



BULLETIN!
7 January 2009
**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROVIDES FUNDING
IN SUPPORT OF
DRUG TREATMENT COURTS**

Minister of Justice & Attorney General of Canada, The Honourable Rob Nicholson, announced new funding in support of the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court in November, 2008. This announcement formed part of Minister Nicholson's participation in the opening of the 2nd National Canadian Association of Drug Treatment Courts (CADTC) conference.

Funding over two years will support transitional housing for individuals addicted to illicit drugs who have come into conflict with the law and have been streamed into the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court system.

Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs) are specialized courts that aim to reduce crime associated with drug dependency by providing monitored treatment and community service support for offenders with drug addictions. They take a comprehensive approach that includes judicial supervision, substance abuse treatment, random and frequent drug testing and social service support.

Funding for the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court pilot housing program was provided through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC) Homelessness Partnering Strategy's (HPS) Federal Horizontal Pilot Projects program. The project was undertaken under the HPS mandate to enhance collaboration with other federal programs and departments whose mandates relate to homelessness.

The Government of Canada, under the National Anti-Drug Strategy, supports DTCs in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Regina.

"We are part of a global effort working diligently towards finding effective solutions in circumstances where criminal conduct arises as a result of an underlying social pathology," said CADTC Chair, Justice Kofi Barnes. "Drug treatment courts have demonstrated significant promise as we develop and implement innovative strategies aimed at effecting holistic rehabilitation without compromising public safety."

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General of British Columbia will administer the funding and work with the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Authority Addiction Services and British Columbia Housing to provide short-term supportive housing for participants involved in the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court program. The funding will be provided through a partnership between Justice Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The National Anti-Drug Strategy is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Justice, Public Safety Canada and Health Canada and includes three action plans: preventing illicit drug use; treating those with illicit drug dependencies; and combating the production and distribution of illicit drugs.

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The CADTC is a not-for-profit association that assists Drug Treatment Courts across Canada by gathering and sharing information and evaluations about the effectiveness of DTCs. The association also acts as a forum through which best practices can be shared and assistance and training to those interested in developing a DTC can be provided.

Drug Treatment Courts

Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs) aim to reduce crime committed as a result of drug addictions. They offer court-monitored treatment and community service support for offenders with drug addictions.

The Canadian DTC model in six cities – Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg Edmonton, Regina, and Vancouver – is restricted to non-violent accused persons whose criminal activity is not driven by organized crime but by an addiction to cocaine, opiates, or methamphetamine.

For those selected for the program, the judge may suspend the imposition of a sentence to allow the addicted person to undergo treatment under very strict conditions. Those conditions include judicial supervision, substance abuse treatment, random and frequent drug testing and social services support. If the person successfully completes the program, the court can decide to impose a suspended or reduced sentence.

Applicants are screened out if there are indications of drug trafficking for commercial gain, if they are charged with a violent offence, if they have a significant and/or recent history of violence, if they used a young person under 18 years of age in the commission of the offence, or if they are charged with residential break-and-enter.

Participants must also appear regularly in the drug treatment court, where a judge reviews their progress and can then either impose sanctions (ranging from verbal reprimands to expulsion from the program) or provide rewards (ranging from verbal commendations to a reduction in court appearances).

DTCs also aim to reduce the burden of substance abuse on the Canadian economy. The impact of drug-related crimes on the economy has been estimated at \$9 billion annually for areas including law enforcement, prosecution and incarceration.

Drug Treatment Court Funding Program

Health Canada and Justice Canada work collaboratively to support and deliver the Drug Treatment Court Funding Program. The program is managed by Justice Canada.

The objectives of the DTC Funding Program are as follows:

- To promote and strengthen the use of alternatives to incarceration with a particular focus on Aboriginal people and street prostitutes;
- To build knowledge and awareness among criminal justice, health and social service practitioners, and the general public about drug treatment courts; and
- To collect information and data on the effectiveness of DTCs in order to promote best practices and the continuing refinement of approaches.

Vancouver Drug Treatment Court Housing Pilot Project

Funding for the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court pilot housing project has been provided through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC) Homelessness Partnering Strategy's

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(HPS) Federal Horizontal Pilot Projects program. The project was undertaken under the HPS mandate to enhance collaboration with other federal programs and departments whose mandates relate to homelessness.

The goal of the Vancouver DTC Housing pilot project is to support DTC participants as they work to overcome their addictions. This project will assist in addressing the supportive housing gap and will contribute to the success rate of participants of the Vancouver DTC.

The funding will be provided to British Columbia's Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General who, in partnership with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Addiction Services, will provide 34 support transitional housing units for participants of the Vancouver DTC.

Funding for the Vancouver DTC Housing Pilot Project will span two fiscal years (2007-08 and 2008-09) and will total \$200,000.

INNOVATIVE NEW DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, last August announced over \$250,000 in funding over 3 years for "Connecting Youth in the Justice System with Equine Assisted Illicit Drug Addiction Therapy – A Pilot Project". The new project, delivered by the Partners in Process Equine Learning Centre, will provide a unique drug treatment program to youth who have come into conflict with the law. The program is based in Ontario.

Through a combination of interaction with horses, and more traditional sessions with trained counselors, the program helps youth learn about trust and taking responsibility for their own actions. Upon successful completion of the program, youth can choose to remain involved by mentoring new participants.

"I am honoured to be a part of this program," said Melanie Gray, Program Director of Partners in Process Equine Learning Centre. "Equine assisted therapy gets to the root of the issue and allows youth to learn ways to function without the need of drugs."

Background National Anti-Drug Strategy

The National Anti-Drug Strategy is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Justice, Public Safety Canada and Health Canada, and includes three action plans: preventing illicit drug use; treating those with illicit drug dependencies; and combating the production and distribution of illicit drugs.

Prevention

The Prevention Action Plan focuses on preventing illicit drug use among young people. It will provide information to those most affected by drug use, including parents, young people, educators, law enforcement authorities, and communities.

The Prevention Action Plan will:

- refocus existing community-based, drug-use prevention strategies, programs and services for youth;
- provide information directly to parents, educators, and health professionals;
- develop materials for school-based awareness and prevention strategies for elementary and secondary school students;

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- discourage illicit drug use through a new, national public awareness campaign; and
- provide financial help to communities for local projects to tackle the growing challenge of illicit drug use among young people.

The Government has committed \$30 million in new funding over five years to support the Prevention Action Plan. This funding will bolster existing prevention efforts.

Treatment

The Treatment Action Plan supports innovative approaches to treating and rehabilitating those with illicit drug addiction who pose a risk to themselves and the community.

This Plan will promote collaboration among governments and support agencies to increase access to drug treatment services. It will:

- enhance treatment and support for First Nations and Inuit people;
- provide treatment programs for young offenders with drug-related problems;
- enable the RCMP to refer youth with drug-related problems to treatment programs; and
- support research on new treatment models.

The Government has committed over \$100 million in new funding over five years to support the Treatment Action Plan. This funding will bolster existing treatment efforts.

Enforcement

The Enforcement Action Plan bolsters law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute drug crimes. It will increase law enforcement's capacity to combat marijuana grow operations, synthetic drug production and distribution operations.

The Enforcement Action Plan will:

- provide funding to the RCMP so they can expand their dedicated anti-drug teams to help locate, investigate and shut down organizations involved in the production and distribution of illicit drugs;
- provide resources to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada to provide legal advice to law enforcement at the investigative stage and to effectively prosecute those involved with the production and distribution of illicit drugs;
- increase the number of Health Canada inspectors and investigators to ensure accurate and timely analysis of suspected illicit drugs seized by law enforcement;
- increase the capacity of Canada Border Service Agency to inhibit the cross-border movement of precursor chemicals and illicit drugs;
- help law enforcement stop the flow of money that organized crime makes from the illicit drug trade;
- improve the ability of Canadian law enforcement officials to conduct joint investigations with their United States counterparts; and
- ensure that serious penalties are in place for serious drug crimes.

The Government has committed approximately \$102 million in new funding over five years to support the Enforcement Action Plan. An additional \$67.7 million of funding will be made available under the Enforcement Action Plan if mandatory minimum penalties are enacted. This funding will bolster existing enforcement efforts.

Progress under the National Anti-Drug Strategy

To date, under the National Anti-Drug Strategy, the Government of Canada has:

- launched a prevention-focused awareness campaign, with input from the National Drug Prevention Advisory Committee, aimed at discouraging illicit drug use;
- announced more than \$7 million in funding for Health Canada's Community Initiatives Fund to help communities across Canada tackle the increasing challenge of illicit drug use by young people;
- announced \$3.3 million in new funding to enhance the ability of Canada Border Services Agency to inhibit the cross-border flow of illicit drugs;
- announced over \$220,000 in funding for a drug treatment intervention program for Aboriginal youth with drug and gang involvement;
- invested \$10 million in funding for a Drug Prevention Strategy for Canada's Youth to be developed and implemented by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse;
- invested \$8.9 million to strengthen the RCMP's drug enforcement and Proceeds of Crime Teams;
- announced \$111 million over five years for Health Canada in new and ongoing funding for critical drug treatment initiatives for provinces and territories;
- \$30.5 million over five years to bolster services across Canada that will help First Nations and Inuit who suffer from drug addictions, including \$2M dedicated to the Vancouver's Downtown East Side; and
- \$10 million to support new treatment services that will help to treat individuals living in Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

The National Anti-Drug Strategy is a collaborative effort by Health Canada, Public Safety Canada and Justice Canada and includes three action plans: preventing illicit drug use; treating those with illicit drug dependencies; and combating the production and distribution of illicit drugs.

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