

*HC media lines***MEDIA LINES****ISSUE: Davis Inlet Chief requests removal of children at risk due to solvent addiction.**

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh is requesting that Health Canada step in and assist children who are at risk due to solvent abuse in Davis Inlet, Labrador. This appeal comes immediately following a similar request that has been made by the Chief of Shesheshui, Labrador to remove at-risk children from that community.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Innu community of Davis Inlet, Labrador has experienced serious problems with youth abusing solvents and gas sniffing. Recent media reports with Chief Tshakapesh have implied that Health Canada has not provided adequate support to the community of Davis Inlet to address this long standing issue. A meeting is set for Sunday, November 26 in Goose Bay, Labrador. Attending this meeting will be Chief Simeon Tshakapesh of Davis Inlet; Peter Penashue, President of the Innu Nation; Minister Brian Tobin; Premier Beaton Tulk and senior officials from DIAND and Health Canada.

LINES:

- **Health Canada is working closely with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health, and Health Labrador Corporation to provide assistance to the community.**
- **Our first and foremost priority is the health and safety of the children.**
- **Health Canada provides about \$1 million per year to Davis Inlet for ongoing health programs in the community such as community health nursing, health promotion, addictions prevention, and patient transportation. In addition, the Province provides services to Davis Inlet such as treatment nursing and the range of social services.**
- **Beyond the ongoing funding, since 1992/93 Health Canada has provided over \$2.5 million to Davis Inlet for targeted programs to address the special needs of the community. This funding supported programs such as culturally-appropriate, family-based country treatment, and training for community-based workers.**

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- **This year, Health Canada has made an additional \$300,000 available to the community in targeted funding to meet its special needs. As a result, the community is receiving funding for a Healing Coordinator; youth treatment camps; adult country treatment camps and sexual abuse training for staff.**
- **In recognition of the large number of at-risk children in the Innu communities in Labrador, Health Canada funded the building of a new solvent treatment centre for adolescents in Labrador. It opened in May, 2000 and cost \$1.2M. This is expected to assist in supporting the needs of the at-risk youth in Davis Inlet. The centre is a twelve-bed facility, which provides a six-month detox and solvent abuse treatment program.**
- **HC considers the issue of solvent addiction in Davis Inlet to be very serious. We are committed to working with federal and provincial partners and the community to address the situation in a way that will ensure resources are applied where they can yield the greatest positive results.**
- **HC continues to support the community in its efforts to generate and develop ways of addressing these issues.**
- **True, long-term sustainable solutions will not happen overnight and must involve the families and community.**

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