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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

### **Improved access to mental health, addictions coming to Westshore**

COLWOOD – A new community mental-health and substance-use service will soon offer accessible care closer to home for residents of the Westshore on southern Vancouver Island.

The western communities service hub is designed to meet a range of mental-health and addiction needs. It offers immediate access through same-day walk-in or call-in counselling and assessments, five days a week. For those requiring ongoing support, the hub connects clients with a care co-ordinator who tailors services to each person’s needs. A new facility will enhance and integrate the mental-health and addiction services in the western communities, making comprehensive care readily available.

“Mental health and addiction challenges can affect anyone, and as our communities grow, so does the need for dependable care close by,” said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “With this hub, we are bringing together mental-health and addiction services, and supporting individuals and families right where they live. This makes it easier for people to get all the care they need, where and when they need it.”

The hub’s team includes experts from different fields, like psychiatry, addiction medicine, nursing, counselling, occupational therapy and peer support. This diverse group works together to provide a seamless care experience. The new facility will help people find the support they need in one place, whether it’s for mental health or addiction issues. The team adapts to each person’s changing needs over time, ensuring consistent ongoing support throughout their recovery. This model was developed in consultation with local Indigenous communities to make sure its services are culturally informed and relevant. This co-operation helps ensure that everyone has access to care that feels right for them.

“Island Health recognizes and is responding to the growing need for mental-health and addictions care in our communities,” said Leah Hollins, board chair, Island Health. “By providing local services for low to moderate mental-health and addiction needs and connecting those with higher needs to specialized care, we are creating a co-ordinated and effective care system.”

The hub, under construction at 681 Allandale Rd. in Colwood, is intended to improve access to care when it opens later this year. The hub is part of the Province’s work to build an integrated system of mental-health and addictions care so more people can get the care they need, when and where they need it. Budget 2024 builds on Budget 2023’s historic \$1-billion investment into mental-health and addictions care, including early intervention and prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services, and complex-care housing.

### **Quotes:**

**Ravi Parmar, MLA for Langford- Juan de Fuca –**

“This new hub will be transformative for our community, offering crucial mental-health and addiction services exactly where they are needed most. It’s exciting to see this patient-centred care infrastructure come to fruition in the Westshore, enhancing the well-being of our residents and setting a new benchmark for community mental health services.”

**Mitzi Dean, MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin –**

“People living in the Westshore will be able to access mental-health care where and when they need it with this new hub coming to Colwood. This new and responsive service will deliver crucial services to people quickly, helping their recovery and healing journey.”

**Mary Morrison, manager, Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use Services (Western Communities) –**

“Island Health is responding to expanding service needs in one of the fastest-growing regions in British Columbia. Our new service hub will provide same day-walk in and appointment-based group and individual services and supports. This will connect people with the care they need within the hub, as well as facilitate strong connections to community agency-provided services and higher levels of care when needed.”

**Learn More:**

For more information about mental-health and substance-use supports in B.C., visit:  
<https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/>

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