
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

BC NURSELINE CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

VICTORIA – Health Minister George Abbott celebrated BC NurseLine’s five years of outstanding service to thousands of British Columbians with a formal plaque presentation today.

“The BC NurseLine has received more than one million calls from British Columbians with 24-hour, toll-free access to registered nurses over the last five years,” said Abbott. “The dedication and commitment of the staff to improving health care in British Columbia is to be celebrated and commended.”

BC NurseLine facts:

- BC NurseLine offers 24/7 health information and advice from a registered nurse;
- Translation services available in over 130 languages;
- After-hours pharmacist support from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. every day was introduced in 2003;
- The BC NurseLine budget has almost tripled, rising to almost \$15 million in 2005/06 from \$5 million in 2001/02; and
- The number of calls has more than tripled to more than 330,000 calls in 2004/05 from close to 100,000 in 2001/02.

“Working as a telenurse is a unique way to provide quality patient support to British Columbians,” said Wendy Lodge, the first nurse hired at BC NurseLine. “One of the best parts of the job is knowing that we all make a difference and that the sky’s the limit of what we can do in the future.”

Specially trained nurses at BC NurseLine answer questions about health topics and procedures, identify symptoms, and help callers decide when to see a health professional.

The Ministry of Health recently announced plans to transfer the service to the Emergency Health Service Commission.

“The move to the Emergency Health Services Commission supports government’s commitment to further expand and strengthen the BC NurseLine,” said Abbott.

The BC NurseLine budget has almost tripled, rising from \$5 million in 2001/02 to almost \$15 million in 2005/06. This funding strengthened British Columbians’ access to care in rural and remote communities, and enabled the addition of the pharmacist service. This next step will build on this foundation with a view to ultimately expanding the service to include physician involvement, mental health support and crisis intervention.

BC NurseLine is a part of the BC HealthGuide program, which also includes the BC HealthGuide Handbook, BC HealthGuide OnLine (www.bchealthguide.org) and BC HealthFiles. The BC HealthGuide program provides quality health information and advice to B.C. residents, wherever they live, to help them manage their health and take appropriate action to their health problem, and actively participate in decision making with health providers.

Call the BC NurseLine:

- Toll-free in British Columbia 1-866-215-4700
- In Greater Vancouver 604-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired 1-866-889-4700

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