
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
Capital Regional Hospital District
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DIAGNOSTIC EXAM CAPACITY DOUBLED FOR SOUTH ISLANDERS

VICTORIA – Two new additional \$650,000 gamma cameras at the Royal Jubilee and Victoria General hospitals will double the capacity of diagnostic exams and help doctors make faster, more accurate diagnosis of cancers, fractures/injuries and various disease processes.

“Investing in the very latest medical technology at the Royal Jubilee and Victoria General will help ensure residents receive the best quality care close to where they live,” said Oak Bay-Gordon Head MLA Ida Chong. “All across the province, we are seeing record levels of investment in public health facilities.”

New to the Royal Jubilee Hospital, the gamma camera will provide approximately 3,000 additional exams per year, which will have a positive impact on wait times. The camera at Victoria General Hospital replaces an existing model and is also expected to provide approximately 3,000 exams.

“The addition of this advanced technology at these two hospitals will significantly improve access to diagnostic services by doubling the number of diagnostic exams performed by these pieces of medical equipment,” said Saanich North and the Islands MLA Murray Coell. “Modern equipment not only benefits patients but also the health professionals who use it.”

Nuclear medicine uses small amounts of radioactive tracers, which are absorbed by body tissues in different concentrations. A gamma camera detects and maps the radiation throughout the body to produce 3D images, which can then be used to assess the health of the organ being studied. In a single exam, doctors are provided with information about both the nature and the precise location of disease, all in a quick and comfortable procedure.

“We are very excited to have this new technology in our South Island hospitals,” noted Dr. Con Rusack, acting executive vice president and chief medical officer with VIHA. “With units already active in the Comox Valley and Nanaimo, we are showing our commitment to providing high-quality and state of the art patient care to the members of our community.”

The total equipment cost of \$1.3 million was shared between the government of B.C., VIHA, the Capital Regional Hospitals District (CRHD), and with community contributions through the Victoria Hospitals Foundation.

“State-of-the-art diagnostic imaging equipment is crucial in order to provide key procedures for residents across the Capital Region,” said Denise Blackwell, vice-chair of the Capital Regional Hospital District. “The CRHD is proud to have contributed \$290,000 for this new equipment. In partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority, we can ensure our health-care facilities have the best equipment to deliver the best care.”

The new system, the Infinia Hawkeye 4 system from General Electric Healthcare, is a versatile imaging system that helps physicians to determine both the nature and precise location of disease. It is an ideal tool for diagnosis, monitoring treatment response, and surgical planning, especially in the areas of cardiology, oncology, sports medicine, and orthopedics.

“This is one of the latest advancements in hybrid scanners, which combines functional imaging with computed tomography (CT),” said Dr Kevin Forkheim, clinical section head of VIHA-South Department of Functional Imaging/Nuclear Medicine. “It provides us with a new method to visualize disease processes that was not previously available and is a big step forward in medical imaging.”

Nuclear medicine imaging is useful for monitoring and detecting various disease processes, such as:

- Tumors and cancers
- Cardiac disease (including heart attack prevention)
- Bone and lower back pain
- Sports injuries
- Thyroid problems
- Dementia
- Lung problems.

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