



Government of Yukon

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January 11, 2011

New secure assessment centre planned for acutely intoxicated persons

WHITEHORSE—In response to recommendations contained in two major reports, the Government of Yukon will construct a new Secure Assessment Centre in Whitehorse.

Sharing Common Ground, Review of Yukon's Police Force, was released today by Justice Minister Marian C. Horne. Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart released the Report on the *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report*. Both reports were recently commissioned by the Government of Yukon.

"We heard very clearly in the review that we need new ways of responding to acutely intoxicated and vulnerable people," Horne said. "The new Secure Assessment Centre will provide appropriate 24-hour medical support to acutely intoxicated individuals who are detained or arrested by the RCMP and require secure custody."

'M' Division Chief Superintendent Peter Clark said: "The centre will enhance public safety. In the past, these situations were mainly addressed using the tools that happened to be at hand—including the medical system and the policing system—neither of which was designed specifically to meet these needs. The RCMP supports using the right tool for the job—provision of trained care in an appropriate setting."

Subject to legislative approval, \$3.5 million has been identified for the centre's construction in the 2011-2012 territorial budget.

Sharing Common Ground recommends that the Justice minister meet with First Nations leaders, municipalities and women's organizations to develop a further implementation strategy that will be effective, sustainable and meets the aims of the remaining recommendations.

"*Sharing Common Ground* is the blueprint for establishing a new relationship between Yukon citizens and the RCMP," Horne said. "I would like to thank the co-chairs and the advisory committee, as well as everyone who participated in this valuable review."

Hart also thanked the authors of the *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report*, Dr. Bruce Beaton and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Chief James Allen for their service to Yukoners in providing 12 recommendations on how to address the needs of acutely intoxicated individuals.

"I would like to thank Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen for leading the work on this report. Yukon government is co-ordinating efforts to change societal attitudes and attempt to avoid the tragedies that sparked this task force in the first place," Hart said. "The recommendations in

the review will be carefully considered and a collaborative implementation strategy will be developed in the near future.”

Sharing Common Ground is at www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca.

Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report is at www.hss.gov.yk.ca.

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See backgrounder below.

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Backgrounder: Secure Assessment Centre

- The Secure Assessment Centre is a joint initiative between Yukon and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and responds to the recommendations from the Review of Yukon’s Police Force. The centre will innovate the way Yukon manages persons detained by the RCMP.
- The centre will ensure the highest standard of care and protection for persons taken into police custody, including the acutely intoxicated. Persons detained can experience complications that require medical assessment and supervision to ensure safe care and control while in custody. The centre will provide onsite medical assessment and care through 24-hour nursing and supervision by corrections officers with specialized training.
- The RCMP has collaborated on the development of the Secure Assessment Centre concept and has confirmed agreement in principle for cost-sharing the centre’s construction and ongoing operations and maintenance costs.
- The centre will take advantage of the intended multi-use nature of the Yukon Correction Infrastructure project such as the admissions and discharge area, medical rooms and office space. By including the centre within the envelope of the new correctional facility, the centre’s operational efficiencies will reduce costs over the long term.

- The RCMP is co-funding the Secure Assessment Centre by contributing 50 per cent of the capital costs for construction. The operating and maintenance costs will be shared in accordance with the Territorial Police Services Agreement. Final details of the agreement in principle are well underway and are near completion.
- The centre will include a cellblock facility within the secure envelope of the new Yukon Correctional Centre. The centre's design will include designated male and female group and individual cells, separate youth cells, a medical interview room, a police interview room and a harm reduction cell. All persons detained in RCMP custody will be kept separate from other prisoners in the new correctional facility.
- The RCMP had planned an upgrade of the existing cells in Whitehorse Detachment. With the announcement of this centre, a full upgrade will no longer be necessary. The Whitehorse Detachment cell area will be used for other purposes, including short-term temporary holding of persons as part of serious or sensitive criminal investigations.
- The centre will be staffed by Yukon correctional officers and registered nurses to provide 24-hour, 365 days a year operation.
- This innovative Yukon response will provide opportunities for a combination of secure and short-term custody with medical assessment for all persons detained by the RCMP, referrals for acute intoxication, and possibilities for short-term case management.

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