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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

### **RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN BRINGS EXPERIENCED NURSES TO B.C.**

VICTORIA – A total of 521 nurses from the United Kingdom have been hired in the Lower Mainland over the last two years, the result of a targeted provincial recruitment effort, Health Minister George Abbott announced today.

“These experienced nurses are benefiting patient care by bringing their strong skills to our province,” said Abbott. “The nurses are helping us to meet the challenge of nursing shortages faced by every province, and many bring with them specialized skills. The recruitment effort complements our provincial programs that are seeing a record number of B.C. nurses graduating from our schools. We’re working to ensure that British Columbians have access to the best possible nursing care.”

The recruitment effort is a partnership between the Ministry of Health, Nurse Vancouver, Health Match BC, the Provincial Health Services Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Providence Health Care and Fraser Health Authority. Its goal is to attract experienced U.K.-licensed nurses to the Vancouver area.

The program focuses on recruiting nurses with more than one year of U.K. work experience in a number of specialty areas, including: cardiac care; ICU/critical care; operating room; renal; oncology; neurosciences/acute spine; emergency nursing; neonatal intensive care; obstetrics; perinatal; pediatrics; gerontology and mental health.

“I chose Vancouver for its attractive lifestyle,” said RN Wayne Gilbert, who began his new career as infection control practitioner at Providence Health Care on Jan. 2, 2008. “There’s such diversity in the city and the mountains are spectacular. I also liked the ethos and values of the Canadian health-care system. The support I was given during the recruitment process and after I arrived has been first-rate. I wanted a challenge and, as an experienced nurse, I’m looking forward to working in British Columbia – learning from the health-care system here and making a positive contribution.”

“Recruiting experienced nurses to British Columbia is a key way for us to address the shortage of health-care workers in British Columbia,” said Lynda Cranston, president and CEO of the Provincial Health Services Authority. “Our focus is on providing the best possible care to patients, and our U.K. nurses have a year or more of experience, often in hard-to-fill specialty areas. These experienced nurses can also take on a mentorship role allowing us to integrate and support more recent nursing school graduates into the health-care system.”

All recruits are qualified to practise in the U.K. and may originally be from communities around the British Isles as well as countries such as Ghana, Jamaica, India, Zimbabwe and the Philippines. Some of the successful candidates are also Canadian-born nurses who wish to come “home.”

“This is a success story not only for our health-care facilities but also for people across the Lower Mainland,” said Vancouver-Burrard MLA Lorne Mayencourt. “This program has placed experienced nurses into health-care facilities and community settings around our region. The statistics are amazing and a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team.”

The recruiters attended a number of job fairs and a major nursing congress held last year in the U.K. The team conducted more than 600 scheduled interviews of experienced nurses who were prescreened through a focused recruitment drive and an online screening process that generated nearly 1,200 candidates who were referred to participating health authorities for consideration. In 2007, a total of 325 nurses were hired, a further 98 nurses are pending hire and another 292 are in the prescreening process.

Recruiting nurses to British Columbia is part of the Province’s B.C. Nursing Strategy. Since 2001, government has invested \$174 million – including \$28 million in 2007 – to help educate, retain and recruit the best qualified nurses. B.C. has added over 3,300 nursing education spaces throughout British Columbia in this time period – an increase of 82 per cent. The increase in nursing education spaces has led to the graduation of over 7,500 new nurses in the past five years – including 4,909 registered nurses, 2,286 practical licensed nurses and 344 registered psychiatric nurses.

Individuals wishing to learn more about the United Kingdom recruitment initiative can visit the campaign’s website at [www.nursevancouver.com](http://www.nursevancouver.com).

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