

GALIANO HEALTH CARE SOCIETY REFERENDUM

At the local election, November 15, you will also be asked to vote on a referendum to fund some of the costs of operating and maintaining the Galiano Health Care Centre through your property taxes. No one wants to pay more tax, but the alternative places our ability to continue to provide quality health care to Galiano residents and visitors at risk. We ask you to read the following questions & answers, and, on November 15, to vote YES for stable funding for our Health Care Centre.

Why does GHCS need stable/predictable funding? The availability of quality health care on Galiano is necessary, not only for our own well-being but as a key component of a stable, economically-viable community. Although GHCS does not provide health care directly, the Society provides the building where health care is provided. This allows all health care services to flourish under one roof, enabling our doctor, our nurses and our other health care professionals to work together to provide quality care for residents and visitors alike.

In the past we've relied on the hard work of a handful of committed Islanders to annually fund-raise over \$60,000 to keep the Centre functioning, but we can't rely on that forever. After many years struggling to keep the Centre afloat, the Board concluded the fairest, most straightforward means to ensure stability and predictability was to request this Referendum. If the Health Care Centre was to close its doors, the government would not provide a health care centre.

What is the role of the CRD? The CRD holds the Referendum, and if successful, will collect and administer the fund. The CRD will have no role in governing the Society or ownership of the building. GHCS remains an independent body.

What will it cost? The fund is meant to cover GHCS operational costs and allow the Society to establish a reserve to cover the increasing maintenance costs of a 25 years old building. The maximum annual request will be the greater of \$86,550. (\$1,550. is an annual CRD administration fee) or \$.19 per \$1000. of assessed value of all properties. Individual property owner's cost: your assessed property value, divided by 1000, then multiplied by .19. For example:

<i>Assessed property value</i>	<i>Annual property tax</i>
\$300,000.	\$ 57.00
\$500,000	\$ 95.00
\$700,000.	\$133.00

The cost for businesses will be higher, but business clients, whether residents, or visiting for a day, generally assume there will be access to health care. For example, think of the impact on the tourism industry if there was no emergency treatment room on Galiano.

What if you are an owner, but are seldom on Island? Anyone can have an accident, or a medical emergency - your kids, your grandmother, your guests - that's when you want quality health care. If there is no Health Care Centre, there is no emergency room. And, don't forget, access to quality health care can have an impact on property values.

Why don't rents cover the expenses? We continue to push the Provincial Government to pay their share of rental cost. So far they refuse to cover rent for the emergency rooms, waiting area, washrooms and lab room. We will continue to push the government to pay these rental costs. Our health care professionals pay their fair share of rent to the Society. Remember, we must compete with other communities for health care providers, so we must make it economically attractive for them to commit to Galiano.

Why not charge user fees at the Centre? There are a host of reasons not to, for instance, access to health care should never be a matter of affordability. Regardless, user fees are forbidden by the Canada Health Act and provincial laws.

What will GHCS do if the Referendum is a success? After a huge sigh of relief, we will finally be able to focus on other priorities. We will continue to count on your memberships, donations and bequests, and we will continue to fund-raise but for specific goals like medical equipment, health education, Aging in Place, and not the cost of operating the building.

Why vote YES in the Referendum? Because it's the right thing to do both for yourself and your community. Think about it – you are on Galiano Island and suddenly there's an unexpected health challenge. Your YES vote means access to quality health care because the Health Care Centre has stable, predictable funding.

Should you have questions please, contact the Galiano Health Care Society at:

galianohealth@shaw.ca or GHCS President, Mike Hoebel 250-539-2003