

HF23-27-1-421

**RESPONSE TO AN ORAL QUESTION RAISED IN THE SENATE
ON NOVEMBER 16, 2004, BY THE
HONOURABLE SENATOR WILBERT J. KEON
REGARDING
INNU SUICIDE IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

**RÉPONSE À UNE QUESTION ORALE
DE L'HONORABLE SÉNATEUR
POSÉE AU SÉNAT LE 2003
CONCERNANT**

Oral Question raised in Senate

Q. 1

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us if the results of this study (from the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information) have prompted the federal government to review the efficacy of its suicide prevention programs for the Labrador Innu?

Q. 2

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us if these complaints (regarding the lack of emergency help and workshops, launched by the former Chief of a native community in Ladrador) have been dealt with?

RESPONSE

Response # 1:

- As the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information study suggests, suicide is caused by multiple factors and no simple solution exists.
- The Government of Canada is working with the Innu communities to provide programs that reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.
- Health Canada has been working with the Innu community of Natuashish to respond to recent suicides.
- Health Canada's efforts are focused on: training workers; conducting suicide prevention sessions; facilitating linkages to other communities with similar experiences; helping the community develop suicide response plans and community response teams; and preparing for a suicide prevention conference in January 2005.
- The statistics in the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information study are attempted suicides. The Government of Canada is working with the province and the Innu communities on activities to help prevent these attempted suicides from becoming completed suicides.

Response # 2:

- Minister Dosanjh met with former chief of Natuashish, Simeon Tshakapesh, in St. John's on September 21, 2004 regarding his concerns. Subsequently, a member of the Minister's staff contacted Mr. Tshakapesh to follow-up.
- In response to recent suicides, Health Canada has been working closely with the community of Natuashish to implement an immediate action plan that focusses on training workers; conducting suicide prevention sessions; facilitating linkages to other communities with similar experiences; helping the community develop suicide response plans and community response teams; and preparing for a suicide prevention conference in January 2005.

Specifics on suicide prevention activities:

- There were no cancellations of suicide prevention workshops.
- ASSIST training for suicide prevention was given in Goose Bay in early June. Ten people from Natuashish participated including the health director and mental health counsellors.
- 60 students in Natuashish recently attended a workshop with Health Canada

staff on suicide prevention.

- Representatives from both Innu communities will be attending a training session on First Nations and Inuit suicide prevention in Montreal this month.
- Health Canada is currently working with community leaders from both Sheshatshiu and Natuashish on a suicide awareness conference being planned for January. The conference will focus on the celebration of life as well as provide community members with information on suicide prevention and the services available in the community

Approve	
yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
no	<input type="checkbox"/>