



## NEWS RELEASE

---

For Immediate Release  
February 12, 2010

### **CRISIS LINE SERVICE PROVIDER CONTRACT SIGNED**

VANCOUVER ISLAND – Residents on Vancouver Island experiencing a crisis will have ongoing and consistent access to crisis telephone services through a new two-year contract signed between the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and the Central Vancouver Island Crisis Society (CVICS).

CVICS, which is based in Nanaimo, has operated a crisis line service for 40 years on Vancouver Island, including 17 years as the crisis line provider for communities stretching from north of the Malahat to Qualicum. CVICS has had a contract with VIHA and VIHA predecessors since 1990 - one of six service providers that delivered crisis line services under contract for VIHA.

“It was a difficult decision to consolidate our six excellent service providers into a single contract,” said Alan Campbell, VIHA’s Director of Mental Health and Addictions. “We are extremely pleased with the quality of crisis services the CVICS will be delivering, and based on the experience in other jurisdictions we know telephone crisis line services can be successfully delivered by a single agency serving different communities, and that high standards of service can be maintained for crisis information, support and service referrals.”

“The Central Vancouver Island Crisis Society welcomes this opportunity to provide this important service to all VIHA residents,” said Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director, CVICS. “While we recognize and are saddened by the impact this has on our fellow crisis line service providers, we are committed to a smooth and seamless transition of services.”

VIHA issued an RFP for crisis line services in November 2009. The RFP sought a single service provider that would:

- Operate and maintain access to a high quality telephone service that provides appropriate responses to callers with needs ranging from information-seeking to emotional support to emergency crisis response;
- Guarantee 24/7 response to telephone calls;
- Ensure the ability to refer to, and link to, other emergency and non-emergency service providers, including VIHA Mental Health and Addiction Services and First Responders;

- Maintain membership certifications with required professional and agency organizations;
- Ensure processes exist to address complaints and respond to feedback from stakeholder groups;
- Provide support to volunteers and/or staff in critical incident situations;
- Provide a user-friendly web site service;
- Provide high-quality reporting to VIHA on statistics, service responsiveness, trends and financial information.

The goal of moving to a single crisis line service provider was to reduce VIHA's costs, eliminate duplication of administrative support, increase efficiency, improve consistency and standardize service levels for people in all areas. VIHA will be saving approximately \$250,000 annually on what was previously a \$900,000 a year budget for crisis line services.

CVICS will assume the island wide crisis line service contract on March 1, 2010. Transition will take place gradually over the coming months working with the existing crisis line providers.

- 30 -

**Media Contacts:**

Shannon Marshall  
VIHA Communications  
250-370-8270

Elizabeth Newcombe  
Central Vancouver Island Crisis Society  
250-753-2495  
Toll Free 1-877-753-2495