



Province-wide solutions.  
Better health.

Better health.  
Best in health care.

June 23, 2005

## High marks for hospital cleaning from independent auditor

Three-quarters of all British Columbia hospitals and residential care facilities scored 85% or higher in the first ever province-wide independent third-party audit of housekeeping services released today.

The audit was conducted by Vancouver's Westech Systems FM Inc. between March 1 and May 31 of this year, and is the first of its kind in Canada. Using an established industry benchmark of 85%, all but one of BC's six health authorities scored in excess of that target. The remaining authority was less than one percentage point below that 85% benchmark.

Based on its audit findings, Westech concluded that the hospitals and residential care facilities audited "...displayed a level of cleanliness that was within acceptable standards".

The company visited 160 hospitals and residential care facilities across BC to conduct unannounced audits of different rooms and locations representative of various areas of the site. Around 10% of all rooms at each site were audited, meaning over 10,000 hospital and care facility rooms were inspected.

The independent third-party audit scores were calculated using a new Provincial Housekeeping Audit System developed by Westech for this initiative. The system methodology divides every area of each facility into four different risk categories – Very High, High, Moderate, and Low.

Rooms classified as Very High or High risk include operating rooms, intensive care units and sterile supply areas, while Moderate and Low risk areas are locations such as waiting rooms, elevators, and maintenance areas. A weighted scoring system was used to ensure more emphasis was placed on rooms and items that could have a higher chance of possible health impact. The concept of weighted scoring, while new to many BC health authorities, is a global best practice.

Of BC's six health authorities, Interior Health received the highest score with 90.36% averaged across 52 sites. Northern Health was second highest with 88.43% across 35 sites. Other average scores were Vancouver Coastal with 87.64% (31 sites); Fraser Health with 86.14% (14 sites); the Provincial Health Services Authority with 85.22% (four sites); and Vancouver Island Health Authority at 84.46% (24 sites).

- 2 -

In all cases, BC health authorities exceeded the 85% target benchmark in the most important category – Very High Risk. This means areas most crucial to patient care such as Operating Rooms, Intensive Care Units, Neonatal ICU, Cardiac ICU, Labour & Delivery Rooms, Special Care Nurseries, Emergency Rooms, and Renal Dialysis Units are all being cleaned in excess of industry standards.

The independent third-party audit of cleanliness in hospitals and residential care facilities began in late 2004, when BC health authorities instigated a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a common system for measuring health care facility cleanliness across the province.

Westech Systems FM Inc. was selected as the successful vendor. Westech is a British Columbia owned and operated company that has focused primarily on providing cleaning\housekeeping auditing services and housekeeping management software solutions for hospitals and other facilities across North America for nearly two decades.

For this BC initiative, it built upon the existing high standards of cleanliness that had been developed from housekeeping audit tools and requirements in health care across BC, Canada, the UK and Australia, as well as information resources from the BC Centre for Disease Control.

The company will conduct another independent third-party audit of BC health facilities later this year. In the meantime, all health authorities will carry out their own internal cleanliness audits on a regular basis, and adopt the same Provincial Housekeeping Audit System developed by Westech.

The final Westech report will be available on the websites of each of the six health authorities.

- 30 -

For media enquiries, please contact:

Clay Adams  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
Tel: 604-708-5280

Brian Geary  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
Tel: 604-313-0388

Don Bower  
Fraser Health  
Tel: 604-450-7881

Suzanne Germain  
Vancouver Island Health Authority  
Tel: 250-370-8270

Alison Paine  
Interior Health  
Tel: 250-861-9527 or 250-878-3970

Sonya Kruger  
Northern Health  
Tel: 250-565-2130