



Government of Yukon

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 April 21, 2011

Yukon signs on to Saskatchewan's MS liberation clinical trials

Whitehorse—Yukon Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart and Saskatchewan Health Minister Don McMorris today announced that Yukon will contribute to Saskatchewan's clinical trials on the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) liberation procedure.

"Yukon has committed \$250,000 to the Saskatchewan project to ensure that territorial residents who meet the criteria will be able to participate in the anticipated clinical trials for the MS liberation procedure," Hart said. "We are very pleased to be able to partner with Saskatchewan and support its efforts to advance research into this therapy.

Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction to make a commitment to fund clinical trials for the MS liberation procedure. It is providing a \$5 million investment to the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation which is managing the publicly funded health research process. Yukon will contribute \$143,000 to the actual clinical trials, while the remaining \$107,000 will support Yukon residents who may qualify to participate, if the decision is made to proceed with the trials.

"We are hoping that these trials will give us the answers that we, and individuals with MS are waiting for. MS is a devastating disease and we all want a solution," McMorris said. Liberation therapy is a potentially ground-breaking discovery for the treatment of MS. However it has not yet been proven as scientifically valid. The Saskatchewan clinical trials, and recently announced Manitoba trials, will help produce more extensive data and may help determine the procedure's validity as a treatment for MS.

Yukon's Dr. Sally McDonald provides medical care to some members of the local MS society.

"It is a very generous move on the part of the government to support people with MS to give them the opportunity of a chance to participate in the clinical trials being proposed by Saskatchewan – access they wouldn't otherwise have without this support," McDonald said.

Minister Hart said that criteria will be established by the successful research team. Scientific peer review will be completed by mid-May 2011 and Saskatchewan will make an announcement regarding the research process moving forward in late May 2011. Yukon residents who are interested are encouraged to check the Health and Social Services website for updates on how to participate once these announcements have been made.

More information will be posted at www.hss.gov.yk.ca or www.shrf.ca as it becomes available.

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