

## ST. JOSEPH'S GENERAL HOSPITAL

Since my report to our Annual General Meeting last year, we have experienced no improvement in the provision of long term care beds in our community. In fact, available acute care beds now being used by alternate level of care patients has now reached 35%. As I have mentioned in previous annual reports, this situation severely impacts on our ability to provide for the needs of patients requiring acute care beds and to handle patients through our ER in a timely fashion.

In the past year, our medical and nursing staff has been under increasing pressure to cope with the lack of long term beds in our community which has, as I have indicated above, been detrimental to the potential operational efficiency of St. Joseph's.

We commend Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) for recognizing the extent of the shortfall in Residential Care beds and applaud their initiative to increase the capacity on Vancouver Island and in the Comox Valley. These beds, however, will not be available until late 2008 at the earliest so we will face two more years of excessive costs, congestion and cancelled surgeries as we struggle to maintain access and care quality levels. We trust VIHA will recognize this and respond favourably to our requests

Our Board totally supports the concerns expressed by the medical, nursing and support staff. Management has done a remarkable job in adjusting priorities to cope with the challenges of running an acute care hospital with the limited funds available. Furthermore, management has worked diligently with VIHA to provide information, both statistical and financial, to assist VIHA in carrying out its mandate.

VIHA commissioned a report with TkMC titled "*Appraisal of Strategic Options for Acute Services Delivery in North Vancouver Island.*" The report states that VIHA developed a comprehensive draft Five Year Strategic Plan 2010 which identifies the need to develop sustainable hospital services. Although the report provided a quasi scoring ranking of all four options deemed appropriate, it failed to provide definitive cost estimates on capital and operating costs and infrastructure needed to be in place to support all four options and, in particular, Option 1. In view of the lack of strategic information, it is difficult to comprehend the basis on which the Regional Hospital District or, for that matter, the Ministry of Health could make an informed

decision as to funding commitments, particularly in an economic environment of rapidly increasing costs coupled with the Provincial Government's financial support for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Based on a review of the report, I have concluded that a more realistic cost for Option 1 would be significantly higher than TkMC's estimate. In addition, the suggestion that it would take a brand new facility to attract additional family physicians and specialists is untrue; rather the location of our hospital in the Comox Valley has been the reason why we have been so successful in attracting so many highly qualified medical professionals.

This year I have decided not to include reference to the financial statements in my report. I believe that this important aspect is best dealt with by management in their report in conjunction with our external auditors, Meyers Norris Penny LLP.

I wish to express my thanks to all Board members, our Medical Directors, Dr. Don Blacklock, and Dr. Don Fockler and the President of the Medical Staff, Dr. Dennis Hartman, our President and CEO, Michael Pontus, his management team, nursing and support staff. All have contributed positively to the running of St. Joseph's General Hospital. They are all a credit to the Comox Valley.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron M. Philip  
Chairman, Board of Directors