



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **\$13.4 Million Assisted Living for South Asian Seniors Opens In Surrey**

**SURREY, British Columbia, April 10, 2007** — Federal, provincial and community funding partners gathered today to celebrate the opening of Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society's (PICS) Guru Nanak Niwas Assisted Living project, a \$13.4 million, 72-unit assisted living development designed for South Asian seniors — a first for British Columbia.

"Canada's New Government is delivering on our commitment to create affordable housing in British Columbia," said Nina Grewal, Member of Parliament for Fleetwood – Port Kells, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "With the opening of this project, seniors will have access to quality, affordable housing and the services they need to meet their specific needs while allowing them to remain close to their families and friends in the community."

The new units are funded under Independent Living BC (ILBC), an innovative housing-for-health program managed by the province and Fraser Health in partnership with the Government of Canada through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

"Today's opening reflects this government's commitment to ensure seniors have access to independent, affordable housing," said Minister responsible for Housing, Rich Coleman. "This facility provides seniors with the housing and support services they need, in a cultural setting that truly makes it home".

Assisted living homes are self-contained apartments where residents receive hospitality and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and laundry services, recreational opportunities, assistance with medications, mobility and other care needs, as well as a 24-hour response system. Fraser Health will provide funding for these personal care services.

"Regardless of culture, seniors do not want to live in an institutional setting with 24-hour nursing care if they have the option of living independently with some support and continued involvement with their family and in their community," said Keith Anderson, Interim President and CEO of Fraser Health. "Seniors whose families are challenged by circumstance and by cultural expectations around elder care will find this culturally sensitive development particularly attractive."

"Surrey is a community that embraces and embodies many cultures," said Dianne Watts, Mayor of Surrey. "To have an assisted living development that celebrates that diversity is a wonderful addition to this city and will richly add to the lives of seniors in our community."

PICS, a strong advocate for the multicultural and immigrant community in the Lower Mainland, is the first South Asian immigrant society to partner with the provincial and federal government to build an assisted living development.

"PICS is pleased to offer a unique living environment that takes into account the specific language, culture and food needs of South Asian seniors," said Charan Gill, Chief Executive Officer of PICS. "Guru Nanak Niwas Assisted Living

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will allow these seniors to maintain their independence in a supportive environment.”

While the development is designed to accommodate the specific needs of the South Asian population by offering Punjabi, Gujarati, halal and vegetarian meals; staff fluent in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and Fijian Hindi; and homes close to a Sikh temple and other cultural destinations, seniors from all nationalities are offered an inclusive home environment.

These new units are part of the British Columbia Government’s commitment to provide 5,000 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units, and supportive housing with home support units by the end of 2008. To date, 8,102 new and replacement beds and units have been built, including 2,984 net-new.

The Province of British Columbia, through ILBC, is committed to providing more than 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments for B.C. seniors and persons with disabilities. To date, more than 3,900 have been allocated in communities across the province. The Province’s budget for shelters and affordable housing is \$328 million — nearly triple what it was in 2001.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million by 2010 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

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[See related speech.](#)

### Backgrounder

#### Guru Nanak Niwas Assisted Living

Guru Nanak Niwas Assisted Living, 12075-75A Avenue in Surrey, provides 72 one-bedroom assisted living apartments. All of the units in the four-storey, wood-frame building are wheelchair accessible.

The development will connect to, and share services with, the existing 54-unit supportive seniors’ housing complex that PICS operates on the same site.

Tenants will pay 70 per cent of their after-tax income for their units and receive hospitality and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and laundry, recreational programs, assistance with medications, mobility and other care needs, and a 24-hour response system.

The complex is near a Sikh temple and within walking distance of shops and other amenities. Guru Nanak Niwas was the founding father of the Sikh faith.

### Partners and Funding

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The capital cost of this project is \$13,385,180 with funding from:

- The Government of Canada, through CMHC, provided a \$1.8 million capital grant;
- The provincial government provided a one-time grant of \$10,385,180;
- \$1.1 million in personal care services through Fraser Health; and
- \$1.2 million in land equity provided by the Society.

### **Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society**

The Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society was formed in 1987 to promote harmony and intercultural understanding and support the building of a more inclusive and respectful society; to ensure equal access to jobs and services, and to work with other agencies and institutions.

The Society provides employment services, job mentoring, immigration/settlement services, health education, dental programs, youth programs, volunteer programs, English-language training, drug/alcohol counselling, agricultural workers' programs, a dance academy, an organic farming institute and training, and seniors' housing. They also work in collaboration with Kwantlen College to provide courses in masonry, carpentry skills, sheet metal, welding and training in many more trades needed by the business community.

The Society is a strong advocate for the multicultural and immigrant community, particularly the South Asian community.