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Hospital opens new wing

\$6 million centre will provide better care for cancer and psychiatric patients

by Martin van den Hemel
Staff Reporter

A new state-of-the-art \$6 million hospital wing was unveiled at Richmond Hospital on Friday, and promises to provide better care for cancer patients and those needing psychiatric care.

The 9,500-square-foot Park Centre houses a new psychiatric emergency unit and a bigger and better cancer care clinic.

The cancer clinic is bigger, better lit and equipped with the newest technology, and will be able to accommodate 10 people compared to just seven at the facility it replaces.

Patients receiving treatment will be able to enjoy a full view of Minoru Park through a bank of windows that give the centre a less institutionalized feel.

The clinic also boasts a high-tech pharmacy with biological safety features that will protect pharmacists from the often highly-toxic cancer treatment drugs they dispense.

A first-of-its-kind for Vancouver

Coastal Health, the specialized neutral-pressure room where pharmacists will work includes a powerful fume hood to vent dangerous gases, and is accessible only by a small specially-sealed room that's pressurized to ensure fumes from the pharmacy lab don't seep into the surrounding workspace.

The new psych unit, which officially opens its doors on April 1, will be open around-the-clock, seven days per week, addressing the increasing demand for this service. The hospital last year cared for 1,241 patients.

The new unit features six treatment beds and a specially-designed secure room for patients who require the assessment of their condition for up to 72 hours. As well, there's interview space, and academic and teaching space.

"The Park Centre is another example of this government's commitment to make ongoing investments in our health care system today, and for the future," said Richmond East MLA Linda Reid, minister of state for child-care.

Aside from more space, the new layout is described as the "perfect mix of form and function," according to Richmond Health Services program manager Lori Beach.

"While a bigger space will allow clinic staff to treat more patients, the patients receiving treatment will enjoy the view of the park and a more comfortable place for cancer care," she said.

"Park Centre will ensure Richmond residents can access the medical services they need in the community where they live," Richmond-Steveston MLA John Yap said.



Martin van den Hemel photo

Pharmacy technician Gurvinder Helena Kaushal inside a high-tech pharmacy that will help and protect pharmacists and patients in the new \$6 million cancer and psychiatric units at Richmond Hospital.