

BN-2015-00414

Regular Circulation

Premier	J. Browne
J. Mullaley	P. Burt
T. King	C. Evans
M. MacPherson	V. Hayden
H. MacLean	D. Hynes
M. Brown	J. Paddock
P. Morris	

September 4, 2015

Information Note Child Youth and Family Services

Title: Community of Natuashish Services Enhancement Program (CONSEP).

Issue: To provide an update and an assessment of implementing the CONSEP Initiative

Background:

- To help address significant recruitment challenges in the coastal northern community, a new fly-in fly-out approach (CONSEP: Community of Natuashish Service Enhancement Program) was introduced in December 2013.
- This initiative consisted of teams of two experienced CYFS social workers and a clinical program supervisor rotating biweekly into the community, in addition to one permanent social worker, one social work assistant and two community service workers in the community full time.
- The staff working rotational schedules work extended hours and are available in the community in the evenings and on weekends. This has been demonstrated to be a very positive step in the community. Staff are invited to and participate in community events, meetings, help to organize and participate in breakfast programs at the local school and seek out opportunities to engage with families in ways that are more positive than a traditional protection role. This is developing and creating trusting relationships within the community.
- In the spring of 2015, CYFS increased the staffing levels for the fly-in fly-out teams to three social workers, due to increasing demands upon the caseload, primarily related to reports of solvent use among children and youth in the community and the leadership providing additional housing to support the increased CYFS presence.
- Through a recent competition, CYFS has now recruited two new graduates to join the Natuashish team. While the goal continues to be to recruit more permanent staff in the community, the four-person rotational teams will continue for a period until the new recruits gain the needed experience to work in the community.
- In consideration of the increased caseload overall within the Innu Zone, in July 2015, CYFS created a second (temporary) Zone Manager whereby each of the communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish will now have their own responsible Zone Manager. An experienced CYFS supervisor has been recruited and will commence full-time duties in September.
- The Department has been working closely with the leadership in the community which has been supportive of the increased presence of social workers in their community. The leadership meets regularly with staff and invites staff as partners in the community to help identify community solutions. During spring 2015, the Band Council provided additional work space for CYFS staff to support the families in the community.

Current Status:

- CYFS is continuing to work collaboratively with Mushuau Innu First Nation, the Federal Government, HCS, Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority and other partners to provide necessary supports and protective intervention services to children and youth in Natuashish.
- There is a reported increase in documentation compliance within CYFS case files. While there remains significant outstanding documentation on case files, current files are more up to date and there is notable progress being reported. Supervisory audits are demonstrating slow but steady progress.
- Combined with a current file closure project underway the caseload ratios are steadily improving. In June the caseload ratio was 1 per 55 cases and in September to date the ratio is 1 per 37 with the addition of the two permanent staff.
- The use of solvents among children, youth and adults continues to be an issue in the community for CYFS and other providers. This is having an impact on overall caseload management. With an increased presence of CYFS staff in the community, the Department is well positioned to partner in the community to assist families and identify treatment options and other services.

Action Being Taken:

- CYFS cannot eliminate all of the issues that place children and youth at risk and are continuing to work together in the community to pursue practical ways of helping to ensure the protection of all children and youth.
- CYFS is of the view that child protection services available in this community have improved with the implementation of the CONSEP Initiative. Improvements have also been observed with a focus on documentation compliance and a current file assessment/closure project is underway to ensure caseload accuracy for planning purposes.
- Despite these improvements, CYFS is of the view this initiative needs to continue into the foreseeable future in this community. CYFS will maintain the goal of reducing the reliance on this rotational staffing model using active recruitment initiatives and enhancements to attract qualified staff, however at this time, sufficient progress have not been made to warrant a reduction or elimination of the CONSEP Initiative.

Prepared/approved by: D. Patey/D. O'Brien

Reviewed by: W. Parsons/T. King, Cabinet Secretariat

Ministerial approval: Received from Honourable Sandy Collins

September 4, 2015