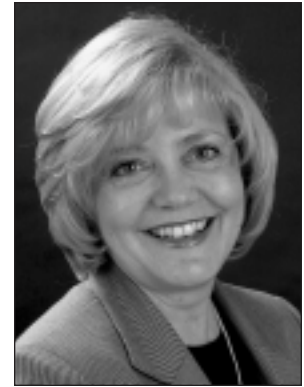


## INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS

Sue Carruthers



# Win-Win Program Benefits BC Kids

**B**C Children's Hospital (BCCH) is embarking on an ambitious program to become Canada's Centre for International Child Health. With a population of 1 million children in British Columbia from birth to age 16 to serve, some might wonder why.

The reason is actually quite simple; by expanding our network internationally, we can deliver exceptional medical benefits to our children here at home.

Children's Hospital Chief of Pediatric Medicine Dr. Bob Armstrong has described Canada's pediatric health system as a delicate "house of cards" that is encountering extremely complex challenges. He and his colleagues maintain we must begin now to rebuild and support a system that provides the best care in the best place and to ensure that the quality of these services reflects the high value we place on the well-being of our children.

To best serve the children who live within our geographic boundaries, we must look beyond our horizons. We must take a leadership role in the international community, promoting collaboration with organizations around the world that share our commitment to child health.

The vision for the Centre for International Child Health is to initiate and coordinate international partnerships in training, research collaboration, and patient care undertaken by and through BC Children's Hospital.

The benefits include the following.

- Enabling our physicians and surgeons to maintain a high level of clinical activity so they can advance their specialized skills

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- Providing opportunities for our physicians, medical students, and staff to expand their knowledge through work in other countries
- Encouraging the recruitment of pediatricians to BC Children's Hospital and other hospitals in key centres of the province. There is intense competition for pediatricians; offering an international component to their practice would excite them to stay and work here.
- Increasing opportunities for funding partnerships and providing a focus for our donors abroad who wish to support international child health

Recently the Centre initiated a partnership in Shanghai, China, a country with a child population of 377 million. Pediatric specialists from BC Children's Hospital are collaborating

with their counterparts at Children's Hospital of Fudan University to provide training in pediatric cardiac care and newborn intensive care.

That facility is one of two national training centres for child health in China. The cardiac care and neonatal (newborn intensive care) training programs will serve as models for future international projects undertaken by the Centre.

Commencing in the Spring of 2004, the BC cardiac team will travel to Shanghai to provide intensive training and patient care at Children's Hospital of Fudan University. In January 2005, Chinese cardiac surgeons and cardiologists will come to BCCH to complete their training.

Expanding our international networks brings benefits back home to the diverse populations we serve, helping our surgeons hone their skills, thus providing educational opportunities for our trainees and physicians and enabling collaborative research projects that advance child health internationally.

It's not simply the right thing to do. Supporting international child health is the wisest investment we can make. It's a win-win situation for BC kids—and for kids around the world. ▲

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