



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **First Aboriginal Patients' Lodge and Family Housing Opens**

**VANCOUVER, British Columbia, April 6, 2005** — Members of Vancouver's Aboriginal community and their project partners celebrated the opening of a unique housing and health partnership.

The development consists of 22 units of mixed-income housing for Aboriginal families and singles. Seven of these units will be dedicated as an Aboriginal Patient Lodge to provide safe, affordable housing for women, children and their families who travel to Vancouver from rural and remote Aboriginal communities for health care services.

"The construction of this project marks an important step forward for the Aboriginal people of Vancouver," said the Honourable Hedy Fry, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "The Government of Canada is proud to partner with the members of the Aboriginal community, and this project demonstrates how housing can work hand in hand with meeting the medical needs of Aboriginal residents."

"We know that there is a need for affordable housing for our Aboriginal community in Vancouver," said the Honourable Murray Coell, Minister for Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. "We also know that there is an increased risk of homelessness for Aboriginal families from other communities the longer they spend away from their home. That's why this innovative partnership between government and the Aboriginal community is so important."

Many Aboriginal women and children travel to Vancouver for medical treatment that is unavailable in their home communities. They often travel alone because of insufficient resources or unsuitable accommodation for family members.

"Coming to Vancouver for necessary medical care can be very intimidating for Aboriginal patients and their families," said Dr. Liz Whynot, President of the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre. "The Aboriginal Health Program staff at BC Women's Hospital recognized a need for suitable accommodation for Aboriginal families travelling for medical treatment and worked in partnership with Lu'ma to make the Lodge a reality. This is a place where patients and families can feel safe, comfortable and connected at a time when they are away from the support of their home communities."

"Vancouver has excellent health services that should be accessible to those who need them," said Larry Campbell, City of Vancouver Mayor. "The Aboriginal Patients' Lodge and Family Housing is an outstanding asset to the Aboriginal community in Vancouver."

Lu'ma Native Housing Society provides over 40 per cent of all the Aboriginal affordable housing in Vancouver. This housing project will integrate permanent urban Aboriginal residents of mixed income with patients' families in a community setting.

"Lu'ma means 'new beginnings' in Coast Salish," said Ken Clement, President of the Lu'ma Native Housing Society. "As the first of its kind in British Columbia, this housing and health development is a true example of a new beginning. Our urban Aboriginal community is pleased to provide the support needed for rural Aboriginal people in times of

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medical crisis. Our home is your home."

Located at 1254 East 8th Avenue, this development is a multi-partnership initiative between all three levels of government and Lu'ma Native Housing Society.

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute \$130 million by 2008 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the costs of units built under the Canada-B.C. Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.



Drum group with Ribbon Cutting  
(Left to right):

Tso'kam Singing Group; Marjorie White, Board Member - Lu'ma Native Housing Society;  
Claire Marshall, Board Member - Lu'ma Native Housing Society;  
Ken Clement, President - Lu'ma Native Housing Society;  
Dr. Liz Whynot, President of BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre;  
Shayne Ramsay, BC Housing CEO;  
Art Zocolle, Building Namesake and Board member;  
Peter Ladner, Councillor at the City of Vancouver;  
and Nelson Merizzi, General Manager at CMHC.

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### **Backgrounder**

#### **Development**

The development is a 22 unit housing and health partnership. The project consists of 15 units of mixed income family housing and 7 units that will be dedicated as the Aboriginal Patients Lodge to assist women, children, and their families who travel to Vancouver from rural and remote Aboriginal communities for health care services.

The development, designed by Nisga'a architect Patrick Stewart, reflects Indigenous architecture with a contemporary functionality necessary for the project.

#### **Society**

Formerly, the Vancouver Indian Centre Housing Society, the group was incorporated in May, 1980. The Society changed its name to Lu'ma Native Housing Society which means 'new beginnings' in Coast Salish.

Lu'ma provides 40 per cent of the affordable Aboriginal housing in Vancouver and owns and operates 258 units in 10 homes and 10 apartment buildings.

Lu'ma is also the community entity for the Aboriginal Homelessness Committee sponsored by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada which has funded many Aboriginal homelessness projects over the past five years.

#### **Partners and Funding:**

Capital cost of this project is \$4.9 million.

- The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a \$660,000 capital grant.
- The province, through BC Housing provided a \$182,000 capital grant and ongoing subsidy of \$3,659,497 over 35 years.
- The City of Vancouver contributed to the development through the write down of the lease in the amount of \$493,350.
- The province, through the Ministry of Health Services provided a capital grant of \$125,000 which includes funding through the Provincial Health Services Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health.
- Children and Women's Health Centre of BC will be supporting the patients through their Aboriginal Advocate.
- Variety — The Children's Charity contributed playground equipment for visiting families.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities.
- VanCity Community Foundation provided a capital grant of \$5,000.
- First Nations Community including: Chawathil First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and First Nations Resource Group.