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Preferred proponent selected for Niagara Health System's new health care complex

Niagara, ON - The Niagara Health System (NHS) and Infrastructure Ontario will begin negotiations shortly with Plenary Health, the team selected as the preferred proponent to design, build, finance and maintain a new health care complex in St. Catharines.

The 375-bed acute care community hospital will be located at First Street and Fourth Avenue in west St. Catharines. It will replace the aging St. Catharines General and Ontario Street Sites. Serving St. Catharines, Thorold, Niagara-on-the-Lake and surrounding communities, the new facilities will provide a full-range of acute/critical care, surgical, emergency, longer-term mental health and ambulatory services.

The new, state-of-the-art health care complex will also accommodate new regional services that have never been available in Niagara, including facilities for comprehensive cancer care at the Walker Family Cancer Centre along with facilities to support cardiac catheterization and longer-term mental health beds. The new site will also act as the centre of regional dialysis services, supported by the permanent dialysis unit recently constructed in Welland.

"As one of the largest infrastructure projects currently being planned in Ontario, this new hospital demonstrates our government's commitment to provide resources and facilities to serve the health care needs of people across Ontario," said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. "This project is part of the government's five-year \$30-billion-plus infrastructure investment plan, which represents the biggest investment in health care infrastructure in more than a generation."

Plenary Health includes:

- Plenary Group
- PCL Constructors
- Bregman + Hamann Architects
- Silver Thomas International Architects
- Johnson Controls
- Deutsche Bank

Following negotiations with Plenary Health, the project will reach commercial close, which is expected within two months. This will signal that relevant contracts have been signed.

The next project milestone, financial close, should follow within 30 days of commercial close. At this time, a financing rate will be set, the project's cost is finalized and funds become available for the project.

The final cost of the project will be shared with the public following financial close. At this time, the hospital and Plenary Health will continue to work together to finalize the design and ensure the necessary permits and approvals are in place to commence construction. Site preparation and groundbreaking will take place this fall, with full construction starting in the spring of 2009.

Said Jim Bradley, MPP for St. Catharines, "Along with the addition of these new regional services, our vision of a new community hospital for the residents of St. Catharines, Thorold, Niagara-on-the-Lake and immediate area is one step closer to becoming a reality."

"We are poised to begin negotiations and look forward to future design development with Plenary Health and re-engaging our hospital user groups and our community in further consultation as we make this project a reality," said Debbie Sevenpifer, NHS President and CEO.

"As a specialist in health infrastructure development and management, we look forward to bringing our expertise to Niagara to construct an efficient hospital that will be built not only for today, but for generations to come," said Mike Marasco, Plenary Health CEO.

"The new centre means hundreds of patients per year won't have to travel from Niagara to Hamilton or Toronto for radiation treatment. Patients will have access to high-quality cancer services much closer to home," said Terrence Sullivan, President and CEO, Cancer Care Ontario.

The St. Catharines facility is the first new hospital to be constructed as a Design, Build, Finance and Maintain (DBFM) project in partnership with Infrastructure Ontario under the provincial government's Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP) delivery model.

This new financing model transfers responsibility to the winning bidder for designing the facility, constructing the facility, arranging financing for its construction and maintaining the building for a 30-year period. Transferring most construction-related cost and schedule risks and entering into maintenance arrangements with the winning project team ultimately benefits the public by ensuring the new hospital is built on time, on budget and well-maintained over the 30-year period.

Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will work with the Niagara Health System to build the new health care complex, which will remain publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable. Infrastructure Ontario is a Crown corporation dedicated to managing some of the province's larger and more complex infrastructure renewal projects – ensuring they are built on time and on budget.

Visit www.infrastructureontario.ca or click [HERE](#) for more information.

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Backgrounder

Niagara Health System

The Niagara Health System (NHS) consists of six hospital sites and an ambulatory care centre serving 434,000 residents across the 12 municipalities making up the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

The Niagara Health System Project

The Niagara Health System project will result in a new, state-of-the-art health care complex that will bring new regional programs and services to Niagara and replace two aging, existing community hospitals in St. Catharines (St. Catharines General and Ontario Street Sites).

The new health care complex to be built at First Street and Fourth Avenue in St. Catharines will include:

- The Walker Family Cancer Centre to provide close-to-home treatment for the more than 1,000 cancer patients who currently travel to Hamilton or Toronto for life-saving radiation treatment;
- A new Regional Longer-Term Mental Health Centre with longer-term inpatient mental health beds, combined with acute inpatient mental health beds and ambulatory care services for Niagara residents;
- A new Regional Cardiac Catheterization Centre to provide diagnostic investigation services, reducing hospitalizations for heart disease, lowering wait times and improving access to treatment;
- Expanded regional dialysis services enabling the hospital to act as the hub of regional chronic kidney disease (CKD) services accompanied by a permanent dialysis unit in Welland; and
- A community-based hospital of up to 375 beds offering:
 - Acute and critical inpatient services, surgical, emergency and ambulatory services available under one roof for the residents of St. Catharines, Thorold, Niagara-on-the-Lake and the area.

The new health care complex will be built on a 32-acre section of the 40-acre site in St. Catharines.

When the project is completed, Niagara will be home to one of the most up-to-date health care facilities in the province. It will establish infrastructure to care for and treat the unique health needs of the Niagara region, ensuring care is provided to Niagarans in Niagara.

Groundbreaking for construction is scheduled for the end of this year.