – Health department expenditures are \$745 million, 22 per cent of total provincial spending.
- 1975 – British Columbia's population is 2.5 million, 9.5 per cent are over the age of 65. The average life expectancy is 73.5 years.
- 1984 – The Canada Health Act is passed by Parliament, outlining the five principles of a public health system – universality, portability, accessibility, comprehensiveness and public administration – that provinces and territories must meet to receive the full federal cash transfers for health and social programs.
- 1984 – British Columbia's population is 2.9 million, 11.2 per cent are over the age of 65. The average life expectancy is 77.3 years.

**1985 – 1994:**

- 1985 – Ministry of Health expenditures are \$2.6 billion, 28 per cent of total provincial spending.
- 1985 – British Columbia's population is 2.9 million, 11.6 per cent are over the age of 65. The average life expectancy is 77.4 years.
- 1988 – The first breast cancer screening program in Canada is established in B.C. through a single agency, the Screening Mammography Program of BC. In conjunction with the Screening Mammography Program, hospital programs begin upgrading the mammography equipment in hospitals.
- 1989 – A multi-organ donor program including heart, lung, and liver transplants is introduced in the fall, and the first heart-lung transplants in B.C. are performed.

**1995 – 2004:**

- 1995 – Ministry of Health expenditures are \$6.8 billion, 34.1 per cent of total provincial spending.
- 1995 – British Columbia's population is 3.7 million, 12.6 per cent are over the age of 65. The average life expectancy is 78.7 years.
- 2001 – Federal Senator Kirby releases report on health care calling for numerous changes to Canada's health-care system.
- 2002 – The Romanow Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada makes recommendations on Canada's health-care system.
- 2002 – Satellite medical schools of the University of British Columbia School of Medicine are established at University of Victoria and University of Northern British Columbia.
- 2004 – First Ministers agree to the 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, which commits provinces and territories to reduce wait times in ten priority areas, and to set multi-year access targets by December 2007.

**2005 – 2017:**

- 2005 – Cost of delivering health-care services across the province (including other ministries and health authorities) is \$12.8 billion.
- 2005 – British Columbia's population is 4.2 million, 13.9 per cent is over the age of 65. The average life expectancy is 81.1 years.
- 2005 – First publicly funded Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner started.
- 2005 – first class of nurse practitioners graduate in British Columbia.
- 2007 – PharmaCare costs are expected to exceed \$1 billion.

- 2009 – Satellite medical school to begin at UBC-Okanagan.
- 2017 – If demand continues to grow, the cost of public health care could be over 70 percent of the total provincial budget.
- 2017 – British Columbia’s population is predicted to be about 4.9 million, 17.9 per cent over the age of 65.
- 2024 – British Columbia’s population is predicted to be about 5.3 million, 21.4 per cent over the age of 65.
- 2024 – Nearly 58,000 British Columbians would be over age 90, more than double the number 20 years earlier.
- 2024 – Average Canadian life expectancy estimated to reach 82 years old – 79 for men, 86 for women.

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