



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2005

Woodlands Assisted Living Development One Step Closer

NEW WESTMINSTER, British Columbia, October 26, 2005 — Good Samaritan Canada will build and operate 59 new senior housing units on the historic Woodlands site in New Westminster, Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing, and Senator Jack Austin, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing announced today.

The development will include 46 units of assisted living subsidized under the Independent Living BC program, with operational funds provided by Fraser Health. In addition to seniors' housing, the six-storey building will include a community health centre, and will lease a floor to a childcare centre operated by Kolumbia Inn Daycare Society (KIDS).

"The federal government is committed to providing a wide range of housing options for all British Columbians," said Senator Austin. "This particular development sets a new standard in meeting a full range of housing and care needs, from young children to seniors, and meets the housing priorities established by the Government of Canada."

"Affordable housing, particularly affordable housing for seniors, is a priority for our government," said Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing. "With affordable apartments for seniors, a health centre and much-needed child care spaces provided for growing families, this facility is going to make a big difference to the community."

"This project demonstrates Fraser Health's commitment to providing integrated health and housing solutions designed to meet the needs of seniors in our communities," said Keith Anderson, Interim CEO of Fraser Health, "and brings our total number of assisted living units open or under construction to approximately 1 100 of the overall target of 1 176. The assisted living units, when combined with our planned community health centre will present a campus of care unique in our region, and a strong complement to our existing residential care and hospice beds at the adjacent Queen's Park Care Centre, enabling Fraser Health to respond with a range of services on the same site as individual care needs change."

Assisted living units are self-contained apartments with a 24-hour response system. Residents receive personal care services, such as recreational opportunities and assistance with medications, housekeeping, meals, and laundry services. The federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provides a capital grant towards a portion of the capital costs, and BC Housing provides funding to make sure the housing remains affordable to tenants. Fraser Health funds the personal care services.

"This is a great partnership designed to benefit people of all ages," said Phil Gaudet, president and CEO for Good Samaritan Canada. "We had been looking for an opportunity to include a childcare centre in an assisted living development, and we think it will bring mutual benefits to residents and staff, in addition to the families who will be using it; and we are very pleased to be in partnership with Fraser Health"

The Province of British Columbia is committed to providing 3,500 affordable assisted living apartments. To date over 3,200 units, or 92 per cent, have been allocated in communities across the province.

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

Today's announcement reflects the B.C. government's goal of providing the best system of support in Canada for seniors. The Province's September Budget Update provided an additional \$242 million over three years to improve the lives of seniors, including: renewing the Seniors' Supplement, to provide a monthly benefit for approximately 40,000 low income seniors; doubling annual funding for the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program; and updating existing seniors' health facilities and strengthening and modernizing the full range of services for seniors, to help them live as independently as possible.

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Backgrounder

Good Samaritan Canada

Good Samaritan Canada, a Lutheran social service organization, has over 55 years experience in providing continuing care, assisted living and other specialized health-care services and facilities in an innovative and caring environment. It is one of the largest voluntary health-care providers in Canada.

The society was created in 1949 and built its first facility, a long-term care hospital, in 1955. Subsequent expansion within Alberta and British Columbia included multiple continuing care, assisted living and supportive seniors' housing facilities, as well as purpose-built homes for persons with developmental disabilities and Alzheimer's.

The society has played a key role in the development of new and innovative programs that are becoming industry standards across Canada.

Woodlands Assisted Living Details

The development will have 59 one-bedroom units of assisted/supportive living seniors' housing, including 46 units of subsidized assisted living under the Independent Living BC program. The building will be a six-storey structure with two elevators. It will also include a community health centre, adult day program and a children's day care centre.

Independent Living BC

In 2002, the Province, through BC Housing, implemented the Independent Living BC program in partnership with the federal government, regional health authorities, and private and non-profit housing providers.

The program will create 3,500 affordable independent living units with support services across the province. Of these, 2,500 units are being developed with non-profit societies through the construction of new developments or the conversion of existing health facilities. The remaining 1,000 units are being provided through rent supplements in private assisted living developments.

Seniors are referred to Independent Living BC units by their local health authorities. Case managers work with individual seniors to determine whether independent living is the best option to meet their needs.

Partners

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- The provincial government, through BC Housing and Fraser Health.
- Good Samaritan Canada
- Kolumbia Inn Daycare Society