



PRESS RELEASE



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Construction Begins on Assisted Living Residence

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, October 28, 2005 — Construction started today on the Icelandic Assisted Living Residence, a new \$20-million housing development that will provide 77 assisted living units for Vancouver seniors.

"Quality, affordable housing is what the partnership between the Governments of Canada and British Columbia aims to produce because of our shared vision for the people of this province," said the Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh, Minister of Health and Member of Parliament for Vancouver South, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Housing projects such as this one in Vancouver will help us ensure that our seniors continue to lead active and independent lives."

The Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society's project is funded under Independent Living BC, an innovative housing-for-health program for seniors and people with disabilities. 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.

"Providing modern services in a way that promotes independence is one way the provincial government is meeting its Great Goal of building the best system of support for seniors," said Vancouver-Fraserview MLA Wally Oppal. "Another 77 assisted living units in Vancouver will help meet the changing needs of B.C.'s seniors."

The new assisted living apartments are funded in part under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement. The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), will provide funding to cover capital costs, and BC Housing will provide an ongoing subsidy to ensure that the housing remains affordable. Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) will provide funding for personal care services to ensure that the health care needs of the tenants are met.

"Seniors have differing needs and abilities, and we need to offer them innovative housing options to meet those needs," said Maureen Whyte, VCH Chief Operating Officer for Vancouver Community. "The social and recreational programming is another huge factor in keeping seniors connected to the neighbourhoods where they live."

The City of Vancouver provided development fee reductions to lower capital costs, making the Icelandic Assisted Living Residence a collaborative venture between all three levels of government.

"Vancouver's seniors are asking for more options to live independently as they age," said Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell. "By adding assisted living, we are ensuring that Vancouver remains a great and liveable city at any age or care level."

The Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society first purchased the land from the City of Vancouver in 1962 and has provided residential care for Vancouver's seniors ever since. The growing demand for more independent housing options for seniors who require some care resulted in the decision to replace the care facility with assisted living to further its

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mandate to provide affordable services to seniors.

"The Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society has a history of providing care to seniors," said Albert Teng, Executive Director, Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society. "These new assisted living units will bring a greater degree of dignity and independence to the residents."

The Province of British Columbia, through BC Housing, is committed to providing 3,500 affordable assisted living apartments across the province. To date, more than 3,200 ILBC units, or 90 per cent, have been allocated in communities across the province.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 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 cost of units built under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of its 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

Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society

In 1947, the society, then known as the "Icelandic Old Folks Home Society, Höfn," acquired a mansion on Osler Street in the Shaughnessy district of Vancouver. The Osler Street Home had 24 residents, seniors of Icelandic descent. The growing resident population and their needs necessitated the eventual sale of the Osler Street Home to help pay for the larger home on Harrison Drive. Höfn residents stayed in the Osler Street residence until the Harrison Drive facility was ready for occupancy.

The society later changed its name to the Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society.

The residential care facility on Harrison Drive opened in 1963 and provided housing and care to Vancouver's seniors for over 40 years. Vancouver Coastal Health identified various residential care facilities that needed to be updated to provide the quality of care keeping in line with the changing needs of seniors. The Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society was offered the opportunity to provide assisted living on the same site.

Development

The assisted living development will have two residential wings paralleling the east and west property lines, linked together with service and amenity areas. It is two storeys fronting onto Harrison Drive and four storeys along the south property line on South East Marine Drive. All 77 apartments are one-bedroom units.

Construction is scheduled for completion by fall 2006 with residents moving in prior to the end of the year.

Independent Living BC apartments also include two meals a day, weekly housekeeping and linen services, 24-hour emergency response, personal care services and social and recreational opportunities.

Partners and Funding:

Capital cost of this project is approximately \$20 million.

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is providing a \$3,850,000 capital grant.
- The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide housing subsidy of \$12.1 million over 35 years.
- Vancouver Coastal Health will provide funding for the personal care and part of the hospitality services to tenants.
- The City of Vancouver is providing reductions on various development costs. The value of the contribution is approximately \$450,000.
- The Icelandic Care Home Höfn Society is providing approximately \$3 million in land equity and approximately \$250,000 in cash.



Steven Peterson, potential resident, Solskin Lady Sylvia Isfeld, Craig Crawford — BC Housing, Heather Alda Ireland — Consul General for Iceland in BC and the Yukon the Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh — Minister of Health and MP for Vancouver South on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing.