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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
BC Mental Health & Addiction Services

### **Heartwood cares for women with addictions**

VANCOUVER – Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, MLA for Vancouver-Fairview, on behalf of Health Minister Michael de Jong, announced the Province will invest more than \$2 million annually to support the Heartwood Centre for Women, a new leading-edge residential substance treatment program at BC Women’s Hospital.

MacDiarmid was joined by representatives from the Provincial Health Services Authority and staff for the centre’s official opening today.

Heartwood, the only program of its kind in B.C., focuses on women with significant substance dependence, mental health concerns and primary health-care needs. It will provide 24/7 services with 30 inpatient beds, eight of which are stabilization-focused. Women can stay for up to 90 days.

As part of BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, the Heartwood Centre for Women offers a full range of residential treatment supported by an interdisciplinary team that includes physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, counsellors, a social worker, a recreation therapist and a dietician. Additional therapies – such as expressive art therapy, acupuncture and yoga – are core program elements. A more robust program, Heartwood replaces the Aurora program, which closed in August 2011.

The Heartwood program is available to any woman who resides in B.C. and meets its eligibility as determined by the regional health authority. Women interested in residential treatment at Heartwood should speak with their health-care provider or call the Ministry of Health’s toll free Alcohol & Drug Information & Referral Service line, 1 800 663-1441, and ask for a contact number for Mental Health and Addiction Service in their community.

The Heartwood Centre for Women reflects best practice for treatment of women with substance dependency and mental health challenges, and exemplifies government’s commitment to improving mental health for women through treatment, harm reduction and transitional care.

## Quotes:

### **Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Labour, Citizen Services and Open Government and MLA for Vancouver-Fairview –**

“Women who complete the Heartwood program will have a solid foundation for recovery. They will emerge with new coping and problem-solving skills, improved health and a transition plan to assist them with recovery in their home community.”

“Supporting women in their recovery supports families and ultimately supports healthier communities across the province.”

### **Lynda Cranston, president and CEO, Provincial Health Services Authority –**

“Specialized treatment and care at Heartwood Centre for Women provides a safe environment that helps to reduce stigma and fear, two known barriers for women seeking treatment for substance dependence and mental health concerns.”

### **Denise Bradshaw, program director, Heartwood Centre for Women –**

“An inter-disciplinary approach to treatment designed specifically for women, provides them with a broad range of support for their recovery. At Heartwood, we know how important meaningful relationships are to improving health and for promoting recovery for women with addiction, mental health challenges and primary health-care needs. We are committed to helping women develop these relationships on the path to recovery.”

## Quick Facts:

- Over any 12-month period, about one in five individuals in the province will experience significant mental health and/or substance use problems leading to personal suffering and interference with life goals.
- Research indicates that women experience more stigma attached to their substance use problems than do men. Stigma and negative stereotypes regarding women’s substance use influences the extent to which women are supported in reaching out for help.
- Women with substance use problems have fewer resources (education, employment, income stability) than men, are more likely to be living with a partner who has substance-use problems, have the responsibility of care for children and have more severe challenges at the beginning of treatment.
- Research indicates that as many as two-thirds of women with substance misuse problems may have a concurrent mental health problem such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder and/or an eating disorder.
- Integrated interventions by primary care and mental health and substance use teams result in better outcomes and decrease the need for emergency and hospital services.

**Learn more:**

- For more information about the Heartwood Centre for Women, please contact Denise Bradshaw, program director at 604 875-2026.
- Women who are seeking access to a day treatment program rather than a residential program should speak to their local health-care provider or visit:
  - Vancouver Coastal Health: [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)
  - Fraser Health: [www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

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