
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

RECORD PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH CONVERSATION

VANCOUVER – Thousands of British Columbians have joined the Conversation on Health to date, making it one of the single largest public discussions on health in B.C. history, announced Health Minister George Abbott at the last public forum in Vancouver today.

“While this is the last public forum for the Conversation, there is still time to have your say on the future of health care in our province,” said Abbott. “British Columbians can continue to send in their ideas and innovations by e-mail, toll-free phone line, letter or the website and through MLA offices, until the deadline on Sept. 30, 2007.”

The Conversation on Health was launched on Sept. 28, 2006. As of July 3, the Conversation has:

- Received almost 10,200 written and phone line submissions;
- Seen more than 2,400 British Columbians, including health professionals, patients, unions, health organizations, academics and Aboriginal communities, participate in 74 meetings across the province; and
- Had over 4.4 million hits to the website.

“Throughout the Conversation, British Columbians have voiced a diverse range of opinions based on common values for the health system,” said Mary Polak, Parliamentary Secretary for the Conversation and Langley MLA. “This input will help guide the next steps B.C. takes to strengthen and improve the public health system so that it best serves this and future generations.”

All input received through the Conversation on Health will be summarized in a report that will be presented to government this fall. This report will help guide new programs, services and legislation for B.C.’s health system, in accordance with the principles of the Canada Health Act, and criteria such as improved patient care and accountability.

Some of the common recommendations heard across the province include:

- More health promotion and more focus on illness prevention rather than treatment
- Establish 24/7 clinics close to emergency rooms to help ease pressures
- Develop multi-disciplinary clinics to provide more holistic health care
- Open up discussions on the ethics and options for end-of-life care
- Ensure supports for addicted and mentally ill British Columbians are integrated across government
- Provide more community home supports, and train and support families to help care for the sick and elderly at home
- Establish more centres for specific surgical procedures to help address wait times
- Expand the scope of practice for health professionals to make the best use of their skills and training

British Columbians can continue to join the Conversation on Health until Sept. 30, 2007 by:

- Toll-free phone line – 1-866-884-2055, Monday to Friday, 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
- Website – www.BCConversationonHealth.ca
- Contacting a local MLA.

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