



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MOBILE MRI SET TO ROLL FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND PATIENTS

VANCOUVER ISLAND – Mobile Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) service is about to roll between Duncan, Port Alberni, the Comox Valley and Campbell River giving patients in these and surrounding communities improved access to MRI scans.

“This is a wonderful day for patients and their families,” said Comox Valley MLA Don McRae. “Our government is committed to improving patient access to MRI scans by investing in state-of-the-art technology such as mobile MRI.”

The mobile MRI service was officially launched today at its first stop, Cowichan District Hospital in Duncan. Final equipment set-up and staff training is underway with the first patients booked for MRI scans on October 9.

“The mobile MRI is a great benefit for patients and VIHA is pleased to bring this service to these and neighbouring communities,” said Don Hubbard VIHA Board Chair. “Most patients will be able to receive their scans in the mobile MRI unit therefore reducing the need for patients to travel to larger centres for diagnostic testing.”

The mobile unit, housed in a specially designed, 48-foot trailer, will spend one to two weeks in each community at the outset, and rotate to the next community over a weekend. Launch events will be held in Port Alberni, the Comox Valley and Campbell River when the mobile MRI makes its first visit.

“Our mobile MRI system is the first of its kind to be installed in a trailer in North America,” said Dr. John Mathieson, VIHA Medical Director of Medical Imaging. “The equipment is state-of-the-art and will support better patient care and outcomes. Radiologists will have the opportunity to add this technology to their practices and the mobile MRI will allow us to provide most of the MRI scans locally, with only a small number needing to travel to Victoria for more specialized studies.”

The mobile MRI is a significant investment in health care in these communities. Final purchase price for the MRI system including the trailer was approximately \$1.9M while infrastructure costs totaled approximately \$1.1M. Regional Hospital Districts (RHD) have been asked to contribute funds including: Comox Strathcona RHD \$575,971, Cowichan Valley RHD \$419,456 and Alberni Clayoquot RHD \$205,183.

Specially designed parking pads constructed earlier this year at the four acute sites will support the mobile MRI trailer. The MRI system will be operated by VIHA with an annual operating cost of \$1.4M.

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Page 1 of 1

MRI is used to take images of organs and tissues inside the body. Through MRI, radiologists (physicians who specialize in reading images from technology such as MRI, CT, X-Ray or Ultrasound) are able to view detailed internal structures of the body, which in turn supports the diagnosis of many types of injuries and medical conditions. The use of MRI has increased exponentially in recent years as the technology has improved and become more and more effective in diagnosing injuries and diseases.

## QUOTES

“Cowichan Valley residents are very much looking forward to the addition of mobile MRI service,” said Rob Hutchins, Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District. “We know that MRI technology is an important tool in providing patient care and it is great news that residents can now have their MRI scans done locally.”

“The funds our regional hospital district invested in this equipment will have a direct benefit to those who live here,” said Claire Moglove, Chair, Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District. “Our region is geographically very large, and having access to MRI technology close to home will improve health care delivery to so many who had to travel great distances before.”

“The Alberni Clayoquot Regional Hospital District is very pleased to have contributed funds toward the mobile MRI system,” said Cindy Solda, Chair. “Providing MRI technology locally is a huge benefit to residents because they will not have the stress of travel to larger centres when in need of an MRI scan.”

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