

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Richmond Hospital Foundation commends City of Richmond resolution seeking provincial government commitment for new acute care tower

Resolution adds to growing community support to replace seismically unstable, obsolete 50-year-old original tower

Richmond, B.C. – Richmond Hospital Foundation is commending City of Richmond Mayor and Councilors for unanimously passing a resolution last night seeking a provincial government commitment to build a new acute care tower at Richmond Hospital. “It’s time to champion the replacement of a building that has reached the end of its 50-year life-cycle, and we are grateful for the efforts of the Mayor and Council for their community leadership,” said Natalie Meixner, President & CEO, Richmond Hospital Foundation. “Richmond has reached a tipping point. Our city’s growth has outpaced Richmond Hospital’s capacity. Richmond Hospital needs a new acute care tower to address seismic risks and provide adequate acute care beds and we need the voices of our community to be heard.”

On Feb. 15, Richmond Hospital Foundation had made a presentation to the City of Richmond’s General Purpose meeting requesting the support of the Mayor and Council to ask the Provincial Government for a commitment now to build a new Acute Care Tower. “The Foundation and our donors are willing to do their part to raise funds, but we need a provincial funding commitment to proceed,” says Meixner.

Richmond Hospital’s original tower poses serious seismic risks. Vancouver Coastal Health Authority commissioned studies showing the original tower is severely deficient and would sustain major structural damage with possible localized or complete collapse in a moderate to strong earthquake, with or without liquefaction. A moderate earthquake on the Richter scale is 5 to 5.9. On Dec. 29, 2015, we experienced a 4.7 magnitude earthquake.

Since the hospital was first opened in 1966, Richmond has experienced exponential growth while the number of hospital beds has not kept pace. 1966, when the hospital was first opened, Richmond had 50,000 residents and had 132 beds. Today, 50 years later, Richmond has 213,000 residents and YVR has 20 million passengers per year and Richmond Hospital has approximately 225 funded beds. While the population has more than quadrupled, the number of beds has not even doubled. The projection for growth in Richmond for five years from now includes another 20,000 people. By 2030, Richmond is expected to surpass 250,000 people

Richmond also has the fastest growing seniors population in the entire province. In 2014 the total number of people over 65 years was 31,000. In five years from now, that will jump by a whopping 44% to 45,000. By 2030, the number of seniors will be a staggering 65,000. Richmond's seniors have the longest life expectancy in Canada, at 84.9 years. Combined, this will place extreme pressure on our hospital's ability to provide acute care services

No other hospital in BC has fewer acute care beds per capita than Richmond. Richmond Hospital is already recognized as being the most efficient given its population and number of beds. Richmond has the: lowest number of beds per capita in BC and has the highest efficiency rate in hospital beds in BC and one of the highest in Canada, (known in health care as the lowest acute care bed utilization rate, meaning that all beds are effectively utilized for the population).

For nearly 30 years, Richmond Hospital Foundation has raised nearly \$65 million to help purchase vital medical equipment, improve patient care services and upgrade facilities at Richmond Hospital.

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