



PRESS RELEASE



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Assisted Living Project Moves Forward

GRAND FORKS, British Columbia, May 14, 2004 — Seniors and people with disabilities will have more options for affordable housing and personal care services in Grand Forks with the conversion of Boundary Lodge into 17 subsidized assisted living apartments. Construction is expected to get underway this fall, and Interior Health hopes to place the first clients in the facility by the spring of 2005.

The development will be the community's first publicly funded assisted living residence. It will be subsidized through Independent Living BC (ILBC), a housing-for-health partnership that involves the provincial and federal governments, regional health authorities and the private and non-profit sectors.

Lower-income tenants will be able to rent these units for no more than 70 per cent of their after-tax income. This fee covers accommodation, meals, personal care and hospitality services such as housekeeping, laundry, recreational opportunities and 24-hour response system.

The conversion of Boundary Lodge to assisted living is funded through the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement. Under the Agreement, Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), will provide a \$425,000 grant and the Province of British Columbia, through BC Housing, will provide a grant worth \$844,980. These grants will be used to offset project costs of the conversion and eliminate the need for mortgage financing.

"The Government of Canada is committed to providing affordable housing and support services for seniors who wish to continue living independently but require some assistance," said the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment. "Partnerships like this one are helping to meet the needs of seniors not only here in Grand Forks, but throughout BC and across Canada."

"Residents of Grand Forks got a firm commitment for 17 funded assisted living units, and we are moving forward to make this commitment a reality," said West Kootenay-Boundary MLA Sandy Santori. "The end result will allow more seniors to remain independent for a longer period of time."

Boundary Lodge was originally built to care for residents with intermediate-care needs. However, the facility is outdated and no longer meets the complex needs of today's care clients. It is being converted to assisted living to offer more choices for seniors with health needs in the community. The conversion of Boundary Lodge to assisted living has the support of the Grand Forks and District Housing Society.

"The community has a keen interest in seeing the renovation get underway," said Ingrid Hampf, Interior Health's Grand Forks Site Director. "The benefits of assisted living are tremendous, and the people of Grand Forks will benefit from this service."

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The next steps will involve more detailed discussions with the potential operators of the facility, as well as beginning the construction process. Interior Health and BC Housing will continue to issue updates on the process as it moves forward.

ILBC will create a total of 3,500 independent living units with support services across the province by 2006. To date, over 1,900 ILBC units have been allocated — about 55 per cent of the target.

ILBC is funded in part through the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Program Agreement. The government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute \$88.7 million over 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 Columbians.

For more information about ILBC, visit www.bchousing.org.

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