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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market  
Development

### GREATER HEALTH EDUCATION ACCESS FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND

COMOX/PORT HARDY – The Province is investing \$477,820 at North Island College to train 30 practical nurses and 30 health care assistants, announced Don McRae, MLA for Comox Valley.

“This funding means that for the first time, practical nurse education can be offered in Port Hardy,” said Comox Valley MLA Don McRae. “We are committed to providing more access, closer to home for B.C. students, which is great news for the Comox Valley.”

This one-time funding will double the student spaces for the health care assistant program and fund an evening practical nursing program at North Island College’s Comox Valley campus in 2010-11. It will also fund a health care assistant program and a new practical nurse access program at the college’s Port Hardy campus. The new practical nursing access program allows for laddering of graduates from last year’s Port Hardy health care assistant program, which received one-time government funding in 2009-10.

Practical nurse graduates will provide nursing care in partnership with other health care professionals in acute care, extended care, intermediate care and community settings. Health care assistant graduates will provide health care in a variety of institutional and community settings, including both home support agencies and residential care facilities.

“We know how important it is to ensure B.C. students have better access and a wide variety of choice in pursuit of post-secondary education,” said Moira Stilwell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. “These new spaces will help our students achieve their educational goals and provide them with the post-secondary education and skills training they need to succeed.”

Practical nursing students will graduate with the theory and skills required to practise as a licensed practical nurse, while health care assistant graduates will be trained to provide care that promotes and maintains the physical, emotional, cognitive and social well-being of clients.

“North Island College is thrilled to be receiving this additional funding to provide much needed health care education in the Comox Valley and Mount Waddington regions,” said Dr. Jan Lindsay, North Island College president. “I am particularly pleased that this funding will enable us, for the first time, to offer practical nurse education at our Port Hardy campus.”

North Island College's provincial funding is part of almost \$1.7 million provided to six public post-secondary institutions in urban and rural communities across B.C. for 210 new student spaces to train practical nurses, health care assistants and medical office assistants.

Since 2001, the Province has invested more than \$937 million in health-related operating and capital funding at post-secondary institutions across B.C.

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