

reporting our actions - a foundation for change

Quarterly Update January 1 – March 31, 2010

success stories

standards help adoptions move through more smoothly for workers and parents

With the update of Territorial Adoptions Standards this year, Adoptions Workers in the NWT have better tools and guidelines for use in the adoption process.

The Standards are a reference tool, and the foundation of adoption worker's training. The new format is also easily updated at the direction of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Less than 100 departmental and custom adoptions take place in the NWT each year, and from region to region, there may be relatively few adoptions to process in a year – This makes it particularly important for Adoption Workers to have good Standards to follow and refer to, so that the process is consistent and easy to understand for all families across the NWT.



Adoption workers attend training on the new standards in Inuvik

making healthy choices in fort smith

The hardest step in making a lifestyle change is often the first step. With funding from the Health Promotion Fund, the Town of Fort Smith helped make that first step a little easier

for 20 local residents, who participated in the HEAL – Healthy Eating and Active Living program. The program was hosted by the town this spring, and provided daily options for physical activity, regular weigh-ins, and 9 different educational sessions on Healthy eating and living.



‘It was the right incentive to get back into a healthy lifestyle,’ commented Jayne Murray, one of the participants. “The support helped keep me going.”

The combined weight lost was nearly 200 lb for the group over the 10 weeks – a great inspiration for others in Fort Smith and across the NWT!

access for all northerners

Starting in October 2009, applications for long-term care in the Northwest Territories have been processed through a single Territorial Admissions Committee that ensures that no matter where you live in the NWT, your needs will be equally considered in accessing one of the 10 long-term care facilities that currently exist.

The committee oversees one coordinated, prioritized placement list, and uses a uniform assessment instrument, common definitions and common criteria for long-term care. They maintain an inventory of available beds and place applicants as close to home as possible.

Applications for long term care continue to be coordinated through the Health and Social Services Authorities.



Territorial Dementia Centre

To date, 21 people have been placed in care, including 12 at the new Territorial Dementia Centre.

contribution agreements first step in improving system accountability

For the first time since 1999, Health and Social Services Authorities and the Department have a new contribution agreement format which reflects the current funding model. This agreement sets the parameters around base funding that Authorities receive through the Department of Health and Social Services. The new agreement will increase clarity, accountability and understanding for all parties.

“The contribution agreement gives us a better idea of what funds can be used for, and clarifies our accountability as an Authority.” commented Paul Gard, Director of Finance and Administration for the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority.

“This is the first step in improving the consistency of financial management across the system. In the long run, it will help us better account to the people of the NWT about how we spend health and social services dollars.” added Derek Elkin, Director of Finance and Capital Planning for the Department of Health and Social Services.

priorities under wellness

Updates to March 31, 2010

1.1 Priority – Improve community services by developing community wellness plans

Action – Expand respite care for families of children and youth with special needs

- Families from Fort Smith, Deline and Aklavik continue to be referred and supported through this program in partnership with the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities.

Action – Increase supports for FASD prevention

- Pan-territorial public promotional campaign encouraging family and friends to support pregnant women in choosing not to drink during pregnancy
- An electronic distribution has been created that sends out weekly updates of FASD-related information to 250 interested caregivers/professionals/families.
- Three training items: “This Is Me: A Tool For Learning About and Working with People Who have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder”, “Strategies for Parenting Children with FASD” and “Living and Learning with FASD: Jilly’s Story” have been distributed to NWT schools.
- A FASD Diagnostic Services Team has been formed and trained as part of the Child Development Team of the Stanton Territorial Hospital. Clinical diagnosis follows the Canadian guidelines for diagnosis for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder as set out in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.
- Fifty-four physicians, nursing practitioners, nurses, other medical professionals and front-line workers received “Pregnancy Related Issues in the Management of Addictions (PRIMA)” training at two one-day workshops in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

1.2 Priority – Improve Services for children in care

Action – Expand and promote the existing extended family care model

Action – Strengthen policies and practices to support children who are permanently in care

- Timeframe for completion of these actions has been moved to 2010-11.

Action – Establish a territory-wide system for foster care training

- PRIDE (Parent’s Resource for Information on Development and Education) training was delivered to foster parents in Yellowknife, Beaufort Delta, and Fort Liard.

Action – Update and distribute revised adoption standards to all adoption workers

- This action is completed. Adoption standards have been finalized and shared with all Adoptions Workers. See more about this under ‘Success Stories’.

1.3 Priority – Promote healthy living and wellness

Action – Update and promote the Healthy Choices Framework to the public

- Health and Social Services is working with Municipal and Community Affairs, Education, Culture and Employment, Justice, Transportation and the Department of Executive to maximize the government resources available to help NWT residents make healthy choices.
- Current initiatives include the Justice-lead ‘Not Us’ campaign against hard drugs such as crystal meth, and HSS-lead initiatives such as ‘Drop the Pop’, ‘Butthead’ and the ‘Respect Yourself’ healthy sexuality portal.
- Preparation has begun to educate the public about the Healthy Choices Framework so that NWT residents better understand the programs available to help them make healthy choices and prevent illness or injury.

Action – Expand the Health Promotion Fund to provide funding for more smaller-scale community-driven health promotion projects

- Over the summer of 2009, the Tulita Family Support Program hosted a series of ‘Fun in the Sun’ programs for young families and new parents in the community, that focussed on helping parents learn about healthy home environments, developing family literacy, and easing them into the parenting role. The events used fun summer activities such as swimming and berry-picking to bring people together in a positive environment.
- Over a weekend in March 2010, 18 Inuvik youth in grades 6 to 9 participated in an Anti-Tobacco Conference held by the Beaufort Delta Health and Social Services Authority. They participated in 9 different tobacco presentations and a scavenger hunt that lead them through the town of Inuvik, combining physical activity and fun, with tobacco awareness education.

- The Town of Fort Smith hosted HEAL – the Healthy Eating and Active Living program. 20 residents completed the 10 week program that combined daily physical activities, weigh-ins, and 9 healthy living and eating modules. The group lost almost 200 lb as a whole over the time period. (see Success Stories for more information)

Action - Expand the Healthy Foods North project which coordinates community awareness and access to nutritious foods

- The project has now fully initiated in Ulukhaktok
- The Healthy Foods North project, a partnership that includes the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (NTNU) Public Health Association and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has recently been awarded the Dieticians of Canada's Regional Award – Alberta and the Northwest Territories

Action - Increase funding and supports around nutrition promotion and food security

- Over the month of February, *Drop the Pop* was delivered in 43 schools that registered to participate. This is a campaign that provides schools with funding to deliver community-based projects that emphasize the importance of healthy foods and avoiding sugary drinks.

Action - Promote breastfeeding and healthy pregnancies

- On-line breastfeeding training was offered to health care staff across the NWT to help them provide assistance to new nursing families.

Action - Develop and implement the Tobacco Strategy

- Consultations for the revision of the territorial tobacco strategy took place in Inuvik and Fort Simpson.
- A federally funded project focused on strengthening cessation supports has begun with a cessation training session for health professionals from across the NWT.

Action – Provide mental health programs targeted to youth that focus on addictions, suicide prevention, self-awareness and self-esteem.

- In partnership with the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, we are funding projects in Lutsel'ke and Fort Resolution that deliver self-esteem, drug and alcohol prevention and other resiliency supports to youth

- In Behchoko, we have partnered with the Tli Cho Community Services Agency for a resiliency project that used photo-voice techniques with grade 9 and 10 students.
- In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association – NT division, we will be carrying out 'FRIENDS for life' resiliency training for trainers from across the NWT. This program teaches children problem-solving techniques to help overcome anxiety.
- The Centre for Northern Families has been funded to carry out the YouthNet NWT project that provides a youth-friendly outlet for discussion of mental illness.

Action – Develop a social marketing campaign around mental health and addictions

- A contract has been awarded for a campaign that will work in tandem with the 'Not Us' Department of Justice anti-drug campaign to provide Northerners and communities with promotional messages and education around mental health and addictions.

1.4 Priority - Increase supports and services for people who experience family violence through the Family Violence Framework partnership

Action - Expand family violence outreach services to three regions without shelters

- In addition to the 4 non-shelter regional projects approved last quarter, a 5th non-shelter project has received funding in the Tli Cho. The Behchoko Justice Committee has received funding to host community workshops on healthy relationships. The dynamics of family violence and the supports available in the community.

1.6 Priority – Work with partners and stakeholders to develop policies and programs for future senior and elder services

Action – Determine needs and service gaps through consultation with seniors and other stakeholders and develop policies and programs to ensure needs are met appropriately and seamlessly

- The Report on the Healthy Aging and Age Friendly Communities Forum has been finalized and circulated to participants. The forum was attended by 32 participants including representatives of health and recreation, municipalities, seniors and elders.
- A Pan-Territorial elder abuse campaign has been completed.

- A draft new Seniors' Action Plan has been submitted for approval by the NWT Seniors' Society's Committee of Officials for Seniors

1.8 Priority – Deliver vaccine programs and improve communication around diseases

Action – Update the NWT Pandemic Plan as part of updated Territorial Emergency Response Planning

- An H1N1 Pandemic workshop with key stakeholders was hosted in January 2010 to review the NWT response and capture lessons learned.
- The Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority updated their pandemic plan using the recent H1N1 experience
- The Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority updated their pandemic plan using the recent H1N1 experience

Action – Increase surveillance and education around antibiotic-resistant organisms and infections

- Enhanced surveillance for “superbugs” was established in the NWT before most other Canadian jurisdictions. Antibiotic-resistant infections have been actively tracked since 1998 and were made reportable in 2000.
- Office of the Chief Public Health Officer is working with the HSSAs to enhance health care provider knowledge of MRSA.
- DHSS, with the assistance of HSSAs, delivers a yearly Superbug and Hand washing Campaign.

1.9 Priority – Reduce the gap in health and wellness between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Northerners

Action – Work with NWT Aboriginal organizations at a community level to implement Child and Family Services Committees (see also Priority 1.2)

- A Child and Family Services Committee Agreement has been signed for the community of Fort MacPherson.

1.10 Priority – Address the issue of homelessness in the NWT

Action –Continue to implement the NWT Homelessness Framework to ensure efficient and effective use of resources to address homelessness

- Small Community Homelessness funds have been shared with those communities that were approved.

priorities under accessibility

Updates to March 31, 2010

2.1 Priority – Provide the right services, through the right providers, in the right places

Action – Review utilization information of NWT Health Care Facilities

- A Utilization Committee was established last fall at Stanton Hospital, reviewing referral processes, using technology for remote consultation and screening of patients for specialist visits. A review of OR capacity and assignment was completed

Action – Enhance oral health promotion to young children

- Oral health promotion activities continue to roll-out
- The Pan-territorial Oral Health Initiative was completed March 2010.

Action – Pilot community treatment options are educate Northerners about addiction aftercare services available in the Beaufort Delta

- Funding agreements ended March 31, 2010 and reporting is due in June. This action will be updated in the next quarterly report.

2.2 Priority – Manage Chronic Disease

Action – Establish a Chronic Disease Management model for the NWT

- The goal for the model is to assist community members who are challenged with chronic health conditions to achieve their optimal level of wellbeing
- The first draft of the model has been reviewed within the department, and direction was been provided to focus on the primary care system

Action – Promote nutrition, physical activity and other preventative healthy choices

- See 1.3
- Dehcho Health and Social Services has delivered poster presentations on prostate and colon cancer, diabetes and nutrition this quarter

2.3 Priority – Enhance and customize continuing care, while ensuring access and administration is optimized

Action – Ensure continuing care clients enter into care through a coordinated referral and assessment process

- While the referral process moves from a manual to an automated process, department staff continue to support Authorities to use a consistent and coordinated approach

Action – Establish a territorial admission committee to develop and manage access to long-term care

- Between October 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010, the Territorial Admissions Committee reviewed 40 applications for long-term care admission
- 2 clients were placed in care at Stanton Hospital, and 7 were placed in other NWT facilities
- 12 applicants were approved for admission to the new Territorial Dementia facility and admitted by the end of March 2010

Action – Standardize the delivery of Continuing Care Services across the NWT

- A Working Group from the NWT Continuing Care Committee is developing new standards for working with those residents in care.

Action – Standardize models of care, direct care hours and staffing so that they are consistent across the NWT

- An operational planning study has been completed that proposes a standard model for NWT Long Term Care facilities.

2.4 Priority – Work with Public Works and Services to ensure facilities are modern, effective and aligned with current and future service delivery

Action – Develop 5 year medical equipment plan and 20 year facility plan

- The proposed plans have been completed and submitted for consideration as part of the 2011-12 GNWT Capital Planning process and will be reviewed leading up to the final approved GNWT Capital Plan in October 2010

- Major Medical Equipment needs have been identified for 2011-12. The Department has initiated a preliminary review to develop a Comprehensive Medical Equipment plan for inclusion in the 2012-13 Business Planning Process.
- The planning study for the proposed replacement of the Hay River Hospital is well underway. Schematic design and initial costing has proceeded.

2.5 Priority – Use information technologies to bring timely, quality services to Northerners

Action – Update and provide Telehealth equipment in health centres and schools

- Telehealth (SLP services) are now installed in seven schools in the communities of Colville Lake, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita.
- Ulukhaktok school is delayed due to network issues until November 2010.
- 21 health centre units have been installed and are in use in Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Norman Wells, Colville Lake, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Tulita, Stanton Territorial Hospital, Lutselk'e, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Behchoko, Wha Ti, Fort Providence and Hay River.
- Paulatuk is delayed due to equipment issues until May 2010
- The target for the use of this equipment is being met and exceeded
- Stanton Hospital is using the equipment for physician consultation with regional health professionals

Action – Develop and implement a spectrum of electronic technologies to improve connections between Northerners and service providers, and improve access and integration of records and medical information

This spectrum will include the Electronic Health Record System, Electronic Medical Records, Digital Imaging/Picture Archiving and Communications, the Lab Information System, and the Internet Public Health Information System

- HealthNet has been rolled out and continues to evolve.
- Educational materials are being developed to help professionals understand use of the electronic tools

Action – Implement and continue to evolve the Electronic Health Record System (HealthNet) across the territory. This will allow sharing of information that includes text reports from all 4 NWT hospitals and laboratory results from Stanton, Hay River and Inuvik laboratories as well as those referred by NWT to out-of-territory laboratories

- The second version of the Healthnet Viewer which has more information from regional Hospitals and more lab results, as well as greater functionality(eg. standardized lab specimen labels) has been made available to NWT Health Care providers, and access has rolled-out to professionals in Hay River, Fort Smith, Sahtu, Dehcho, and Stanton.

Action – Implement Electronic Medical Records (EMR) where services are required

- In 2008-09 a pilot product was determined unsuitable for territory-wide roll-out. The Electronic Medical Records Strategy is being updated to consider the options available with consideration for how technology has evolved since the original strategy was developed, how other provinces are operating, and what is needed in the Northwest Territories.

Action – Implement Diagnostic Imaging/Picture Archiving and Communications System (DI/PACs) at Stanton, Hay River, Inuvik, and Fort Smith

- This action is completed and voice recognition tools are being added to improve the time required for diagnostic image reporting.

Action – Install Computed Radiography readers in the 18 community health centres that currently provide diagnostic imaging services

- Readers have been installed in Fort Resolution, Tulita, Deline, Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope. Implementations are going well and providers are overwhelmingly positive about the new system.

Action – Replace Lab Information System

- Project Management and subject matter expert services have been contracted, and additional funding to cover project costs has been received.

2.6 Priority – Provide supported and assisted living in smaller communities

Action – Implement a Supported Living Program in Hay River for residents of the NWT with moderate to severe disabilities

- The two currently open homes have varied in occupancy from 75 to 88% during the reporting timeframe
- Staffing for the third home has been completed
- The policies and procedures around a respite program to operate through 2 beds in the third home have been completed

2.8 Priority – Manage physician services at a territorial level

Action – Better define the roles of specialists and family practitioners

- The Utilization committee at Stanton is looking at criteria for referrals, sharing information with regional Authorities around when referrals are needed

priorities under sustainability

Updates to March 31, 2010

3.1 Priority – Improve governance and accountability to ensure the delivery of quality programs and services and consistent financial management

Action – Clarify roles and responsibilities through performance and service agreements with Health and Social Services Authorities

- Contribution Agreements to fund the Health and Social Services Authorities have been completed in consultation with the Authorities and the Department of Justice, and will be implemented for 2010-11

3.2 Priority – Develop ongoing system of reporting and evaluation

Action – Introduce a system-wide performance measurement and reporting system

- A balanced scorecard has been proposed to senior management of the Health and Social Services system. This scorecard is intended to translate departmental strategic objectives into a coherent set of performance measures.

Action – Develop capacity for delivering the performance measurement and reporting system

- An advisory committee has been established made up of Authorities representatives, Hospitals, and Department of Health and Social Services Advisors.

3.5 Priority – Innovative, Maximized use of Human Resources

Action – Develop innovative training programs with Aurora College and other partners

- An orientation to work in cross-cultural environments has been developed by the Dehcho Authority traditional healing project and was delivered in March 2010