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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services  
Northern Health

### **PRINCE GEORGE HOSPITAL RENAMED TO REFLECT TEACHING ROLE**

PRINCE GEORGE – Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon today announced that Prince George Regional Hospital will be renamed The University Hospital of Northern British Columbia, Prince George

“The new name better reflects the current role of the hospital as it has become the main teaching site for the Northern Medical Program,” said Falcon. “Over the last five years, the role of the hospital has changed significantly through our investments in academic development, teaching, learning and research in Northern Health.”

The Northern Medical Program welcomed its first students in 2004 and in May 2008, graduated its first students. The Northern Medical Program is a partnership between the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and is an integral part of the expansion of UBC's Faculty of Medicine. The goal of the program is to train physicians in the north for rural and northern practice

“Renaming the hospital is important as it much more than a large community hospital providing regional support as there is a significant focus on teaching,” said Prince George - Valemount MLA Shirley Bond. “Training students and building medical careers in the north is part of our commitment to ensuring healthy and sustainable communities throughout the North and across the province.”

“This expansion for medical education in the north is providing unique opportunities and benefits for many northern communities including Prince George in terms of education, research and health services,” said Prince George – Mackenzie MLA Pat Bell. “The renaming is a physical change to capture all that we have achieved in the past five years.”

The northern medical program and Northern Health Sciences Centre support the expanded health-related research activity at UNBC, and is supporting the North to emerge as a national centre for rural health care teaching and research. In addition to providing overall medical education, the northern medical program will address special issues for northern communities, including aboriginal health.

“The name Prince George Regional Hospital does not reflect the role of the hospital with the expansion of nursing education programs, the development of nurse practitioner programs and the advent of the northern medical program,” said Dr. Charles Jago, Northern Health board chair. “The change in name to The University Hospital of Northern British Columbia signals that this emerging culture will be sustained and further developed into the future.”

The request to rename the hospital was initiated by the Northern Medical Society of BC.

“The Northern Medical Program is the result of the prescription issued by the people of the north and the new name captures the spirit of their intent,” said Dr. Bert Kelly, executive

director of the Northern Medical Society of BC. “The provincial government and UNBC should be commended for delivering this critical program to the North in an astonishingly short time. It will bring benefits for generations to come.”

The province expanded the UBC medical school to university campuses in Victoria and Prince George. Another medical program located in Kelowna is underway – the Southern Medical Program – and is expected to accept students in 2011 and open at UBC Okanagan in January 2012. When this expansion is fully implemented, UBC will graduate 288 doctors each year, up from 128 in 2001.

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Media  
contact: Bernadette Murphy  
Media Relations Manager  
Ministry of Health Services  
250 952-1887 (media line)  
250 213-9590 (cell)

Northern Health  
250-961-7724 (media line)