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Island Health hopes to reduce wait times for surgery

By Victoria News

Published: **August 31, 2015 10:00 AM**

Updated: **August 31, 2015 10:3510 AM**

In an effort to free up operating rooms and reduce wait times for surgery, Island Health has found a preferred service provider to deliver publicly-funded day surgery on a contract basis.

In the coming weeks, contract negotiations will begin with Surgical Centres Inc., with the aim of having a contract in place in the fall, along with a new facility open in Greater Victoria by mid-2016 or earlier.

Island Health has had contracts with private surgical providers since 2004. Since that time, the health authority said patients have benefited from timely, accessible, publicly-funded day surgery.

"By increasing the number of surgeries and colonoscopies we perform outside hospital, we can free up operating rooms for more complex cases and reduce wait times for both day and inpatient surgery," said Norm Peters, executive director of surgical services and heart health at Island Health.

Under the surgery partnership model, the contacted surgical facility will function as an extension of the operating rooms of Island Health's hospitals, and use the health authority's wait lists and physicians. Island Health will manage the surgical/colonoscopy bookings and all procedures are publicly-funded.

Last April, Island Health issued a request for proposals (RPF) that sought a surgical services partner to perform between 3,000 and 4,000 surgeries per year over a five-year term. The RPF also sought a contractor to perform up to 4,000 colonoscopy procedures on the south island and up to 3,000 on the central island.

— Pamela Roth

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