

*Province-wide solutions.
Better health.*

700 – 1380 Burrard Street 604 675-7400 tel
Vancouver, BC 604 708-2700 fax
V6Z 2H3 Canada www.phsa.ca web

For Immediate Release
July 5, 2005

PHSA invests \$1.2 billion in British Columbia health care
Administrative efficiency, fiscal responsibility leads to break even budgets in 04/05 and 05/06

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), the organization responsible for some of the province's most respected health agencies such as BC Children's Hospital, BC Women's Hospital, the BC Cancer Agency and the BC Centre for Disease Control, reported today that it will invest nearly \$1.2 billion in maintaining and improving the good health of British Columbians during 2005/06.

"Our overall budget is projected to see the authority break even at the end of this year and includes approximately \$56 million in new Ministry of Health funding that will be used to improve direct patient care across the province," said PHSA President and CEO Lynda Cranston.

"More than \$36 million of this funding is being invested in 'life support' – costly drugs and treatments which British Columbians need for life-saving care, including cancer therapies and drugs, cardiac services, renal dialysis and drugs and transplant services."

BC's population, like that of the rest of Canada, is aging and this fact is helping drive the need for greater investment in life support drugs and therapies. As newer and more effective drugs and therapies come onto the market, costs also increase.

The PHSA funds specialized drugs and other treatment therapies delivered directly through its agencies, such as BC Children's Hospital, as well as specialized services delivered by regional health authorities, such as renal dialysis and cardiac surgery.

An \$8 million investment in PHSA Cardiac Services this year demonstrates how the organization provides leadership, planning and coordination services at a provincial level while working with regional health authorities to deliver patient service close to home communities. Cardiac procedures, such as cardiovascular surgery, catheterization/angioplasty and implanting drug eluting stents, are delivered through four regional health authority-based sites. The PHSA's role helps deliver the most efficient service possible while continuing to improve access for non-emergency patients.

Cranston added that the PHSA is making a number of other strategic, targeted investments designed to respond to key health and patient care needs.

For example, the PHSA is investing \$1.8 million in the BC Cancer Agency to operate the province's first publicly-funded PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scanner as the focal point of the agency's new Centre of

....continued page 2

Excellence for Functional Cancer Imaging in Vancouver. A PET scanner provides a new imaging procedure that, when combined with Computed Tomography (CT), enables physicians to more accurately diagnose and manage disease, especially cancer.

In another cancer-fighting investment, the Ministry of Health is providing \$1.8 million for an expansion of the BC Cancer Agency's Screening Mammography Program designed to increase the number of women throughout the province who receive screening mammograms. Women who live in rural and remote areas are being particularly targeted through the purchase of a mobile screening unit. Last year, 232,000 BC women were screened through the program.

A further \$2.5 million is being allocated to support an expanded provincial vaccination initiative that builds upon the three child and adolescent vaccine programs (Varicella [chicken pox], Influenza and Meningococcal) introduced and managed by the PHSA last year.

The PHSA plan maintains its focus on operational efficiency and redesign of administrative and clinical services, with the resulting savings being redirected to protecting and enhancing patient services.

The PHSA is also investing \$29.3 million in a variety of needed capital equipment and facilities during the year. This includes the purchase of improved diagnostic imaging equipment, clinical and medical equipment and laboratory and clinical information systems.

As well as projecting a balanced budget in the current fiscal year, PHSA also reported that it achieved a \$21,000 surplus based on an operational budget of more than \$1.1 billion during the 2004/05 year that ended March 31, 2005. Breaking even financially enables the authority to ensure that maximum funding dollars go to direct patient care while continuing to demonstrate prudent financial stewardship.

In the current fiscal year, the ministry has committed about \$6.5 billion to health authority funding – an increase of \$230 million from the previous year. Total spending on health services across government is set at about \$11.6 billion.

A full copy of PHSA budget material and its three-year operating plan is available at www.phsa.ca.

The PHSA plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. The authority is responsible for:

- *BC Cancer Agency*
- *BC Centre for Disease Control*
- *BC Children's Hospital & Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children*
- *BC Provincial Renal Agency*
- *BC Transplant Society*
- *BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre*
- *PHSA Mental Health and Addictions Services (Riverview and Forensic Psychiatric hospitals)*
- *PHSA Cardiac Services*