



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 17, 2011

BEACON COMMUNITY SERVICES ACHIEVES LANDMARK CERTIFICATION

Victoria — An external auditor has given near-perfect marks to Beacon Community Services, today making it the first health care agency in BC to have its occupational health and safety programs certified by WorkSafeBC in partnership with the BC Municipal Safety Association.

Beacon Community Services employs more than 1100 staff, many of whom provide home health care during nearly 3,000 home visits across the Capital Regional District each day.

The community-based, non-profit organization voluntarily initiated its participation in a stringent audit process and has been awarded WorkSafeBC's Certificate of Recognition (COR).

"Safety is the number one priority at Beacon, reflecting that staff and volunteers' safe practices are generally safest for our clients too," said Beacon Community Services' CEO Isobel Mackenzie. "We've undergone thorough reviews and achieved quality accreditation in the past but we were specifically interested in pursuing certification that focuses on health and safety; we know that meeting high safety standards helps support the overall quality of our services."

The COR program requires that a third-party, external auditor review a participating organization's safety programs and practices.

The auditor spent a full week at various Beacon Community Services' sites — including assisted living facilities, thrift shops, offices, and the SHOAL community activity centre — evaluating policies and practices and interviewing staff at all levels of the organization.

Audit results were reported to the BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA), which then conducted a quality assurance review before awarding COR certification and advising WorkSafeBC of Beacon's results.

"The audit measured Beacon's health and safety management system in eight elements, including hazard identification, risk assessment and control, and program administration," said Cathy Cook, BCMSA's executive director. "One of the crucial elements is organizational commitment to health and safety, and Beacon has certainly demonstrated that. This program is designed to reward employers who go above and beyond minimum occupational health and safety standards."

Beacon earned COR certification in the two programs which were audited, achieving nearly 92 percent in the audit of its health and safety programs and garnering a 99 percent score in the audit of its stay at/return to work program.

-more-

To maintain COR certification, Beacon must now conduct yearly internal audits and, every third year, be successfully re-evaluated by an external auditor.

In 2009, Beacon Community Services also received accreditation by Accreditation Canada, which audits health care organizations to ensure they are meeting national standards of quality and care excellence.

Beacon Community Services is a community-based, not-for-profit, social, employment, health, recreational, housing and volunteer services agency that has offered a wide range of programs and services to thousands of clients in the Capital Regional District since 1974.

More information about Beacon Community Services is also available at www.Beaconcs.ca

Attachments: Backgrounder- Beacon Community Services
WorkSafeBC- Certificate of Recognition

Media Contact:

Kerry Readshaw

Beacon Community Services

Phone: 250 658-7243