

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 19, 2011

VIHA AND NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE IN DISCUSSIONS REGARDING SITE FOR NEW COMOX VALLEY HOSPITAL

COMOX VALLEY -- A positive meeting took place earlier today between Dr. Jan Lindsay, President and Chief Executive Officer, North Island College (NIC) and Howard Waldner, President and Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA).

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the potential use of an area of land at NIC's Comox Valley campus (Ryan Road/Lerwick Road) that could be used by VIHA to build the Comox Valley site of the proposed North Island Hospital development currently being planned.

VIHA is in the process of developing the business plan for the renewal of hospital services on the North Island. VIHA and NIC have agreed there would be considerable merit in using this site for a hospital, and also agree substantial synergies could be gained around the training of scarce health professionals who will be required to staff the new facilities in Campbell River and Comox Valley as well as other health care services on the North Island.

VIHA and NIC will now continue discussions towards formalization of an arrangement around the land. Further details will be shared as soon as both organizations' respective boards and government have had the opportunity to formally consider the proposal.

In January VIHA announced it had selected a location on Ryan Road across from the Crown Isle development as the preferred site for a new hospital in the Comox Valley. Unfortunately, this site falls within a three kilometre area around CFB Comox/Comox Airport which restricts the height of structures to less than nine metres, meaning this location is not suitable for a new Comox Valley Hospital. VIHA has been in discussions with the Department of National Defence since March to secure a variance on this height restriction, but were informed last week that a variance was not possible.

VIHA expects the preliminary work that has already gone into this hospital – including designs – to be transferrable to a new location, and that the project will continue on schedule.

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Page 1 of 1