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June 21, 2010

FASD symposium planned for September

WHITEHORSE – Registration opened last week for a Yukon-based symposium on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder to take place September 28 and 29 in Whitehorse.

Sponsored by the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership (CNFASDP), three Yukon government departments and several Yukon organizations, the two-day event will focus on gathering and sharing knowledge.

"The title, *Walking Together, connecting practice and research to create change*, is what this symposium is all about," said Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart, Yukon's member of the CNFASDP. "The partnership has been supporting a number of research initiatives over the past five years and now it's time to see how we can take what we have learned and use it in practical terms here in Yukon."

Approximately 150 individuals will attend the event that will focus on using research to look at the prevention of FASD and support for those affected by the disorder. While attendance is primarily for Yukon residents, other partnership representatives are welcome to attend.

"Through our participation in this consortium, which includes the four western provinces and three territories, we have received funding to host these very important events locally and to bring in guest speakers who can best help our local resources," Hart said.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is an umbrella term used to describe the range of disabilities caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. The damage caused by alcohol exposure is permanent and individuals can experience physical, mental, behavioural and/or learning disabilities. While there are no conclusive statistics on the number of people with FASD, Health Canada estimates that approximately nine in every 1,000 infants are affected by FASD. Prenatal exposure to alcohol is a leading cause of preventable birth defects.

The symposium is the third CNFASDP event hosted by Yukon. An international conference was held in 2002 in Whitehorse and a symposium in 2005 was held in Dawson City. Partners in this year's event include Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon (FASSY); Challenge Vocational Alternatives, Child Development Centre; Council of Yukon First Nations; Yukon College; First Nations Health Program (Whitehorse General Hospital) and Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

Interested participants can register online at www.cnfp2010symposium.ca.

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Contact:

Emily Younker
Cabinet Communications
867-633-7961
mailt.younker@gov.yk.ca

Pat Living
Communications, Health and Social Services
867-667-3673
mailt.living@gov.yk.ca

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