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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
BC Ambulance Service  
Interior Health Authority

### **CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORT TEAM FORMALIZED**

TRAIL – An innovative pilot project launched last year by the provincial government, the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) and the Interior Health Authority (IHA) that provides specialized critical care transport to patients has now been formally endorsed as a regular service in the Kootenay-Boundary Health Service Area (KBHSA).

A major objective of the Critical Care Transport (CCT) Team is to ensure that nurses and doctors in smaller rural hospitals do not have to leave their facility to accompany a critical patient being transported. During the pilot project, 362 patient transfers occurred, allowing health professionals to remain in their facility while the CCT Team transported the patient to the necessary facility.

“The formal endorsement of the Critical Care Transport Team as a regular feature in the Kootenay-Boundary area is good news for patients,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “The pilot project was a resounding success for the region, and the formalization of the pilot into regular service will ensure residents of the Kootenay-Boundary region receive this service into the future.”

Based on experience and feedback during the pilot project, the team will become more mobile, basing itself in Castlegar, Nelson and Trail on a rotating basis as appropriate. Patients will benefit, as the team will be closer to some of the more outlying areas of the region, and the health care facilities in Castlegar and Nelson will benefit from the CCT Team resources in their facilities when they are not needed to transport a patient.

During the pilot project, the CCT Team also attended 172 life-threatening street calls, supporting the Basic Life Support ambulance service in the region. With the formalization of this service, when the team is not engaged in a transfer, it will continue to enhance existing ambulance service by responding to life-threatening street calls if requested by paramedics and working alongside staff in local health-care facilities.

“Basic Life Support is an appropriate pre-hospital care response and is the level of care provided on ambulances throughout the province,” said BCAS CEO Fred Platteel. “The Critical Care Transport Team operates as a complementary service to the local ambulance crews who are trained and equipped to manage the vast majority of patient conditions.”

The final report, recommending continuation of the program, was accepted and endorsed by the senior executive teams of both agencies. The final review of the project also found some capacity to increase the number of calls attended to by the team and complement the local ambulance service without compromising its original purpose. The IHA and BCAS have committed \$500,000 annually to fund the program on a permanent basis.

Carol Markowsky, chief operating officer of the Kootenay Boundary Health Service Area of the IHA was also pleased with the progress of the team.

“They’ve come together in a partnership that is unique in Canada,” Markowsky explained. “The team was even recognized by the Health Council of Canada for its co-operative approach that brought two different health agencies and two different unions together to provide better patient care.”

The CCT Team was launched in the summer of 2005 following creation of a Joint Task Force between the IHA and the BCAS to find creative solutions to transferring critically ill patients between facilities in the Interior and to tertiary care in Kelowna. The CCT Team is staffed by five critical care paramedics and five critical care nurses who have highly-specialized skills and work rotating shifts.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media      Chris Harbord  
contact:    BC Ambulance Service  
              250 953-3651

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