



## Government of Yukon

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FOR RELEASE #10-084  
 May 13, 2010

### Minister names two co-chairs for a task force on acutely intoxicated persons at risk

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart announced today that Whitehorse physician Bruce Beaton and former Champagne and Aishihik First Nations chief James Allen will co-chair the new task force on acutely intoxicated persons at risk.

The announcement follows on the heels of the motion debated in the Yukon Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, May 11.

"I am very pleased that both Dr. Beaton and Mr. Allen have accepted this government's call to co-chair this task force. We must consider the options for supporting people in our communities who are struggling with alcohol dependence, and in particular those whose visible dysfunctions put themselves and others at risk," Hart said. "We need to ensure that the options we look at reflect the current best practices and are solutions that will truly help the people we are trying to reach."

The task force will bring together representatives of the departments of Health and Social Services and Justice, the RCMP, Emergency Medical Services, the Yukon Medical Association, the Salvation Army, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon First Nations. It will begin its work almost immediately with the identification of representatives of the members.

"We want to make sure that the folks who are sitting at that table are the people who really know what's going on," Beaton said. "We want front line workers, people on the streets, not the high-level officials who don't see this every day."

"Alcohol addiction is a severe problem for some people. We need to find creative new solutions to help all Yukoners who are in this dark place and give them hope," Allen said.

The task force will present its final recommendations, by December 31, to the Health and Social Services minister who committed to tabling the report in the spring sitting of the legislature.

"In the meantime, I have directed my department to look at interim supports while we wait to hear from our task force," Hart said.

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See backgrounder below.

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**Biographies:****Dr. Bruce Beaton**

Beaton graduated from the University of California with a BA in Chemistry in 1969 and from the University of California with a medical degree in 1973. He moved to Yukon where he was a general practitioner from 1975 until 1979, before moving to Cassiar, B.C. to practice for two years. He soon returned to Yukon in 1982 and worked as a locum in Faro. He returned to general practice in Whitehorse in 1980 and continued until 2000.

Beaton spent 20 years on the executive of the Yukon Medical Association, including 10 years on the Canadian Medical Association Council of Health Policy and Economics. He also served as chair of the Yukon Medical Council for six years.

Outside of his medical practice, Beaton has his commercial pilots licence and has worked as a white water rafting guide. He is a bridge instructor and has been actively involved in organizing the Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival.

**Mr. James Allen**

Allen is employed as the researcher and communications lead for the Alaska Highway Pipeline Coalition. He is a member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and belongs to the Wolf Clan. His Southern Tutchone name is Jamena.

Allen has been involved in First Nations politics and issues since 1986. He is the former chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) and was a director of the secretariat, the executive councilor and the deputy chief of CAFN, and a vice-chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations.

He is also an electrician and trained as a controls technician with Nova Gas Pipelines in 1980s. During the 1970s he was employed as a native employment officer for Cyprus Anvil Mines, and was an assistant resource management officer with Yukon Lands and Forest Services and a northern careers counselor with the federal government.

Allen is an owner of Tutchone Resources, which specializes in traditional knowledge research and policy development, culture camps, healing camps and five-year capital plans. For the last three years, Allan has held On the Land Healing camps on his trapline at Christmas Bay along Kluane Lake. The camp helps people with drug and alcohol addictions to start developing a healing path for themselves.

Allan remains a strong advocate for First Nations culture, language and beliefs.

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