

# TIMES COLONIST

## Video technology connects med schools to hospitals

Times Colonist (Victoria)

Wed 28 Mar 2007

Page: C3

Section: Capital & Van. Isl.

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Source: Times Colonist

Anesthesiology resident Sana Ahmed doesn't have to leave Royal Jubilee Hospital or hop a ferry to take notes when a professor in Vancouver is lecturing.

The 24-year-old Saskatchewan native just heads to a classroom in the Victoria hospital outfitted with at least six flatscreen TVs. Thanks to the province's most recent injection of \$14.9 million into video-conferencing technology, Ahmed learns along with other residents in classrooms spanning six health authorities.

Since 2002, B.C.'s Health Ministry has poured an estimated \$180 million into hooking up and linking three university medical training facilities at **UBC**, UNBC and UVic with high-tech video-conferencing and e-learning systems.

Now the province has linked up at least eight clinical academic campuses (CACs), large health facilities, including Royal Jubilee and Victoria General hospitals, that provide instruction for undergraduate medical students, post-graduate residents and faculty members.

Residents in the classroom can hear an instructor, in Vancouver for example, talk in real time. And residents can ask questions of that professor with the tap of a button on a microphone.

From laptops, professors can write on the video screens as if they were chalkboards or place plastic models of brains and hearts under a zoom lens to show students in every seat across the province the intricate hardwiring of humans. The technology has been in use since September.

"Expanding academic space at hospitals across the province is enabling the expansion of **UBC**'s faculty of medicine to produce more B.C.-trained doctors for local communities," Health Minister George Abbott said at a news conference yesterday.

The idea is not only to produce more doctors, but to encourage them to practise where they trained in B.C. -- it is more difficult for small towns to attract family doctors and specialists.

Psychiatry resident Kelly Saran, 30, from Trail, said "without a doubt" he will practise in B.C. Ahmed said she also will establish her practice in this province.

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Edition: Final

Story Type: Business