



PRESS RELEASE



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First HIV/AIDS Residence and Day Centre Opens

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, September 25, 2003 — The long-awaited Dr. Peter Centre opens its doors today in downtown Vancouver as the first supportive housing development and day-health program for people with HIV/AIDS in Canada. The centre, named after Dr. Peter Jepson-Young who founded the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation, will provide needed comfort and care to people living with HIV/AIDS.

This project combines the contribution of the federal and provincial governments, through the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Program, with additional funding from the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation, the Ministry of Health Services, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the City of Vancouver.

"This innovative project is a compelling example of how governments can work together to provide compassionate, affordable housing services to residents already facing major health challenges" said Hedy Fry, MP for Vancouver Centre on behalf of the Honourable Steven Mahoney, Secretary of State for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "Successes like Vancouver's Dr. Peter Centre are key to developing strong communities, not just here in B.C., but throughout Canada."

"We're working to modernize and strengthen services for people with HIV/AIDS, to provide the dignity and supportive care they deserve," said Premier Gordon Campbell. "This new centre is a testimony to the incredible legacy of Dr. Peter Jepson-Young, and the volunteers at the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation who've worked so hard on behalf of people with HIV/AIDS."

Research shows that people in the Dr. Peter Day Health Program reduced their hospital stays by 55 per cent, and residents by 98 per cent, within a year.

The top two floors of the centre at 1110 Comox Street contain 22 studio units and two short-stay rooms with 24-hour nursing care, and the first two floors house the day-health program. The residence will accommodate individuals who need medically complex palliative and respite care.

"The incidence of HIV/AIDS is increasing in B.C., and nearly 75 per cent of these residents live in Vancouver," said Vancouver city councillor Tim Stevenson. "HIV/AIDS has become a longer term chronic illness, and affected individuals cope with multiple conditions in addition to HIV/AIDS. The new Dr. Peter Centre will help meet this growing need for care and support."

"The new centre is the continuation of Dr. Peter's legacy," said Maxine Davis, executive director for the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation. "AIDS is not going away. There are as many AIDS patients in hospital now as there were in the early years of the epidemic. The Dr. Peter Centre, with its expanded capacity, will be able to offer people a home instead of a hospital."

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Under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute \$88.7 million over the next five years towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide \$29.7 million annually to subsidize the costs of units built under this agreement as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for vulnerable British Columbia residents.

This news release is available at www.bchousing.org online.

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Backgrounder

Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation

Dr. Peter Jepson-Young and his family and friends founded the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation as a non-profit society to provide comfort-care to people living with HIV/AIDS. For two years, Dr. Peter personalized the face of AIDS in his weekly Dr. Peter Diaries on CBC TV. He was ranked by a readers' poll in the Vancouver Sun (1999) as one of the top 100 British Columbians who have shaped the province in the past century.

The Dr. Peter Centre began as a day-health program in a temporary location in an old wing of St. Paul's Hospital in 1997. The following year, unoccupied nurses' dormitories in the same building were used to provide homes for 10 residents. Although inadequate, the temporary location made it possible for the foundation to provide care while launching a fundraising campaign for a new building.

Development Facts - The New Dr. Peter Centre

Location: 1110 Comox Street, Vancouver

Number of units: 22 studio units
Plus two short-stay rooms and a day health program in the same building

- The new Dr. Peter Centre is a four-storey building combining a 22-unit supportive housing development with a 10,000 sq. ft. day centre for people with HIV/AIDS. The residential component occupies the top two floors, each with 11 self-contained studio suites with mini kitchens and wheelchair accessible bathrooms, a congregate dining room and living room.

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- There are also two transition rooms to provide nursing care for people who would otherwise require hospitalization for treatment.
- Tenants receive all their meals, 24-hour nursing support, palliative care, and the same programs and services as the day-program clients, such as counselling, complementary therapies, health education, and recreational opportunities.
- 1,500 health-care visits are made to the day program each month.
- The centre cares for people at risk of deteriorating health due to HIV/AIDS and other multiple health conditions. Individuals on the Dr. Peter Centre wait-list are long-stay hospital patients, those generally in and out of hospital, and may be living in emergency shelters, SRO hotel rooms, or even on the street. Most lack any form of social support which is a key determinant of health.
- The centre includes a kitchen and cafe, terrace, art therapy studio, music therapy studio, TV/video room, computer room, fitness room, complementary therapy room, laundry facilities, showers and therapy tubs.

Partnership contributions

The total capital cost of the Dr. Peter Centre is \$9.8 million.

- The province, through BC Housing, is providing \$4.3 million in operating subsidies, over 35 years, for the housing component of the project.
- The Ministry of Health Services and Vancouver Coastal Health are providing \$3.6 million in capital, \$1 million in annual operating funding for the day centre, and \$1.8 million annually for 24-hour care in the residence.
- The City of Vancouver has leased the land, valued at \$1.6 million, to the foundation for \$1.
- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has contributed \$660,000 toward capital costs under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement.
- The Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation owns and operates the new centre, and raised \$1.9 million in private donations for the development. VanCity Credit Union is one example of an organization that has supported the centre on several levels.

The difference between the total capital cost and the partnership contributions toward capital costs is covered by a mortgage. The 35-year mortgage is subsidized by BC Housing as part of the ongoing operating assistance.

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