



BACKGROUND

October 4, 2012

MOBILE MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING - MRI

What is MRI technology?

MRI is used to take three-dimensional images of organs and tissues inside the body. A strong magnetic field is used to create the three-dimensional imaging. The level of detail healthcare professionals can see is extraordinary compared to any other medical imaging device. Through MRI, radiologists (physicians who specialize in reading images from technology such as MRI, CT, X-Ray or Ultrasound) are able to view detailed internal structures of the body, which in turn supports the diagnosis of many types of injuries and medical conditions. By changing exam parameters, the MRI system can cause tissues in the body to take on different appearances. The use of MRI has increased exponentially in recent years as the technology has improved and become more and more effective in diagnosing injuries and diseases.

What is mobile MRI?

Mobile MRI is very similar to a fixed MRI except it is located in a specially designed trailer to allow it to be transported between communities. Just like a fixed MRI, the mobile unit uses an extremely strong unit to create the three-dimensional images. The mobile MRI unit is lined with material in the walls in order to keep the strong magnetic field within the trailer housing the unit.

What size is the mobile unit and where will it be used?

The mobile unit that VIHA purchased is the first of its kind to be installed in a trailer in North America. The trailer is 48-feet long and weighs approximately 24,041 kg (53,000 lbs.) It will be set up on specially designed pads constructed earlier this year at Cowichan District Hospital in Duncan, West Coast General Hospital in Port Alberni, St. Joseph's General Hospital in the Comox Valley and at the Campbell River Hospital. A tractor trailer will be used to rotate the unit between communities. Extreme caution must be taken when transporting the mobile MRI due to its sensitivity, unique weight and high value of the equipment.

How did VIHA select the MRI system that was purchased?

VIHA issued a Request for proposals seeking a vendor to provide the MRI system. Three qualified responses to the RFP were received. An island-wide selection committee that included radiologist representation from the four communities set to receive mobile MRI service participated in the vendor selection. The proposals were evaluated based on technology, image quality, ease of use, user references, service support and price. Philips Healthcare was selected as the successful vendor.

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Who supplied the trailer that houses the MRI system?

A Request for Proposals was issued seeking a vendor to house the MRI system in a mobile trailer. Advance Mobility Specialty Vehicles was selected.

How much did the MRI system cost?

Purchase price of the mobile MRI, including trailer approximately was \$1.9 million. Infrastructure/site improvement costs totaled approximately \$1.1 million. Operating costs for the remainder of fiscal 2012-13 will be approximately \$700,000 and \$1.4M in fiscal 2013-14.

Can all MRI scans be done in the mobile unit?

The majority of MRI scans, with the exception of some cardiac and neuro cases, can be done within the mobile unit.

How do I get an appointment for a MRI scan in the mobile unit?

The need for a MRI scan is determined by a patient's physician. The physician's office contacts the MRI booking office to set a date for the procedure. The booking office then contacts the patient with the exam date.

How many MRIs will be conducted via the mobile unit annually?

Approximately 3,800 will be done at this time within the mobile unit.

How long is the waiting list for MRI? How long does it take to get a MRI Scan?

Waiting time varies for MRI scans depending upon the urgency of requests. Patients for routine MRI exams will wait several months but the addition of 3,800 annual mobile MRI exams will reduce wait times for Vancouver Island residents.

If I am currently awaiting a MRI scan, will I be going to the mobile unit?

Patients who live in and around the four communities the mobile MRI will visit may have scans done in the mobile unit. Patients will be informed of where their scan will take place when contacted by the booking office.

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