



# Background

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## Abbotsford Hospital chronology of events

### Spring 2001

Previous NDP government approves business plan to replace MSA General with a publicly owned and operated facility. Capital allocations are approved.

### August

Campbell government secretly shifts course and raises the private hospital option. A hasty request for proposals is put out. PricewaterhouseCoopers is hired to develop ways to involve the private sector in the new facility through a so-called public-private partnership (P3).

### October 19

Based on leaks from government sources, HEU publicly exposes the Campbell government's plans to build a privately financed, owned and operated facility, based on the British private finance initiative model.

In a media interview, finance minister Gary Collins says the private hospital plan will go ahead, provided the community supports it.

### October 23

At the Premier's health summit where the private hospital issue was raised, health minister Colin Hansen tells a media scrum that Fraser Valley residents won't be forced to accept a private hospital. Asked if the government would build the hospital through conventional public finance and ownership, Hansen responds, "Yes of course."

### November 20

HEU asks B.C. Auditor General Wayne K. Strelieff to review the role of PWC in the planning process. Given that the company already promotes and profits from private health care facilities in the U.K., HEU says PWC may not be able to provide independent and balanced advice.

### November 23

Comprehensive polling data is released by the union. It shows that Fraser Valley residents feel they're being kept in the dark about the new hospital project with no opportunity for their voices to be heard. More than eight out of ten support a local referendum to ensure that the community has decision-making control.

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**December 10**

HEU files the first of several freedom of information requests to force the Fraser Health Authority to release the PWC study.

**February 19, 2002**

The Liberals' budget announcement continues to include capital funding to build the new Abbotsford hospital through conventional public finance and ownership.

**March 18**

Pressure from HEU forces the Fraser Health Authority to release the PWC report. Its finding: at best a private hospital would save less than one per cent over a 30-year period compared to a publicly owned and financed facility.

**March 21**

HEU files a complaint with the office of the provincial Information and Privacy Commissioner, seeking an order to force the release of the full, uncensored details of the report.

**April 4**

HEU engages forensic auditors Ron Parks and Derek Malcolm of Kroll Lindquist Avey to provide an independent analysis of the PWC report.

**April 5**

More than 8,200 signatures on petitions opposing the private hospital presented to local Abbotsford MLA and Campbell cabinet minister John van Dongen. Later in the month, van Dongen tables the petitions in the provincial legislature.

**May 7**

A McIntyre and Mustel poll released by HEU shows 71 per cent of British Columbians do not support building a private hospital in Abbotsford and feel that the small cost savings projected by the PWC report would not justify such a move. A majority of Liberal supporters are also opposed.

**May 8**

Parks' review of PWC report released in Vancouver. HEU calls on Campbell government to move quickly to build a publicly owned and financed hospital.

**June 9**

Premier Campbell rebuffs an offer from HEU and forensic auditor Ron Parks to provide a detailed briefing on Parks' independent assessment of the Abbotsford hospital P3 plan.

**June 26**

In a recently published report in the Financial Times of London, Britain's auditor general and deputy comptroller Jeremy Coleman says government officials rely heavily on "spurious" financial data to determine whether proposals for privately owned and operated hospital are cost effective. Colman's conclusions are similar to Parks' findings that a B.C. government study by PricewaterhouseCoopers was based on "suspect data" that "should not be used as the basis for a definitive government decision."

**November 13**

Premier Campbell announces that the new Abbotsford hospital will be a public-private partnership at a meeting of the Independent Contractors and Builders Association of B.C.

**January 23, 2003**

The Ministries of Health Services and Finance jointly issue an expression of interest for the Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre.

**February 5**

HEU files a freedom of information request with B.C. health and finance ministries and the Fraser Health Authority regarding government-funded trip(s) to the United Kingdom to research P3 hospitals.

**May 27**

Government announces four short-listed bidders for the Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre: Access Health Abbotsford, Fraser Valley Health Partnership, The Healthcare Infrastructure Company of Canada and Vancouver Health Care Group.

**August 21**

HEU releases Mustel Group poll that shows that 58 per cent (including 32 per cent of B.C. Liberal supporters) oppose government plans to use P3 arrangements for hospitals, highways and schools.

**September 29**

Government posts request for proposals for the Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre.

**Future dates as per September 2003 AHCC Request for Proposals**

**April-May 2004**

AHCC bidder-consortia to be narrowed to two and final request for proposals to be issued.

**September-December 2004**

Successful consortium to be chosen with contract finalized by the end of the year.

**November 2007**

“Substantial completion of facility” expected by “not later than November 2007”.

**March 2008**

“Occupancy of facility” to be “not later than March 2008”.