
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
Ministry of Advanced Education

NEXT GENERATION OF B.C. DOCTORS HIT THE WARDS

VICTORIA – Government funding of more than \$40 million has expanded UBC Clinical Academic Campuses (CACs) at key teaching hospitals throughout British Columbia, providing teaching and training facilities to educate the next generation of physicians, announced Health Minister George Abbott today.

“Expanding academic space at hospitals across the province is enabling the expansion of the UBC’s Faculty of Medicine to produce more B.C.-trained doctors for local communities,” said Abbott speaking at one of the new classrooms at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria which is now linked by video-conferencing technology to other hospitals spanning all six health authorities. “Expanding the clinical academic campuses is part of the government’s commitment to double the number of doctors in training by 2008.”

The province will double its number of undergraduate first-year medical student spaces at UBC from 128 in 2003 to 256 by September 2007 through collaborations at the University of Victoria and the University of Northern British Columbia. This together with expanded postgraduate training positions for Canadian medical graduates from 128 in 2003 to 224 in 2007 will improve the availability of - and access to - GPs and specialists for B.C. residents.

“The Clinical Academic Campuses will help provide communities across B.C. with access to a major medical centre committed to training the next generation of doctors and health care professionals,” said Gavin Stuart, dean of the UBC Faculty of Medicine, who also attended the official launch of the facilities. “These local learning opportunities will allow medical students and residents to receive an outstanding education with the enthusiasm of clinician-teachers across the province and make a major difference to the health of British Columbians.”

Technology is a key component in the delivery of distributed medical education. Each CAC is equipped with videoconferencing technology, which utilizes TELUS IP technology to link all key teaching hospitals for classes.

The three university medical training facilities at UBC, UNBC and UVic, built with a \$134-million investment from the Province, are equipped with high-tech video-conferencing and e-learning systems. The Ministry of Health provided \$27.6 million for new or renovated teaching space in clinical academic campuses and related facilities, and a further \$14.9 million for an audiovisual information technology (AVIT) infrastructure. This allows faculty members to conduct classes with medical students and residents from any of these locations across the province and links virtual learning with the classroom setting.

“Our groundbreaking success in using advanced video-conferencing to connect medical students at three university campuses has paved the way for a similar approach in teaching hospitals,” said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. “We’re using the latest technology to open up opportunities for medical students throughout their training, and creating a model of medical education for other provinces and countries to follow.”

Using TELUS and other technical partners’ technology and a secure information network, students, health professionals and education institutions will benefit from the use of telehealth technology for ongoing training, education and delivery of health care services.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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