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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education

### **Targeted funding adds more health program seats on Vancouver Island**

VICTORIA – More health-care seats are being added at three public post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island through one-time funding of \$345,000 to ensure that health demands for patients are being met in local communities.

The three institutions receiving funding are:

- Camosun College - \$165,000
- North Island College - \$96,800
- Vancouver Island University (VIU)- \$83,200

Funding at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo will support 12 additional full-time equivalent (FTE) seats in the community health promotion for Aboriginal communities program. The part-time certificate program blends in-class and online learning and includes a practicum component. Graduates of the program can find employment in health-related roles supporting Aboriginal communities including Community Health Representative, Aboriginal Health Coordinator and Community Engagement Facilitator. The scheduled start date for the program is September 2017.

Camosun College and North Island College will both receive funding for their health-care assistant programs.

The one-time funding at Camosun College in Victoria will support 32 additional FTE seats in the certificate program, which includes three clinical placements and is offered in a part-time format to provide students with a flexible learning option. The scheduled start date for the program is September 2017.

North Island College in Courtenay will add 10 FTE seats in the 37-week program. The certificate program provides students with the opportunity to participate in a range of classroom activities and clinical experience outside of the college setting. The program is expected to start on or before September 2017.

Health-care assistant graduates are in high demand throughout the province and play an important role as front-line caregivers who can work in both community and facility settings. Health-care assistants provide personal care that promotes and maintains the physical, psychological and social well-being of clients with a particular focus on the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Government is providing more than \$1 million this year in one-time funding to support an additional 133 FTE seats at 11 post-secondary institutions throughout B.C.

Since 2008, the Province has provided annual one-time funding for additional education seats in health programs. Funding to date totals more than \$16 million and has created almost 2,000 FTE seats.

Funding for health-care training is one of the key ways the B.C. government is taking action to strengthen, grow and diversify rural communities. Targeted health-care funding builds on the immediate investments and long-term action plan outlined in B.C.'s Rural Economic Development Strategy that are expected to create over 26,000 jobs and add \$2.8 billion to provincial GDP.

**Quotes:**

**Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education –**

“Health-care professionals play an important role in meeting an increased demand for quality health-care in their local communities. Our government is providing targeted funding that will allow students to gain hands-on experience that will help them find success close to home after graduation.”

**Michelle Stilwell, MLA for Parksville-Qualicum –**

“Our government is working to ensure that the health needs of all British Columbians are being met. At Vancouver Island University, this funding will support students as they learn the critical skills needed to help improve health and well-being in Aboriginal communities.”

**Don McRae, MLA for Comox Valley –**

“Our government is working to ensure that communities throughout B.C. have the skilled professionals that they need to keep British Columbians healthy. Supporting additional seats in health-care programs is another example of how our government is targeting funding to meet the growing demands for health care on Vancouver Island.”

**Sherri Bell, president, Camosun College –**

“Camosun has had a long-standing reputation for delivering exceptional health-related education to students in our region for over 45 years. This investment in more health-care assistant seats at Camosun will help us meet the high demand both for the students pursuing careers as front-line caregivers and for the patients in our community and in local health facilities who need their skills and professional expertise.”

**John Bowman, president, North Island College –**

“This one-time funding allows NIC students to move from waiting lists into rewarding health-care careers and we thank the provincial government for their continued support. Students take classes, complete a workplace practicum and graduate with the skills, certification and knowledge to support North Island communities.”

**Ralph Nilson, president, Vancouver Island University –**

“Thank you to the provincial government for funding seats in this critical program, which will prepare VIU students for in-demand jobs in a niche sector in health care. This funding also supports a program that furthers one of VIU's core values – building reciprocal relationships

with First Nation communities. Through VIU's community health promotion for Aboriginal communities, students learn culturally relevant skills which allow them to work with and support specific health-care needs within Indigenous communities."

**Quick Facts:**

- The health sector is one of the fastest growing fields in British Columbia and is part of a diverse, strong and growing economy.
- According to the 2025 B.C. Labour Market Outlook, the health sector employed 227,000 workers in 2015.
- Employment has grown at an average rate of 3.2% each year over the past decade.

**Learn More:**

B.C. Rural Economic Development Strategy: <https://bcjobsplan.gov.bc.ca/b-c-s-rural-economic-development-strategy/>

2025 B.C. Labour Market Outlook: <https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/00de3b15-0551-4f70-9e6b-23ffb6c9cb86/LabourMarketOutlook.aspx>

Camosun College: <http://camosun.ca/>

North Island College: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/>

Vancouver Island University: <https://www.viu.ca/>

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