
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Celebrating Hope to Health Research Clinic

VANCOUVER – The Downtown Eastside is now home to a world-class HIV/AIDS, addiction and viral hepatitis research centre.

“The Hope to Health Research Clinic will not only help address addictions and HIV needs of the most vulnerable populations in the Downtown Eastside but the research developed here will inform addictions, HIV and hepatitis strategies throughout the province and beyond,” said Health Minister Terry Lake.

Lake attended the official opening of the Hope to Health Research Clinic today, and announced provincial health officer Dr. Perry Kendall will chair the Network for Excellence in Substance Dependence and Related Harms, which will be established this summer.

The research clinic supports the work of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. It is supported through the world’s most-competitive, peer-reviewed granting agencies, including the US National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and B.C.’s own Michael Smith Health Research Foundation.

Under the leadership of Dr. Julio Montaner and Dr. Evan Wood, the Hope to Health Research Clinic will focus on HIV/AIDS studies; at-risk youth; gender and sexual health; strategies for viral hepatitis; addictions and other related conditions.

“The BC-CfE Hope to Health Research Clinic will help us to expand our research efforts in the Downtown Eastside, addressing the evolving medical needs of the most vulnerable in our society. We will expand the impact we have had to date in controlling HIV/AIDS as well as further our efforts in addiction medicine and viral hepatitis,” said Dr. Montaner.

In August 2014, the Ministry of Health partnered with Dr. Evan Wood and announced \$3 million to harness new ways to treat substance dependence and related health concerns. As a result of this funding, considerable progress has since been made, which positions B.C. as a leader in addictions care:

- The Province’s support helped St. Paul’s Hospital and Dr. Evan Wood secure \$2.5 million from the US National Institutes of Health and \$1.8 in funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for addiction research and care.
- The Vivitrol clinical trial for opioid and alcohol addiction treatment – now being conducted out of the Hope to Health clinic – has finished enrolling patients. Data collection is almost complete and data analysis will begin soon.
- Four physician fellows and one nurse fellow are enrolled in the new residency training for the Canada Addiction Medicine Research Fellowship, now the largest program of its kind in North America. The program will expand to six physician clinical fellows and two nurse

fellows in July 2015.

- A rapid access program is helping family doctors provide better treatment care to patients dealing with addiction across the province.
- St. Paul's clinical addiction medicine training program now provides specialized education to 80 physician trainees per year. Related to this, the American Board of Addiction Medicine recently reported that 2014 was an all-time high for the number of B.C. physicians attempting the accreditation exam.

“As a result of the Province’s investment in addiction research and care, we have been able to secure federal funding through the Canadian Research Initiative on Substance Misuse (CRISM) that will provide a key foundation for establishing a provincial addiction research, education and care network,” noted Dr. Wood. “This sets the stage for positioning British Columbia as a national and international leader in the area of addiction care.”

Thanks to a \$3 million private-sector donation from Goldcorp Inc. in 2012, St. Paul’s Hospital is also home to the Goldcorp Fellowship in Addiction Medicine – western Canada’s only American Board of Addiction Medicine-accredited clinical training programs.

All of this work supports “Setting Priorities for the B.C. Health System”, the Ministry of Health’s overarching strategy to create a more sustainable health system. As part of this, a policy paper on primary and community care was created to help build better supports for all British Columbians, including those affected by addictions.

Dr. Evan Wood is a University of British Columbia professor and co-director of the Urban Health Research Initiative at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS at St. Paul’s Hospital and medical director, Addictions Services, Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care.

Learn more:

To learn more about the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, visit: www.cfenet.ubc.ca/

Media Contacts:

Laura Heinze
Media Relations Manager
Ministry of Health
250 952-1887 (media line)

Caroline Dobuzinskis
Communications Coordinator
BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
604 682-2344 ext. 66536

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