



News Release

St. Joseph's General Hospital
Care with Compassion...100 Year's of Service

For immediate release

21 Nov 2016

ST JOSEPH'S GENERAL HOSPITAL FUTURE VISION OF CARE

COMOX, BC. – Seniors' and hospice care have a secure and exciting future at St. Joseph's General Hospital beyond September 2017 when acute care services transfer to the new Comox Valley Regional Hospital.

The transition of acute care services to the new Island Health hospital leaves behind The Views where 117 seniors call home and the operations of four hospice beds in partnership with the Comox Valley Hospice Society reside. The division of health services now offers a unique opportunity for St. Joseph's to meet community and regional needs in addressing an aging demographic.

St. Joseph's General Hospital feels privileged to continue its role and commitment as a not-for-profit organization in providing needed health care services for the Comox Valley and has a vision of an *aging-in-place* campus of care featuring various housing and residential care options. This could include fully independent living, assisted living, supportive housing, respite, in addition to the current residential care and hospice services.

Further, there is a desire for additional services for seniors such as health and wellness resources, social and community activities, adult day programs, and convalescent care with the goal to keep seniors independent and in their homes for as long as possible.

The vision for future health care is based on the latest research to develop a leading-edge hub of excellence and innovation with an emphasis in seniors and hospice care and, in keeping with St. Joseph's values, be responsive to marginalized and special care populations.

“Since 1913 St. Joseph's has served this community proudly always maintaining the philosophy of providing outstanding care while meeting the needs and valuing the uniqueness of every person,” said Jane Murphy, St. Joseph's Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer. “We refer to this philosophy as *Care with Compassion*. This same philosophy of service will continue but with an exciting and expanding future philosophy that includes a unique and innovative approach to care.”

St. Joseph's will follow the Eden Philosophy of Care, an approach designed to fight three plagues commonly suffered among elderly residents - loneliness, helplessness and boredom.

The Eden Philosophy is focused on creating a human habitat that nurtures the spirit as well as the body and where life revolves around close and continuing contact with plants, animals and children. In addition, medical treatments must act as the servant of genuine human caring and the maximum possible decision-making authority must be placed into the hands of the residents and their caring family members.

“Having a clear vision and identifying a philosophy that compliments our own values now gives St. Joseph’s a clear direction to move toward. The pieces can now fall into place about what that future role in health care will look like, how it will be delivered and with appropriate facilities to make this vision of ours a reality,” explained Chris Kelsey, St. Joseph’s Board Chair. “Arriving at this juncture in the planning process is a significant achievement worthy of sharing with the greater public.”

“It’s important that we turn our institution into a true home for our seniors,” said Michael Aikins, Executive Director of The Views and Glacier View Lodge. “Aging doesn’t need to be a time of decline, but rather a time to grow by creating a meaningful habitat in which residents can live life to the fullest.”

Creating a campus of care will be a phased approach and take place over the course of several years. The first phase involves a new, purpose-built residential building that meets current industry standards and includes innovative, evidence-based designs such as single rooms, grouping residents in smaller “houses” of care, secure outdoor access, and facilities that support residents with dementia. Once constructed, this self-sustaining building will replace The Views and allow for removal of the current hospital to make way for new facilities that meet St. Joseph’s philosophy of care.

Plans for programming, construction and the necessary financing to make it come to fruition is all part of the work of the Future Role Task Force on behalf of the owner, the Bishop of Victoria and the St. Joseph’s Board of Directors.

“We have been in extensive consultation with companies and designers who specialize in seniors’ care, and we have looked beyond Vancouver Island at non-profit organizations who are leaders in eldercare for inspiration,” explained Murphy. “We are also reaching out and discussing with our many partners as to how we can work together to best meet the needs of our community.”

The Task Force has already articulated this concept to key community stakeholder groups with a resounding support to continue fulfilling this vital role for the Comox Valley. On-going community consultation will remain a part of the planning process to engage the community and better understand what people want for seniors’ and hospice care, and for services for the special care populations.

Detailed information about the vision and future development plans will be shared with the community in the weeks and month ahead leading up to the transition of acute care services. Information will be delivered in the form of Press Conferences, Open Houses, community and stakeholder meetings, and through ongoing dialogue with the local and regional media.