



## Government of Yukon

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**NEWS** *release*

FOR RELEASE #10-184  
 September 22, 2010

### Yukon brings Alberta program North

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart announced today a new collaboration with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to better support Yukon residents who are dealing with severe weight issues.

The Weight Wise program is part of the AHS chronic disease management strategy that targets prevention and treatment of obesity. Working with AHS, Yukon is now able to provide support services to bariatric patients here in the territory.

"Until this summer, Yukon was sending patients to Edmonton to take part in the Weight Wise program. This has meant removing the patient from his or her support environment," Hart said.

Working with Dr. Arya Sharma of the University of Alberta, Yukon physician Dr. Isabelle Gagnon and Yukon nurse Nathalie Mercier were trained to deliver the Weight Wise program and have already launched a trial program in Whitehorse. Two dieticians and a kinesiologist have been contracted for the program.

The Weight Wise program is a 10-module re-education series for obese patients. At the end of the program, gastric surgery may be considered if the patient is a likely candidate. For some patients the education series is enough to put them on a path to a healthier life while others require surgery. There is a higher rate of success if the patient has gone through the Weight Wise program prior to surgery.

"Obesity is a real health issue that results in increased medical complications for the patient, including: diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease, and knee and hip damage or replacement. These medical complications translate into greater health costs, from increased visits to the physician to increased long-term care down the road. Addressing this issue now will benefit the patients and benefit the health care system in the long run," Hart added.

The program can take 15 participants at a time; there is currently a small waiting list for Weight Wise.

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