

News Release

Providence Health Care Celebrates Dialysis Unit Upgrade and 1500th Kidney Transplant

VANCOUVER, MARCH 19, 2008 – As part of March's Kidney Month activities, Providence Health Care's Renal Program held a celebration event to mark two significant milestones: the re-opening of a vital area of the hemodialysis unit at St. Paul's Hospital after \$1.34 million in upgrades and the 1500th kidney transplant in the Program's history.

Since doctors completed the Program's first kidney transplant in 1986, Providence has grown into a national leader in kidney transplantation and was the first in Canada to perform a transplant through the new Paired Organ Donor Exchange program. It is also the largest kidney treatment, research and education program in the province.

"Performing 1,500 kidney transplants is a tremendous testament to the skill and expertise developed by Providence Health Care's Renal Program," says Katherine Whittred, MLA for North Vancouver-Lonsdale, who attended the event on behalf of Health Minister George Abbott. "Through the work of dedicated renal care specialists, our government's investment in projects like the hemodialysis unit renovation, and innovative strategies for early kidney disease detection, B.C. continues to lead the way in improving outcomes for patients with chronic kidney disease."

The facelift of the province's largest in-centre hemodialysis unit was funded by the Ministry of Health through the Provincial Health Services Authority and BC Provincial Renal Agency. The renovations will improve patient access and flow, improve workplace efficiency and enhance patient safety and infection control issues.

"These upgrades will enable us to better meet the needs of the 285 patients this unit currently serves and improve their experience overall. This is important when you consider that a dialysis patient commonly visits this unit at least three times a week for four hours each visit," says Dianne Doyle, president and CEO, Providence Health Care. "Providence's Renal Program continually strives to better meet the needs of those with renal risks and illness - from breakthrough research in our laboratories and clinics to helping patients gain independence through the home dialysis program."

Providence Health Care has the largest nephrology department in the province, providing care to patients and families across BC and the Yukon. Its integrated, interdisciplinary team of caregivers - based at St. Paul's Hospital - provides a continuum of treatment, from early intervention to dialysis and kidney transplantation. The range of hospital-based and outreach services provided by the renal team includes hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, as well as pre- and post-transplant assessment. Providence operates community hemodialysis units in Vancouver, Squamish, Sechelt, Powell River, Richmond and North Vancouver.

Working with the Provincial Health Services Authority and the five regional health authorities, the BC Provincial Renal Agency plans and coordinates British Columbia's kidney care services. Through these and other partnerships, the agency works to improve early diagnosis and intervention, improve treatment options for patients, ensure the financial sustainability of the provincial renal care system, ensure equitable access to services for all kidney patients in the province, and educate British Columbians about kidney disease.

