



GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Department of Health & Community Services

June 29, 2001

Mr. Al Garman
Regional Director
Medical Services Branch
Health Canada - Atlantic Region
Suite 1816, 18th Floor, Maritime Centre
1505 Barrington Street
Halifax, NS
B3J 3Y6



Dear Mr. Garman:

I was disappointed you were unable to attend our conference call yesterday to discuss the current situation in Sheshatshiu. However, in your absence, your officials clarified two significant points for us in order to move forward on this file:

- There are 4-5 young adults in the community who are considered "ring leaders" in gas sniffing activities and these individuals contribute to children/youth engaging in gas sniffing. Two of these individuals are pregnant. All require specialized solvent abuse treatment and St. Norbett's is willing to accommodate them. Additionally, removing these young adults from the community is crucial in reducing the risk to other children/youth. I was pleased to hear that discussions are already underway between your officials and the community and I understand, in all probability, treatment at St. Norbett's will be approved.
- Health Canada is funding a family treatment program (Lobstick Lodge) this year for the Innu of Sheshatshiu to the sum of 1.2 million dollars. I understand that although the program will not be up and running until September 2001, the Innu will still receive approximately \$500,000 of this funding to utilize over the summer months. It is imperative that Health Canada, Health Labrador Corporation, and the Innu meet to discuss how best to utilize these funds so that the children currently in care of Health Labrador Corporation and their families will obtain appropriate treatment in the very near future.

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I trust you will agree with the above comments and look forward to continuing our partnership to support this community in need.

Sincerely,



LORETTA CHARD
Assistant Deputy Minister
Board Services

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cc Mr. Boyd Rowe
Ms. Delia Connell

Children/Youth in Sheshatshiu Sniffing Gas

- Health Labrador Corporation (HLC) has informed the Province that children/youth in Sheshatshiu are again engaged in gas sniffing activity and assistance has been sought by the community.
- 14 children/youth under the age of 16 years were assessed and nine children/youth were placed in the vacant Charles J Andrew Treatment Center. This center will be staffed by individuals who are on a "casual call-back list" for the individualized living arrangements established in Goose Bay. These casual staff are currently providing care for the children/youth involved in the gas sniffing crises earlier this year.
- Of the 14 youth of concern, 5 were involved in the gas sniffing crisis November 2000 and subsequently entered the care of the Director of Child, Youth, and Family Services, HLC on a temporary care basis, and were previously placed with foster families in Sheshatshiu. These placements have now broken down. Of the remaining 9 children/youth, only 4 required placement at the Charles J Andrew Treatment Center. 5 children/youth did not require removal.
- There are also 5 young adults gas sniffing, ranging in ages from 18-21 years, who are of particular concern. These young adults could be considered the "ring leaders" of gas sniffing activity. The Innu Health Commission is having discussions with Health Canada regarding possible treatment options outside the Province. Two females of this group, ages 18 and 19 years, are pregnant. A solvent abuse treatment center in Manitoba is willing to take the young adults however federal funding must first be ascertained.
- Federal and Provincial officials will be teleconferencing today to discuss this most recent situation.
- Further information will be supplied as it becomes available.

Prepared by: Pam Rodgers/Marilyn McCormack
Approved by: Loretta Chard
June 28th, 2001

