
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007HEALTH0114-001259
Oct. 9, 2007

Ministry of Health
Providence Health Care

FAST TRACK UNIT OPENS FOR ST. PAUL'S ER

VANCOUVER – A redesigned and refurbished emergency “fast track” unit at St. Paul’s Hospital will reduce wait times and improve around-the-clock patient care, Health Minister George Abbott said today at the facility’s official opening.

“As one of the province’s busiest emergency rooms, St. Paul’s is at the forefront of treating some of the most complex cases, as well those that are non-life threatening,” said Abbott. “The redesigned, innovative fast track unit allows patients with less serious needs to be seen, assessed, and treated faster and released in a timely manner. Fast tracking frees the main emergency room staff to focus on the most urgent cases, and it improves patients’ access to emergency services overall.”

The fast track is a separate area from the main St. Paul’s emergency room and allows for the rapid assessment and treatment of less serious injuries and illnesses. The fast track unit cost \$1.2 million to develop and is the latest improvement as part of a \$12.2-million plan to revitalize St. Paul’s Hospital’s Emergency Department.

The new fast track’s improvements in design, staffing, equipment and patient admission procedures are expected to reduce emergency room wait times for less urgent cases, allowing more of these patients to be assessed and treated in less than two hours.

“Right now at St. Paul’s Hospital, staff and physicians are treating over 60,000 emergency patients a year,” said Dr. Lawrence Cheng, physician operations leader at St. Paul’s emergency. “Reducing wait times allows us to see more patients. For example, if we free up an additional 30 minutes per patient, that would allow us to see another 10,000 patients a year in emergency, leading to improved access and care throughout the system.”

With six stretcher bays, the new fast track will include increased treatment space for IV antibiotics, dedicated rooms for ophthalmology, and ear, nose and throat, a new room for treating infants and children, and gynecology rooms for specialized examinations and treatments.

“Through the \$10-million funding from the provincial government and Vancouver Coastal Health – along with \$2.2 million from the St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation, we’ve made design and care improvements that have already resulted in a 22 per cent reduction in overall emergency wait times at St. Paul’s,” said Dianne Doyle, president and CEO of Providence Health Care. “Along with prevention, healthy living, and recruitment and retention of health-care professionals, innovative solutions such as this redesign will be key to addressing our growing patient care challenges.”

Media contact:	Marisa Adair Communications Director Ministry of Health 250 920-8500 (cell) 250 952-1887 (media line)	Gavin Wilson Providence Health Care Communications 604 806-8583 604 312-4839 (cell) 604 667-4397 (pager)
----------------	---	--

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province’s news feeds using RSS, visit the Province’s website at www.gov.bc.ca.