

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NEW ELECTRONIC TOOLS TO BENEFIT
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CLIENTS**

VICTORIA – The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will be the first health care organization in Canada to use technology to support mental health and addictions clinicians and clients to make the most informed decisions about their care, VIHA CEO Howard Waldner announced today.

With the help of a \$1.8 million strategic investment from Canada Health Infoway's Innovation and Adoption program, VIHA will implement electronic tools to match clients with mental health and addictions challenges with the most appropriate care in the community.

"Electronic health initiatives are improving and modernizing the delivery of better, faster and safer health care," said Health Minister George Abbott. "B.C. is leveraging investment and partnership opportunities from Canada Health Infoway to lead the country in developing electronic health information systems and we may see achievements in B.C. replicated in other jurisdictions."

"We are very grateful for Canada Health Infoway's generous financial support of this innovative project," Waldner said. "By leveraging VIHA's electronic health record system and introducing new web-based decision support technology, we can provide our clinicians with comprehensive information at the point of care, allowing them to make the best possible treatment decisions based on their clients' needs."

As in other Canadian jurisdictions, VIHA clinicians do not currently have a standardized method for identifying and recording clients' needs and risks, nor do they have access to an inventory of services available in the community. With paper-based processes still being used to document clinical information and refer clients to community-based services, transfer of critical health information and treatment can be delayed.

With Infoway's funding, VIHA's Mental Health and Addictions Services team and Information Management/Information Technology staff will work closely with two of their existing technology providers, Cerner and Strata Health Solutions, to develop standardized electronic assessments forms and decision support tools specific to mental health and addictions needs. Clinicians will document a client's assessments in Cerner's PowerChart tool. Using that information, Strata Health's web-based Strata PathWays'™ tool will provide access to a real-time inventory of mental health and addictions services available in the community that meet the needs of the specific client. VIHA expects it will take approximately 24 months to develop, test, implement the new electronic tools and train staff to use the new technology.

Strata PathWays™ is part of the B.C. eHealth initiative to build an integrated, electronic system that improves outcomes for patients by making their specific information available in hospitals, doctor's offices – wherever and whenever they need to seek health care services. Strata Health Solutions is a privately held Canadian corporation that is a leading provider of patient flow solutions and information technology advancement within the health care sector. For more information about Strata Health Solutions Inc., visit www.stratahealth.com.

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