

*Note to Minister**Nov. 28*

**ISSUE:** Responding to the immediate needs of Innu children at risk in Labrador

**DECISION REQUIRED:** To address resource pressures resulting from the youth solvent abuse situation in the Labrador Innu communities of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshui.

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS:**

1. Provide support to the province of Newfoundland in the immediate task of assuring the safety and protection of the Sheshatshui and Davis Inlet children at-risk.
2. Meet with Davis Inlet and Provincial officials in the community on December 6, 2000, to develop strategies and responses appropriate for children at risk in the community.
3. Obtain facilities at Goose Bay to enable children to stay in detox and early treatment for solvent abuse. The best plan is to bring staff to a location near the communities rather than send the children to out-of-province treatment centres. The Department of National Defense is willing to discuss longer term use of the Goose Bay facility for this purpose.
4. Work with the Province and communities to develop a longer term plan to meet the commitments outlined in the joint Communique including the development of a family treatment program for solvent abuse and the establishment of a detox centre in the region.

**Cost Implications:**

- Estimated costs to continue using the Goose Bay facility as a treatment centre for the short and medium term, are \$750K for this fiscal year. These costs include resources for staff, beds, and for potential renovations.
- Estimated costs for youth solvent abuse treatment are \$100 a day per client for a treatment program of 180 days, an estimated treatment cost of \$18K per youth. In addition, there are estimated ancillary costs of \$2000 per youth for a combined cost of approximately \$20K per youth.

*ADDITIONAL POINT*

*- ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGY NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITH DIAND.*

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- A family treatment program in Sheshatshui would run in 6 week module with a team of six councillors, elders and administration assistance to serve approximately 3 to 6 families at a time. The potential total cost of such a program would be \$100K for each six week module of treatment.
- In the longer term, a six bed detox centre specific to the needs to solvent abuse for the region could have operating costs of approximately \$600K per year, not including construction costs.

The above resource needs will place a significant pressure on Branch resources, both for this fiscal year and in the future. This is likely to require additional resources or reductions in other programs.

There will also be increased demands from other communities for similar services and resources to those provided in Labrador that the department will be pressured into addressing.

**BACKGROUND:**

On November 26, 2000, Premier Beaton Tulk, Minister Brian Tobin, Ernest McLean, Minister responsible for Labrador, Lawrence O'Brien, Labrador M.P., Wally Anderson, M.H.A. for Torngat Mountains, Innu Nation President, Peter Penashue and Sheshatshiu Chief, Paul Rich along with federal, provincial and band officials, met in Happy Valley Goose Bay to explore short and long term solutions to the social and cultural challenges facing Innu children at Sheshatshiu.

All parties agreed that the first and foremost priority is for the protection and well-being of the children in the Innu communities affected by the gas sniffing problem. Federal and provincial governments have agreed to work co-operatively with the community to seek appropriate treatment options for the affected children as quickly as possible. They agreed to commit necessary resources to this end.

On November 26, Prime Minister Jean Chretien met with representatives from Davis Inlet and discussed solutions to the addictions crisis in the Labrador community. Discussions on medium and long term resolutions will continue at a December 6<sup>th</sup> community meeting to which federal and provincial officials have been invited; Health Canada participation is confirmed.

TOTAL COST  
07/11 FISCAL YEAR.. 750 Treatment KIDS  
200 FAMILY  
~~100~~ PLANNING IDEO  
# 1050