

**Victoria Hospitals Foundation Kicks off Fall Campaign to
Raise Funds for Ventilators for the Intensive Care Units at
Victoria General and Royal Jubilee Hospitals**

September 30, 2009

For Immediate Release

Victoria, BC — The Victoria Hospitals Foundation launched its fall campaign today in support of six new ventilators for the Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at the Victoria General and Royal Jubilee Hospitals.

A ventilator is a machine that assists with or provides all of the breathing for people who cannot breathe on their own. The goal of the Victoria Hospitals Foundation's 2009 fall campaign is to fund six new ventilators that cost a total of \$375,000. Funds will be raised through a variety of activities including mail, events, the *Visions* gala and online gifts.

"Patients in the ICU are some of the most vulnerable and require urgent care of the best quality," says Dr. Gordon Wood, site chief for intensive care medicine at Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA). "And the majority of them require the assistance of a mechanical ventilator at some point during their stay."

The ICUs at the Royal Jubilee Hospital and the Victoria General Hospital provide care for people with life-threatening conditions. Patients in the ICU may be critically ill or severely injured, and often have a failure of one or more vital organs. To help them recover as best as possible, intensive care involves specialized staff and facilities, complex medical equipment, and full monitoring systems to track patients' condition.

"Ventilators are a critical part of the pandemic planning being done for the H1N1 virus, although it is impossible to know how many patients will develop severe illness or how many will require ventilation," said Wood. "Ventilators and ICUs will still be needed for other medical conditions, so VIHA has developed a plan to respond to the regular demand as well as the anticipated surge due to H1N1. During the worst phase of their illness, H1N1 patients will require the assistance of the most sophisticated mechanical ventilators."

The ICU at Royal Jubilee Hospital is one of only two ICUs in the province that admits patients with severe burns, and the ICU at Victoria General Hospital is within the designated obstetrical and trauma centre for Vancouver Island, as well as the only hospital on the island that performs neurosurgery.

"We are so fortunate to have exceptional medical staff in the Intensive Care Units in our local hospitals," says Starr McMichael, Victoria Hospitals Foundation board vice chair. "The new ventilators will benefit both Intensive Care Units and help enhance the care they provide each day."

Donations to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation's fall campaign can be made by mail, by phone (250-414-6688) or online at www.victoriahf.ca.

About the ICU H1N1 Pandemic Plan:

In June 2009, the World Health Organization declared a worldwide pandemic relating to the new H1N1 strain of influenza. The word pandemic does not refer to the seriousness of the illness, but rather to its presence and spread around the world.

H1N1 has spread quickly through communities because many people are susceptible to this virus. As distinct from the regular, seasonal influenza, which is present each winter, H1N1 affects younger individuals. It appears people born before 1957 have some immunity, and are less likely to get this illness. Most people who do become ill with H1N1 experience mild symptoms, similar to the symptoms associated with the regular seasonal flu.

In very rare cases, some individuals may experience more serious H1N1 illness, particularly if they have underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or morbid obesity. These individuals may develop a life threatening viral pneumonia and severe hypoxemic respiratory failure from H1N1. Severe cases may require admission to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and mechanical ventilation. Most of these patients will recover.

Depending on the number of individuals who get sick at the same time, this may pose some challenges for critical care capacity. Compared to general hospital wards, ICUs are disproportionately affected by H1N1 infections not just because of the number of patients but also because they will require prolonged stays.

It is impossible to know how many patients will develop severe illness or how many will require ventilators in the ICU because of H1N1. Because they know that ventilators and ICUs will still be needed for other medical conditions, the Vancouver Island Health Authority has developed a plan to respond to the regular demand as well as the anticipated surge in demand due to H1N1. Because of the severe damage to their lungs, H1N1 patients who require ICU admission may be difficult to ventilate. They will require the assistance of the most sophisticated mechanical ventilators during the worst phase of their illness.

The four components of VIHA's ICU pandemic response plan include: space, ventilators, equipment (pumps, monitors, disposables, drugs) and staff (nurses, physicians, respiratory therapists, nutritionists, pharmacists, physiotherapists). VIHA has the capacity to support 26 simultaneously ventilated patients for a two to four week period.

About Direct Mail:

The Victoria Hospitals Foundation undertakes two mail campaigns each year in the spring and fall. Victoria residents can expect to receive the fall letter in the third week of October.

About Visions 2009:

Visions is the annual gala event hosted by the Victoria Hospitals Foundation. The event is held at the Fairmont Empress and is a black-tie evening that includes an elegant sit-

down dinner, entertainment and both silent and live auctions. Last year, the event raised \$390,000.

This year's event will be held on Saturday, November 14. However, while Visions is a one-night affair, the Foundation will be working throughout the fall to reach out to all Vancouver Island residents for support of this worthwhile cause.

About the Victoria Hospitals Foundation:

The Victoria Hospitals Foundation works in partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to enable donations to Vancouver Island's two largest and most comprehensive hospitals: the Royal Jubilee and the Victoria General. Every year we fund 40 per cent of capital equipment purchases for these hospitals, and last year this amounted to more than \$6 million for urgently needed medical equipment and special projects that help these two hospitals provide care to all 752,000 residents of Vancouver Island. Since 1989, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised more than \$70 million to benefit our hospitals. For more information, call the Foundation at 250-414-6688 or go to www.victoriahf.ca.

Did You Know?

- Most patients in the intensive care unit require the assistance of a ventilator at some point during their hospital stay.
- Many patients admitted to the intensive care unit have a failure of one or more vital organs. Lung failure is the most common problem.
- The first machine designed to assist patients with respiratory failure was the iron lung, which was in high use during the 1950s polio epidemic.
- Modern ventilators use *positive pressure* to assist breathing and are able to ventilate patients not only with weak breathing muscles like in polio, but also with far more common problems such as pneumonia.
- The sophisticated newer machines can be adjusted to be 100% responsible or to provide only partial respiratory support, allowing the patient to take over their own breathing as they heal and recover.
- In June 2009, the World Health Organization declared a worldwide pandemic relating to the new H1N1 strain of influenza.
- Severe cases of H1N1 may require admission to an intensive care unit and patients may need the assistance of a ventilator to help them breathe.
- You can contribute to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation's campaign in support of six ventilators for the intensive care unit at Royal Jubilee and Victoria General Hospitals by calling 250-414-6688, mailing to #602-620 View Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1J6 or donating online at www.victoriahf.ca.

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