



Northern Cancer Control Strategy: NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Final concrete pour at Cancer Centre for the North

The BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North has reached a key construction milestone as the final concrete pour has taken place for the linear accelerator vaults.

"Construction continues to be on track for an opening in late 2012," said Prince George-Valemount MLA Shirley Bond. "A new era in cancer care for the North will be launched at that time, providing greater access to service for cancer patients and their families across the region. This final concrete pour is another milestone on our way to a Northern Cancer Centre."

The new BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North will include two linear accelerators, which are used in the delivery of radiation therapy. The facility will also include a computerized-tomography (CT) simulator; a chemotherapy treatment unit; a pharmacy; and general outpatient clinics.

"Today's construction milestone marks a critical service component of the new Centre for the North," said Prince George-Mackenzie MLA Pat Bell. "When operational, the centre's linear accelerators will provide radiation therapy for the first time in Northern B.C. – a specialized treatment that patients in the area currently have to travel to other parts of the province to receive."

To protect others against radiation emitted during treatment, the vault rooms housing the linear accelerator machines need to be enclosed in extremely thick concrete. There were over 900 truckloads of cement delivered for the facility and 246, or around one-quarter, were used directly for the vault walls. At their largest point, the walls are approximately 3.35 metres, or 11 feet, thick. The vault area is only seven per cent of the centre's footprint, yet contains 27 per cent of the building's concrete.

"We are looking forward to the opening of our sixth cancer centre in B.C. and expanding our provincial cancer services to the North," said Brian Schmidt, interim president, BC Cancer Agency.

"We are committed, together with our partners, to enhancing cancer care in Northern B.C.," said Provincial Health Services Authority board chair Wynne Powell. "The new Centre for the North will help provide increased services for Northerners."

"Through the Northern Cancer Control Strategy, we are working to improve cancer care across the Northern Health region," said Dr. Charles Jago, board chair for Northern Health. "The new centre's services will complement the work already completed to enhance our community cancer clinic network across the region."

With the concrete pour complete, work remaining at the centre includes the building envelope and interior finishes.

"The Centre for the North will bring cancer services closer to home for patients and families living in Northern BC," said Nechako Lakes MLA John Rustad.

The Centre for the North is being delivered as a public-private partnership, which will ensure the project is delivered on time and budget. The BC Cancer Agency entered into a fixed-priced, performance-based agreement with the private partner Plenary Health to design, build, finance and maintain the centre for a term of 30 years. All clinical health services will be publicly funded and publicly provided, in accordance with the Canada Health Act.

The Centre for the North is a key component of the Northern Cancer Control Strategy. The \$106 million strategy is a joint partnership between Northern Health, BC Cancer Agency and the Provincial Health Services Authority. It is focused on enhancing the continuum of cancer services in the North, including prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and supportive and palliative care.

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Cancer Centre for the North concrete pours – Quick Facts (in cubic metres):

- Total for cancer centre: 6339 m³ (906 cement truckloads)
- Cancer centre (not including vault rooms): 4,617 m³ (660 cement truckloads)
- Linear accelerator vault area: 1,722 m³ (246 cement truckloads)
- Parkade: 3,864 m³ (552 cement truckloads).

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