

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Weight Wise program doubles intake for coming year**

WHITEHORSE—Minister of Health and Social Services Mike Nixon announced today that permanent funding has been allocated for the Yukon Weight Wise program. With secure funding Weight Wise can now provide two intakes annually along with a comprehensive follow-up for clients who have already completed the program.

"The success of Weight Wise is something we want to build on and I am happy to announce that the Yukon government will now fund more intakes," Nixon said. "We have seen dramatic drops in the number of people on medication for diabetes, hypertension and pain management. Altogether, this means healthier Yukoners."

Weight Wise was developed by the Alberta Health Services chronic disease management program to target prevention and treatment of obesity. It has been available in Yukon since 2010. Prior to that, Yukon residents had to travel to Edmonton to participate in the program.

The program uses a collaborative care model which includes a multi-disciplinary team of a physician, dieticians, psychologist, a kinesiologist and a nurse who have all been trained to deliver Weight Wise in Yukon.

"This is great news for the program – it will have a positive impact on health care delivery," local physician in charge of Weight Wise Dr. Isabelle Gagnon said.

Introduction of Weight Wise to the territory has allowed more individuals to participate, with each intake allowing 18 individuals. There is currently a wait list of 89 individuals with an anticipated five-year wait to access the program. Since 2010, 162 Yukoners have participated in the program and have collectively lost a total of 8,032 pounds. Individuals require a referral from a physician in order to be eligible.

"Given the number of health problems associated with obesity, it is a costly medical problem both to those who suffer from it and for the health care system," Nixon added. "We are pleased to make this program available to more Yukoners to give them the tools they need to improve their health and quality of life."

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