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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

### **CREATIVE IDEAS ON HEALTH HEARD IN VICTORIA**

VICTORIA – Both new and recurring recommendations for health were heard during the sixth provincial Conversation on Health held in Victoria this weekend, and the second to be held on Vancouver Island.

Victoria-area, Salt Spring Island and Pender Island residents from all backgrounds directly told government what they think is needed for the future of B.C.'s health services. An example of suggestions and ideas shared include: more community supports for seniors and mental health clients to alleviate pressure on the acute care system; ensuring primary care centres are integrated by linking funding to partnerships; and developing a patient information system for "cradle to grave."

"As these forums roll out across the province, it's both interesting and informative to see the differences and the similarities of input from participants," said Health Minister George Abbott, who welcomed participants to the forum. "The suggestion of establishing a program to train healthy senior citizens to care for those who are ill is unique to Victoria residents, while ideas like providing more end-of-life care options have been heard at all forums to date."

Meetings were also held on March 9 with health professionals, health organizations and patients to gather their input, experiences and expertise. New input received included: creating more aggressive public education campaigns on prevention of chronic disease and expanding health services to include social supports. Suggestions common to those being heard across the province included: establishing 24/7 community clinics; more education on illness prevention; and making it easier for foreign-trained health professionals to practice in B.C.

"It's obvious from the close to 94,000 people who have joined the Conversation to date that British Columbians have a great passion and interest in the health system today and for the future," said Minister Abbott. "Victoria participants and all British Columbians across the province should be commended for their enthusiasm, thoughtful ideas and commitment to ensuring B.C.'s health system is sustainable for today and tomorrow."

Another 10 Conversation on Health meetings will be held across the province between now and July. On April 28, Campbell River will be the next Vancouver Island community to host these meetings. Full transcripts of all Conversation meetings are posted to the Conversation on Health website at [www.BCConversationonHealth.ca](http://www.BCConversationonHealth.ca) as they take place across the province. To date, transcripts of the Kamloops, Surrey, Kelowna and Nanaimo forums have been posted.

There are many ways to join the Conversation on Health:

- Signing up before a community's registration deadline for one of the upcoming Conversation community meetings. Call the toll-free phone line or register on the website at [www.BCConversationonHealth.ca](http://www.BCConversationonHealth.ca).

- Toll-free – 1-866-884-2055, Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (translation services available in 130 languages)
- Mail – Conversation on Health, 5-3, 1515 Blanshard St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8
- E-mail – ConversationonHealth@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca
- Contacting a local MLA.

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