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FOR RELEASE #11-033 February 28, 2011

Yukon's Medical Travel Program comes under review

WHITEHORSE—The Department of Health and Social Services has hired a consultant to review its medical travel program and policies as part of a pan-territorial initiative to address one of the most expensive health services in the North.

Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said today that Yukon government spends more than \$10 million each year on medical travel expenses for residents, for travel both within the Yukon and outside the territory.

"Health care costs continue to increase and we just want to make sure that our programs are as effective as possible," Hart said. "We have awarded, through public tender, a \$307,100 contract to the Winnipeg firm of Meyers, Norris, Penny LLP to complete this review."

The medical travel review is a pan-territorial project funded through the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative (THSSI). Each of the northern governments is engaged in addressing some aspects of their own program. Yukon is focusing on its business processes, policy and referral patterns in an effort to identify areas for cost savings.

"We don't anticipate any change to patient benefits but we expect we may be able to realize savings in how we do our business," Hart added.

The report will be completed by March 2012.

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