



ISLAND HEALTH, UVIC AND UBC LAUNCH MAJOR COGNITIVE HEALTH RESEARCH PROJECT

Victoria family funds ambitious five-year project
that aims to improve diagnosis and treatment

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VICTORIA, B.C. - An innovative five-year project to integrate leading-edge research and care for patients living with cognitive health issues on Vancouver Island was announced today at Royal Jubilee Hospital. A Victoria family who has been impacted by cognitive health issues have inspired Island Health, the University of Victoria (UVic) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) to partner and develop *The Neil and Susan Manning Cognitive Health Initiative*. The Mannings have made a generous pledge of \$2.5 million to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation to fund the program.

This is the first-time Island Health, the University of Victoria (UVic) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) Island Medical Program have come together in order to launch a research project that aims to improve the diagnosis and treatment of dementia. UVic's Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health is a key partner and is internationally known in the area of dementia research.

"When a cognitive health illness impacted our family and we began to understand this issue, we realized that while much research had been done, there is still so much more to do to solve the riddles around cognitive diseases," said Neil Manning. "We reached out to the healthcare professionals in Victoria, as it is our home, and asked how can we help? The vision they created for this project resonated with us. For the past two years all the partners here today have worked to finalize the details for this Initiative. It is our great hope that the knowledge gathered will, in time, help thousands of patients."

This visionary project will see the development of state-of-the-art digital tools for early diagnosis, the integration of research protocols into patient care, and the tracking of dementia patients throughout Vancouver Island into a single real-time *Dementia Guidance System* database that will track and cluster patient's symptoms, treatment plans and outcomes. Over time, these tools will be available for use by family physicians to assist with early diagnosis and care across Vancouver Island.

"This program demonstrates the power of philanthropy for research that aims to transform care," said Bruce Dyck, incoming Chair of the Victoria Hospitals Foundation. "This gift, which is the first significant research gift to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation, will bring together some of our best researchers and clinicians to create an unequalled legacy of healthcare that will improve dementia care for people across Vancouver Island."

For Island Health, there is a compelling need to learn more about this complex and devastating illness, and how best to help patients and their families. In addition to having a high population of older adults, Vancouver Island is experiencing a “rising tide” of dementia, with many types of dementia and advanced and complex cases. Fortunately, the family physicians, clinics, hospitals and community care services that treat patients with cognitive health issues all operate under a single health authority (Island Health) creating an ideal environment in which to conduct clinical and health services research.

“If you have had a family member impacted by a cognitive health issue you know how devastating the diagnosis can be,” said Leah Hollins, Board Chair of Island Health. “As this program unfolds, clinicians from Island Health and researchers from UVic will design and run a collection of cognitive health disorder studies. They will also engage medical professionals, giving them the opportunity to conduct research with their patients and deliver quality care simultaneously.”

The project will also aim to expand clinical trial opportunities for patients with dementia, including studies of investigational new drugs otherwise not currently available to patients on the Island.

“This donation creates an exceptional opportunity to advance health research collaborations on Vancouver Island, and represents the way of the future for research partnerships,” said Professor Jamie Cassels, President of UVic. “The initiative announced today will see University of Victoria researchers, Island medical professionals, and Island Medical Program educators and students working together as teams on cognitive health research. These teams will strive to incorporate their learning into practice so that those living with a cognitive health disorder can see the benefit of this research much more rapidly.”

Dr. Bruce Wright, UBC’s Regional Associate Dean for the Island Medical Program added, “Physicians who have clinical appointments with UBC’s Island Medical Program will be some of the first to be equipped with leading-edge clinical tools through this Initiative. This will build Island Health’s capacity in the area of cognitive health while providing a best practice platform to educate the next generation of healthcare providers located on the Island.”

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About the Victoria Hospitals Foundation

The Victoria Hospitals Foundation works in partnership with Island Health to enable donations to Vancouver Island’s two largest and most comprehensive hospitals: the Royal Jubilee and the Victoria General. Last year, we raised more than \$7 million for urgently needed medical equipment and special projects that help these two hospitals provide care to all 765,000 residents of Vancouver Island. Since 1989, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised over \$128 million to benefit our hospitals.

About Island Health:

Island Health, one of seven health jurisdictions in British Columbia, provides health care and support services to more than 765,000 people on Vancouver Island, the islands in the Salish Sea and the Johnstone Strait, and mainland communities north of Powell River. With more than 20,000 staff, 1,900 physician partners, 6,000 volunteers, and the dedicated support of foundations and auxiliaries, Island Health delivers a broad range of health services, including: public health services, primary health care, home and community care, mental health and

addictions services, acute care in hospitals, and much more across a huge, geographically diverse region.

About the University of Victoria:

UVic is one of Canada's leading research-intensive universities, offering life-changing, hands-on learning experiences to 21,000 students on the edge of the spectacular BC coast. As a hub of transformational research, UVic faculty, staff and students make a critical difference on issues that matter to people, places and the planet. We have more research based on international collaboration than any other Canadian university and our community and organizational partnerships play a key role in generating vital impact, from scientific and business breakthroughs to achievements in culture and creativity.

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