

For Immediate Release
[release number]
November 19, 2007

BC Ambulance Service

SANTA CLAUSE FLOWN IN TO ROYAL COLUMBIA HOSPITAL BY AIR AMBULANCE

VANCOUVER – Christmas is just around the corner and no one knows that better than the children at Royal Columbian Hospital. On Monday November 19, 2007 Santa Claus made a surprise visit to kids currently in the hospital’s children ward thanks to the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS), Helijet and the Rogers group of companies.

“Hospital stays can be difficult times for children and events like today’s can help to brighten spirits,” said George Abbott, Minister of Health. “I would like to thank BCAS Air Ambulance crews not only for their dedication to the everyday work of emergency transport but also in supporting efforts like this that can bring smiles to the faces of kids in hospital.”

Santa Claus touched down on the Royal Columbian Hospital’s roof top not by reindeer but rather by BCAS Air Ambulance operated by Helijet, just after 1:00 p.m. Helped by BCAS paramedics and Rogers staff Santa Claus delivered Rogers Christmas DVD’s to children throughout the hospital.

“Paramedics often meet children and their families under stressful circumstances,” said Dave Carmichael, Aviation Services Superintendent. “Being here today is a unique opportunity to interact with them in a much happier environment.”

Last year, the BC Ambulance Service’s infant transport teams ensured that 2,945 high-risk babies, children and expectant moms, were transported safely to health care facilities like Royal Columbian Hospital. In 2001/02, BCAS air ambulance transported 7,031 patients at a cost of \$3,324 per patient. The projected number for 2006/07 is 8,300 patient transfers at a cost of \$4,500 per patient, representing a 35 per cent cost increase over the past five years.

Following the visit, Santa is continuing to prepare for his starring role in the 4th Annual Rogers Santa Claus Parade, Sunday November 25, 2007 in downtown Vancouver.

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