

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release



Media Contact:

Tracy Tang
Public Affairs Officer
Provincial Health
Services Authority

604-675-7416
ttang3@phsa.ca

Plans Unveiled For Complex Chronic Disease Clinic

Vancouver – BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre will be home to a new clinic that will address complex diseases such as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Lyme disease and Fibromyalgia, which often lead to disability for British Columbians.

British Columbia is taking a leading role within Canada with the clinic and its associated research program. The establishment of the clinic is made possible with the direct investment of \$2 million from the BC Ministry of Health announced earlier this year. The clinic will work with patients and family physicians from across the province to provide care for people in addition to learning more about these complex diseases.

The clinic and its research program are expected to support clinicians and researchers in their pursuit of the discovery of causes, diagnosis and potential treatments for these types of diseases. The clinic will also explore the feasibility of incorporating an outreach component to build capacity in the province. The goal will be to enhance the ability for people from all regions within British Columbia to access improved care.

Consulting with people who are suffering with complex chronic diseases during early development of the clinic was established as a key priority. The Complex Chronic Disease Clinic Community Advisory Committee convened its inaugural meeting on November 10th, 2011. The planning team has taken additional time to meet with key stakeholders thus the opening of the clinic has been extended.

During the meeting participants, which included representatives from the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation, MEFM Society of BC and National ME/FM Action Network, were provided a tour of the space. In addition they provided input and feedback to the clinic organizing committee on a variety of topics including community engagement strategies that will provide meaningful input into clinic planning, service delivery model and proposed research agendas.

BC's Women's Hospital & Health Centre is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). The PHSA has been working on the creation of the clinic, which aims to provide patient and symptom-centered care. In addition to establishing a strong link with community advisors from the beginning, recruitment for medical leadership for the clinic is underway.

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QUOTES

Dr. David Patrick, Director and Professor UBC School of Population and Public Health and Medical Epidemiology Lead, Antimicrobial Resistance, BC Centre for Disease Control

"On behalf of a large PHSA team from the BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre and PHSA's Corporate Office, we are enormously grateful to have community members with the generosity to contribute their time in helping us serve the people they represent. They are the experts when it comes to living with Complex Chronic Diseases."

Dr. Jan Christilaw, President, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre

"BC Women's Hospital is pleased to be working with our partners to bring this exciting and important project to fruition."

Sherri Todd, BC Director, National ME/FM Action Network

"We congratulate the BC Government for launching the Complex Chronic Disease Clinic in BC. This is a much needed and very worthwhile endeavor. I am pleased that the project has been assigned to the Provincial Health Services Authority as this recognizes the province-wide scope of the problem and look we forward to working with the PHSA."

Jim Wilson, President, Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation

"The Provincial Health Services Authority had the foresight to create an advisory committee that includes patient representatives. This is a very positive move that reinforces the nature of the relationship of the clinic with its future patients."

Susan MacLean, President, MEFM Society of BC

"We need solutions to the enormous personal costs that are associated with chronic diseases. I believe a community and patient-based approach will move the Complex Chronic Disease Clinic progressively forward. By sharing our understanding of and experience living with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Lyme disease/Fibromyalgia with the clinic's staff and researchers, we will also be able to inform the community about the focus and progress of the clinic."

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